

A. GENERAL:

1. The Court recognizes that it is in the best interest of all involved to resolve employee complaints at the lowest possible level in the organization and through informal process. Therefore, supervisory and non-supervisory personnel are encouraged to resolve employee complaints at the earliest possible level in the resolution process(es). Except as stated otherwise, employees must meet with their supervisor to discuss the problem and resolution prior to filing a grievance.
2. **REPRESENTATION:** Employees may choose to have either legal or non-legal representation during Merit Commission and/or Hearing Officer hearings provided in Rule 602 and 603. Legal and non-legal representation must be obtained at the employee's cost.
3. **EXTENSIONS:** In any type of grievance or appeal, extensions of all time limits may be granted by the Chairperson of the Merit Commission, Hearing Officer or by written consent of both parties for good reason as provided by these Rules. All time limits specified are defined in terms of working days unless otherwise noted.
4. **TIME PERIODS:** In any type of grievance, failure of supervisory personnel to comply with the time limits established under this Rule shall entitle the employee to resort to the next level of the procedure. Failure of the employee to comply with the time limits established under this Rule shall constitute abandonment of the complaint.
5. **RETALIATION PROHIBITED:** There shall be no retaliation from supervisors and/or Division Heads against employees who file a legitimate grievance.

B. **SOURCE OF REVIEW:** If an employee complaint or problem is not resolved by informal consideration, then the employee may formalize the grievance by utilizing the formal grievance process. One of the following two procedures shall be used:

1. If the complaint alleges misinterpretation or misapplication of the Merit System Rules, misinterpretation or misapplication of Divisional work rules, or if the complaint alleges unsafe or unhealthy working conditions, the General Procedure shall be used.
2. If the complaint alleges unlawful discrimination or harassment or is an appeal from administrative suspension without pay, or disciplinary suspension, demotion or dismissal, the Hearing Officer Procedure shall be used.