



Ohio Revised Code

Section 124.34 Reduction in pay or position - suspension - removal.

Effective: September 29, 2023

Legislation: Senate Bill 21, House Bill 33

(A) The tenure of every officer or employee in the classified service of the state and the counties, civil service townships, cities, city health districts, general health districts, and city school districts of the state, holding a position under this chapter, shall be during good behavior and efficient service. No officer or employee shall be reduced in pay or position, fined, suspended, or removed, or have the officer's or employee's longevity reduced or eliminated, except as provided in section 124.32 of the Revised Code, and for incompetency, inefficiency, unsatisfactory performance, dishonesty, drunkenness, immoral conduct, insubordination, discourteous treatment of the public, neglect of duty, violation of any policy or work rule of the officer's or employee's appointing authority, violation of this chapter or the rules of the director of administrative services or the commission, any other failure of good behavior, any other acts of misfeasance, malfeasance, or nonfeasance in office, or conviction of a felony while employed in the civil service. The denial of a one-time pay supplement or a bonus to an officer or employee is not a reduction in pay for purposes of this section.

This section does not apply to any modifications or reductions in pay or work week authorized by section 124.392, 124.393, or 124.394 of the Revised Code.

An appointing authority may require an employee who is suspended to report to work to serve the suspension. An employee serving a suspension in this manner shall continue to be compensated at the employee's regular rate of pay for hours worked. The disciplinary action shall be recorded in the employee's personnel file in the same manner as other disciplinary actions and has the same effect as a suspension without pay for the purpose of recording disciplinary actions.

A finding by the appropriate ethics commission, based upon a preponderance of the evidence, that the facts alleged in a complaint under section 102.06 of the Revised Code constitute a violation of Chapter 102., section 2921.42, or section 2921.43 of the Revised Code may constitute grounds for dismissal. Failure to file a statement or falsely filing a statement required by section 102.02 of the Revised Code may also constitute grounds for dismissal. The tenure of an employee in the career



professional service of the department of transportation is subject to section 5501.20 of the Revised Code.

Conviction of a felony while employed in the civil service is a separate basis for reducing in pay or position, suspending, or removing an officer or employee, even if the officer or employee has already been reduced in pay or position, suspended, or removed for the same conduct that is the basis of the felony. An officer or employee may not appeal to the state personnel board of review or the commission any disciplinary action taken by an appointing authority as a result of the officer's or employee's conviction of a felony. If an officer or employee removed under this section is reinstated as a result of an appeal of the removal, any conviction of a felony that occurs during the pendency of the appeal is a basis for further disciplinary action under this section upon the officer's or employee's reinstatement.

A person convicted of a felony while employed in the civil service immediately forfeits the person's status as a classified employee in any public employment on and after the date of the conviction for the felony. If an officer or employee is removed under this section as a result of being convicted of a felony or is subsequently convicted of a felony that involves the same conduct that was the basis for the removal, the officer or employee is barred from receiving any compensation after the removal notwithstanding any modification or disaffirmance of the removal, unless the conviction for the felony is subsequently reversed or annulled.

Any person removed for conviction of a felony is entitled to a cash payment for any accrued but unused sick, personal, and vacation leave as authorized by law. If subsequently reemployed in the public sector, the person shall qualify for and accrue these forms of leave in the manner specified by law for a newly appointed employee and shall not be credited with prior public service for the purpose of receiving these forms of leave.

As used in this division, "felony" means any of the following:

- (1) A felony that is an offense of violence as defined in section 2901.01 of the Revised Code;
- (2) A felony that is a felony drug abuse offense as defined in section 2925.01 of the Revised Code;



(3) A felony under the laws of this or any other state or the United States that is a crime of moral turpitude;

(4) A felony involving dishonesty, fraud, or theft;

(5) A felony that is a violation of section 2921.05, 2921.32, or 2921.42 of the Revised Code.

(B) In case of a reduction, a suspension of more than forty work hours in the case of an employee exempt from the payment of overtime compensation, a suspension of more than twenty-four work hours in the case of an employee required to be paid overtime compensation, a fine of more than forty hours' pay in the case of an employee exempt from the payment of overtime compensation, a fine of more than twenty-four hours' pay in the case of an employee required to be paid overtime compensation, or removal, except for the reduction or removal of a probationary employee, the appointing authority shall serve the employee with a copy of the order of reduction, fine, suspension, or removal, which order shall state the reasons for the action.

Within ten days following the date on which the order is served or, in the case of an employee in the career professional service of the department of transportation, within ten days following the filing of a removal order, the employee, except as otherwise provided in this section, may file an appeal of the order in writing with the state personnel board of review or the commission. For purposes of this section, the date on which an order is served is the date of hand delivery of the order or the date of delivery of the order by certified United States mail, whichever occurs first. If an appeal is filed, the board or commission shall forthwith notify the appointing authority and shall hear, or appoint a trial board to hear, the appeal within thirty days from and after its filing with the board or commission. The board, commission, or trial board may affirm, disaffirm, or modify the judgment of the appointing authority. However, in an appeal of a removal order based upon a violation of a last chance agreement, the board, commission, or trial board may only determine if the employee violated the agreement and thus affirm or disaffirm the judgment of the appointing authority.

In cases of removal or reduction in pay for disciplinary reasons, either the appointing authority or the officer or employee may appeal from the decision of the state personnel board of review or the commission, and any such appeal shall be to the court of common pleas in accordance with section 119.12 of the Revised Code.



(C) In the case of the suspension for any period of time, or a fine, demotion, or removal, of a chief of police, a chief of a fire department, or any member of the police or fire department of a city or civil service township, who is in the classified civil service, the appointing authority shall furnish the chief or member with a copy of the order of suspension, fine, demotion, or removal, which order shall state the reasons for the action. The order shall be filed with the municipal or civil service township civil service commission. Within ten days following the filing of the order, the chief or member may file an appeal, in writing, with the commission. If an appeal is filed, the commission shall forthwith notify the appointing authority and shall hear, or appoint a trial board to hear, the appeal within thirty days from and after its filing with the commission, and it may affirm, disaffirm, or modify the judgment of the appointing authority. An appeal on questions of law and fact may be had from the decision of the commission to the court of common pleas in the county in which the city or civil service township is situated. The appeal shall be taken within thirty days from the finding of the commission.

(D) A violation of division (A)(7) of section 2907.03 of the Revised Code is grounds for termination of employment of a nonteaching employee under this section.

(E) The director shall adopt a rule in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code to define the term "unsatisfactory performance" as it is used in this section with regard to employees in the service of the state.

(F) As used in this section, "last chance agreement" means an agreement signed by both an appointing authority and an officer or employee of the appointing authority that describes the type of behavior or circumstances that, if it occurs, will automatically lead to removal of the officer or employee without the right of appeal to the state personnel board of review or the appropriate commission.