



Tips for Writing Witness Statements

Vice President Lew Drass

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Written statements are extremely important in our dispute resolution process. This is especially true if the grievance is appealed to Step B. The Step B team will render a decision based on the information that is contained in the grievance file.

A statement serves as a snapshot of what happened during a particular event. It is up to you to ensure that the picture shown through your statement is clear and accurate.

Here are a few easy-to-remember tips for writing an effective statement for a grievance file.

- Statements should be clearly written and contain specific details about what was seen or heard. It is easier to do this if you write your statement as soon as possible after an event occurs while the details are fresh on your mind.
- An effective statement will contain thorough answers to as many of the following questions as possible:
 - Who was involved?
 - When did the event occur (date and time)?
 - Where did the event occur?
 - What happened?
 - Exactly what did you see and hear?
 - Exactly where were you when the event happened?

The best statements focus on answering the questions above with detailed facts and avoid expressing personal opinion. The reader should be able to get a clear picture of what happened.

Here are two examples of a statement describing the same event. The event is an allegation of supervisor misconduct on the workroom floor.

Grievant Statement #1:

I asked for a 3996 today and Supervisor X got in my face and harassed and intimidated me again. He has treated me like this for a long time. I am sick of it. I shouldn't have to put up with treatment like this. Supervisor X always singles me out and treats me unfairly. He gets so angry that I feel threatened all the time. I can't take it anymore. I am a nervous wreck. This has to stop or I don't know what I'll do.

Grievant Statement: #2:

I asked Supervisor X for a 3996 today (8-30-13) at 9 AM while I was casing my route. When I asked him for a 3996 he became very angry and started raising his voice screaming that I didn't need a 3996. He got up from his desk which is about 30 feet from my case and rushed toward me. His fists were clenched and his face was red. He stepped into my case and came within three (3) inches of my face. He kept yelling that I did not need any help to complete my route and that I had enough undertime to take half an hour from another route. I thought he was going to physically attack me. This isn't the first time he has behaved this way.

Consider the examples above. The first statement is full of the writer's emotions and opinions and is very vague about exactly what happened. The second statement is much more descriptive and focuses on the facts rather than emotion.

Effective statements don't take much more time or effort to write than ineffective statements. Just be descriptive, focus on the facts, and write your statement so someone who doesn't know a thing about the people or particular circumstances in your office can easily understand what you are saying.

In summary, make sure your statement is:

- Legible
- Sufficiently detailed
- Easy to understand if the reader knows nothing about the people or particular circumstances in your office.
- Signed (including the printed name [no nicknames], title, and contains your contact information)
- Dated

Remember, the quality of your statement could be the difference between success and failure in the grievance procedure. Just follow the advice offered above and you will give us the best chance for success.

Thanks in advance for your efforts!