

At your first meeting with the responding party, before you begin any questioning or information gatherings, it is important to go over the basics - even if they received all the policies and procedures in writing ahead of the meeting. In order to both build rapport and maintain a fair and equitable process, it is important that all parties are aware of what will happen and what their options are. Be sure to include the following:

- Describe the incident being discussed.
- Make sure they know they can have an advisor present.
- Explain the investigation process.
- Explain your role in the process.
- Discuss their rights and responsibilities. Make sure they know they have the right to:
 - Know any specific allegations made against them
 - The opportunity to present information, evidence, or witnesses as part of the investigation
 - Refuse to answer questions or to make statements although they do still have to participate in the process
 - Review and respond to any evidence gathered as well as the investigation report;
 - Pose questions to others involved in the process
 - Be presumed not responsible for the conduct until a determination is made following a hearing.
- Clarify the standard of evidence used to determine responsibility for a policy violation.
- Discuss the possible disciplinary sanctions and remedies.

Only after they have a clear understanding of these things should you begin questioning and information gathering.

