

## What Is a Grievance?

**Definition:** A grievance is any unjust action, practice or condition committed by management. It is a statement that an employer, or someone acting on behalf of an employer, has violated a worker's rights that have been agreed to under the contract, or through legislation, or through the employer's past practice, or through the employer failing to meet management rules or responsibilities, or through lack of fair treatment.

The following are examples of grievances:

1. **Violations of the contract**  
These are grievances which are violations of the contract. They include such matters as seniority, hours of work, staffing, wages, working conditions, holidays and vacations, and disciplinary action without just cause.
2. **Violations of past practice**  
No contract can cover every practice on the job. A practice that has been in place for an extended period of time and is accepted by both parties either explicitly (orally or in writing) or implicitly (neither side has ever objected) may be the basis for a grievance if it is violated.
3. **Violation of fair treatment**  
There doesn't have to be a contract clause covering a supervisor's assaults or abuse of employees to make it possible to grieve this kind of violation. Discrimination and workers' rights covers a broad range of incidents or practices. Management cannot legally discriminate on the basis of race, gender, age, nationality, religion, or union activity.
4. **Violation of the law**  
Laws written to protect workers are implicitly part of the contract, and violation of municipal, state, or federal laws can constitute a grievance.
5. **Management's violation of rules or responsibilities**  
Management has the responsibility to provide safe and healthy working conditions. Likewise, management has a right to certain policies under the contract. If management fails to fulfill its responsibilities or violates its own policies, it may be necessary to file a grievance.