

TITLE Employee Concerns	POLICY NUMBER DCS 04-38	
RESPONSIBLE AREA Human Resources	EFFECTIVE DATE Feb. 1, 2017	REVISION 4

## I. POLICY STATEMENT

The Department of Child Safety (DCS) values the ability of employees to express work-related concerns to their management and human resources that do not meet the criteria for consideration through any of the Department’s other formal review processes. This policy is intended to clarify the use of existing mechanisms to communicate concerns. It does not establish a formal grievance process.

## II. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all DCS employees.

## III. AUTHORITY

[A.R.S. § 8-453](#) Powers and duties

## IV. DEFINITIONS

Chain of Command: The formal line of authority, communication, and responsibility within the Department, from the person with the most authority to the next one below, and so on.

Department: The Department of Child Safety.

Employee: All officers and employees of DCS, whether in covered or uncovered service, unless otherwise prescribed.

Management: The leadership responsible for making decisions as outlined in this policy and accompanying procedures.

Employee Relations Officer: A Human Resources professional responsible for addressing workplace concerns.

Employee Relations Manager: Manages the Employee Relations Department.

## V. POLICY

A. The employee concern process shall provide employees a method for requesting a review of work-related actions that do not meet the criteria for consideration through any of the Department's formal review processes:

1. [DCS 04-04 Equal Employment Opportunity](#)
2. [DCS 04-16 Recruitment and Hiring](#)
3. [DCS 04-20 Covered Employee Grievance Process](#)

B. The Department does not permit or tolerate retaliation against any employee for raising a concern, assisting in an investigation, or filing a complaint.

C. In accordance with good management practices, DCS expects supervisors and employees to work towards resolving complaints at the lowest possible level. The employee shall have a discussion with the immediate supervisor in an attempt to resolve the employee's concern.

1. The employee shall clearly state the concern to the supervisor and identify the requested resolution.
2. The purpose of the discussion is for both parties to explore the issue and the requested resolution. If the employee fails to take this step, the concern shall not be accepted through the employee concern process.
3. If the employee cannot resolve their concern with their immediate supervisor, they should follow the chain of command in an attempt to reach resolution. If the employee fails to take this step, the concern shall not be accepted through the employee concern process.

- D. If the concern cannot be resolved informally, the employee may submit the concern to the Employee Relations Department at [employeerelations@azdcs.gov](mailto:employeerelations@azdcs.gov).
1. The Employee Relations Officer shall remand the concern back to the employee if it is determined that the informal discussion between the supervisor and the employee has not occurred.
  2. The Employee Relations Officer shall remand the concern back to the employee if it is determined that the employee did not attempt to reach resolution through the proper chain of command after discussions with their immediate supervisor are unsuccessful.
  3. Any concerns regarding an employee's performance appraisal must be submitted within five working days of the date the employee received the performance appraisal.
- E. The Employee Relations Department is responsible for documenting all concerns received, identifying the employee's proposed resolution of the concern, and identifying all steps the Employee Relations Officer took to resolve the concern.
- F. The decision of the Employee Relations Manager is final and may not be further elevated, appealed, or grieved.

## **VI. PROCEDURES**

- A. Elevation of a Work-Related Concern
1. Employees with work-related concerns that cannot be addressed through one of the Department's other formal complaint processes must first discuss their concern with their supervisor and/or through the proper chain of command.
  2. If the employee's concern cannot be resolved between the employee and their immediate supervisor or through the proper chain of command, the employee can submit their concern to the Employee Relations Department. If the Employee Relations Officer determines that the required discussion between the employee and the supervisor or through the proper chain of command has not occurred, the Employee Relations Officer will forward the concern back to the employee to attempt resolution with the supervisor or through the proper chain of command.

3. The Employee Relations Officer evaluates the employee's concern to determine if the concern should be addressed through one of the formal complaint processes.
    - a. If yes, the Employee Relations Officer provides the employee with the applicable policies and directs the employee to the appropriate office to file the concern;
    - b. If no, the Employee Relations Officer determines the proper means to resolve the issue, and if necessary, refers the concern to other entities.
  4. The Employee Relations Officer then reviews the employee's concern and gathers information.
    - a. If the Employee Relations Officer determines that the employee's concern has validity, the Employee Relations Officer works with the employee and/or the employee's supervisor or manager and other entities to resolve the issue. The Employee Relations Officer documents the finding and resolution and communicates the outcome to the employee.
    - b. If the Employee Relations Officer determines that the employee's concern is not valid, the Employee Relations Officer documents the finding and communicates the finding to the employee.
- B. Formal Documentation of An Employee's Concern

The Employee Relations Department shall maintain records identifying the concerns, the employee's proposed resolution, and all actions taken by the Employee Relations Officer to resolve the concern. Employee Relations documentation shall be maintained in accordance with the Human Resources record retention policy.

C. Final Decision of an Employee's Concern

The Employee Relations Manager's final decision and any action(s) taken by the Employee Relations Officer to resolve an employee's concern are final. No further action shall be taken on the matter, nor does the employee have the right to elevate the matter further or appeal the Employee Relations Department's decision.

## VI. FORMS INDEX

[Employee Concerns Form](#)