

**SECTION 9.15 EMPLOYEE INITIATED DISCUSSION**  
**Last Update: 2/06**

When an employee has a problem that he/she wishes to discuss with you, consider the following steps that can help with the discussion.

1. Recognize the employee's need to discuss the problem.
2. Schedule an appointment to meet with the employee as soon as possible. Take time to think about the employee's work performance and determine if a problem exists in that area.
  - Respect the employee's confidentiality (see Section 9.35).
  - Be sure the place chosen for the conference is quiet and private.
3. Have the employee state the problem.
  - Be a good listener; try not to give advice.
  - Be sure you understand what the problem is from the employee's perspective.
  - Do not try to solve the problem for the employee.
4. Help the employee identify ways to deal with the problem. Brainstorm solutions together. Then help the employee evaluate solutions.
5. There are some problems that employees will want to discuss that are not work-related but are personal, such as family problems. In those cases, simply be a good listener and remind the employee of the EAP.
6. If it is a problem that you cannot help with, inform the employee of this. Suggest that he/she call the EAP or the personnel officer for outside assistance.
7. Even if the problem was solved in one meeting, have a follow-up discussion with the employee. Check the employee's progress or determine if the employee is no longer interested in pursuing the issue. If there is a performance-related issue and the employee has failed to show improvement, continued assistance will be necessary.
8. Sometimes people simply need to have someone listen to their problem and then they can solve it themselves.
9. If the problem involves another employee, it is best to discuss the problem all together, if possible.