



MANITOBA TRUCKING ASSOCIATION

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# CONFLICT RESOLUTION TIPS FOR TRUCKING MANAGERS: MEDIATING EMPLOYEE DISPUTES

In the trucking industry, where long hours and tight deadlines are common, conflicts between employees can arise. Whether it's a disagreement over routes, scheduling issues, or communication breakdowns, unresolved disputes can disrupt operations and damage morale. As a manager of employees, handling these conflicts effectively is key to maintaining a smooth and productive workplace. Here's a step-by-step approach to resolving disputes.

## *Address the Conflict Quickly and Privately*

Ignoring conflict only makes it worse. As soon as you become aware of a disagreement, take action. Prompt intervention prevents small issues from escalating and affecting team dynamics.

Start by scheduling private, one-on-one meetings with each person involved. This allows employees to share their perspective without the pressure of the other party being present. Choose a neutral and confidential space to have these conversations.

Example: If two drivers are arguing over route assignments, meet with each one privately after their shifts to understand the issue fully.



## *Listen to Each Person's Perspective*

When meeting individually, let each employee explain their side of the story. Listen actively without making assumptions. Your goal is to gather information and understand how the conflict is affecting both parties.

Use open-ended questions to encourage detailed responses:

- "Can you walk me through what happened from your perspective?"
- "How has this situation impacted your work?"
- "What would you like to see as a fair resolution?"

Taking the time to listen shows employees you value their input and are committed to a fair process.

## *Identify Common Ground*

After meeting with both parties, identify areas where their concerns overlap. Are they both frustrated by unclear communication? Is there a misunderstanding that can be easily clarified? Finding common ground helps shift the focus from blame to problem-solving.

## *Bring the Employees Together*

Once you've heard both sides and identified key issues, schedule a joint meeting. Set the tone by emphasizing that the goal is to find a solution—not to place blame.

In this meeting:

- Summarize what you've heard from each person.
- Highlight shared concerns or goals.
- Encourage respectful communication.

Guide the conversation toward practical solutions. Allow both parties to propose ideas and collaborate on an agreement.

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If company policies apply to the situation, review them to ensure everyone is on the same page. Consistency is crucial for fair and effective conflict resolution.

Example: If dispatchers and drivers are struggling with unclear instructions, implement a standardized communication process that meets both groups' needs.

### ***Document the Agreement***

After the meeting, document the discussion and the agreed-upon solution. Include:

- A summary of the issue.
- The steps both parties will take moving forward.
- Any follow-up actions or deadlines.

Providing a written record helps prevent future misunderstandings and reinforces accountability.



### ***Follow Up***

Check in with both employees a few weeks later to ensure the solution is working. This follow-up shows you are committed to maintaining a positive work environment and allows you to address any lingering issues.

### ***Conclusion***

By meeting with employees individually before bringing them together, you create a fair and structured process for resolving disputes. This approach allows everyone to feel heard, encourages collaborative problem-solving, and helps maintain a productive and harmonious workplace in your trucking company.

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