



Public Sector Employee Relations Decision Record

Document public-sector discipline and complaint decisions to survive records requests, appeals, council questions, and public scrutiny.

WHAT THIS HELPS YOU DO

Use this record for every significant public-sector employee relations decision — establishing authority, consistency, due process, and public-scrutiny readiness before the action is taken.

WHEN TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

- Before disciplining, demoting, or terminating any public employee
- When resolving complaints involving public employees
- When civil service, contract, or policy creates hearing/appeal rights
- When the decision will plausibly reach the council, the press, or a records request
- When 'how did we handle the last one?' has no written answer

WHAT THIS DOCUMENT HELPS PREVENT

- Due process violations that reverse otherwise justified discipline
- Decisions made by someone without charter or policy authority
- Inconsistency across departments that becomes Exhibit A on appeal
- Records requests exposing a decision with no documented reasoning
- Council ambush — learning of the action from a constituent

Faulkner HR Solutions focuses on the system behind the people problem. This tool is designed to help employers slow down the decision, identify the risk, and create proof before the issue becomes a claim, complaint, turnover event, or credibility problem.

BEFORE YOU START: READINESS CHECKLIST

Gather the following before working through this document. Incomplete inputs are one of the most common reasons employer decisions fail under later scrutiny.

Have it	Input	Notes / location
☐	Employee name and role	
☐	Date of incident, request, or separation	



Have it	Input	Notes / location
☐	Supervisor involved	
☐	Policy or handbook section that applies	
☐	Prior documentation on file	
☐	Pay records, if applicable	
☐	Relevant emails, texts, notes, or complaints	
☐	Decision-maker name	
☐	Deadline, if applicable	



EMPLOYEE RELATIONS DECISION RECORD

Public-sector decisions answer to more audiences than private ones: the employee, an appeals board, the council, the AG's office, and the public record. This record briefs them all in advance.

Part 1 — Matter Snapshot

Employee name, position, department	
Matter type (discipline / complaint resolution / grievance / termination)	
Triggering incident or complaint, with date	
Policy, rule, or standard involved (cite section)	
Civil service / CBA / contract coverage? (changes everything below)	

Part 2 — Authority Check

Confirmed	Authority element	Source
☐	Who has authority for THIS action (charter, ordinance, policy — cite it)	
☐	That person is the one deciding — not a council member, not the loudest voice	
☐	Any required consultations completed (legal, civil service director, manager)	
☐	Council's role, if any, correctly limited to what charter provides	

Part 3 — Due Process (where rights exist)

Done	Due process step	Date
☐	Property interest assessed (civil service status, contract, policy promises)	
☐	Written notice of charges/allegations provided	
☐	Employee given a real opportunity to respond BEFORE decision (pre-disciplinary/Loudermill-type hearing where required)	
☐	Employee's response documented and actually considered	
☐	Appeal/grievance rights stated in the decision letter	

**Part 4 — Consistency Review**

Prior comparable case	Department	Outcome	Distinction, if outcomes differ

Part 5 — Public Scrutiny Readiness

Ready	Scrutiny test	Notes
☐	This record survives a Public Information Act request as written	
☐	The reasoning would sound fair read aloud at a council meeting	
☐	Manager/administrator briefed before action (no surprises upward)	
☐	Media-attention plan if the matter is newsworthy	
☐	Confidential content (medical, protected) separated per records rules	

Part 6 — Decision and File

Decision and effective date	
Reasoning in two or three sentences (behavior, policy, evidence — not conclusions)	
Documentation file location (investigation, notices, response, this record)	
Appeal filed? Outcome?	

Role	Name / signature	Date
Decision authority		
HR review		
Legal review (where required)		

STOP AND REVIEW BEFORE ACTING

If any statement below is true, pause. Get the decision reviewed by HR, counsel, or Faulkner HR Solutions before you act.

- ☐ A council member is pushing for a specific outcome on a specific employee.
- ☐ The employee has civil service or contract rights and no pre-decision hearing is planned.
- ☐ The last comparable case ended differently and nobody can articulate why.
- ☐ The decision letter is being drafted before the employee's response was heard.
- ☐ The file contains opinions about the employee rather than documented facts.
- ☐ Someone suggested handling it quietly 'to keep it out of the papers.'

MINIMUM DOCUMENTATION STANDARD

Before this file is closed, the employer should be able to answer every question below and point to where the proof lives.

Question	Your answer / where the proof is stored
What happened?	
When did it happen?	
Who observed or reported it?	
What policy, standard, deadline, or expectation applies?	
What decision was made?	
Who had authority to make the decision?	
What alternatives were considered?	
What risk was reviewed?	
What follow-up is required?	
Where is the proof stored?	

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Skipping the pre-decision hearing where a property interest exists — the reversal is automatic and expensive.
2. Letting political pressure pick the outcome and papering it afterward.
3. Treating each department's discipline as its own universe until an appeal compares them.
4. Writing decision letters full of conclusions ('unprofessional') instead of facts.
5. Forgetting the file will be read by the employee's attorney, the council, and possibly the public.



6. Failing to state appeal rights, which restarts clocks and invalidates timelines.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Issue the decision with appeal rights stated, file this record with the complete documentation set, and calendar any appeal deadlines. If the matter is newsworthy or council-sensitive, brief upward the same day — the decision should never travel faster than the briefing.

Before you terminate, deduct, discipline, classify, or respond, get the decision reviewed.

Call 210.446.8730 or email thomas@faulknerhrsolutions.info.



Public-sector HR decisions have to survive more than internal disagreement. They have to survive records requests, council questions, budget scrutiny, and public trust.

Need help applying this to a real workplace decision?

Faulkner HR Solutions helps Texas employers, nonprofits, municipalities, and growing businesses fix the people systems behind recurring workplace problems.

If this document raised a risk flag, do not guess your way through the next step.

Call: 210.446.8730

Email: thomas@faulknerhrsolutions.info

Website: faulknerhrsolutions.info

DISCLAIMER

This resource is provided for general employer education and planning purposes. It is not legal advice and does not create an attorney-client relationship. Employment laws, agency guidance, and local requirements may change. Employers should review the facts of each situation before acting and consult appropriate HR or legal counsel when needed.