

GOOD INFORMATION

Alternative Handling: What is the Plan?

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Let's say a rule violation has occurred and the employee has accepted responsibility and requested alternative handling. The local supervisor appreciates the opportunity to correct a problem without having to resort to punitive measures, but how exactly does the supervisor proceed to enact an "alternative handling plan?"

The first step is a waiver/plan letter. Though not specifically discussed in the agreement, the prevailing process is for the requesting employee to sign a waiver letter accepting responsibility for the rule violation and agreeing to an action plan outlined in the letter.

The plan itself should be of short duration (usually less than ten days), and directly on point to the rule violation. Examples of specific plans for specific offenses can be found in the Alternative Handling Process Guidelines previously distributed to the field. In any case, because the employee will be under pay, BNSF wants to maximize the plan's benefits and avoid crafting an alternative handling plan that doesn't address the underlying problem.

What if the employee fails to successfully complete the assigned alternative handling plan?

Under the terms of the Safety Summit agreement, the local supervisor determines whether the employee's plan has been satisfactorily completed. If the local supervisor determines an employee has failed his alternative handling plan, the employee must be sent a written notice of this failure. This notice may be sent at the time the failure occurs, or up to ten days after the plan's scheduled completion date.

When an employee fails to complete a plan, the agreement allows time limits for the original rule violation to start anew. A new notice of investigation should be issued, and the first knowledge of this original incident, for agreement purposes, is the date we notified the employee he failed his alternative handling plan. As a practical matter, the notice of alternative handling failure is usually combined with the notice of investigation.