



AHK

Deutsch-Singapurische
Industrie- und Handelskammer
Singaporean-German Chamber
of Industry and Commerce



What you need to know about Grievance Handling

About the Speaker: Sebastian Blasius



Attorney-at-law (Germany)



Foreign Lawyer (Singapore)



Almost a decade of experience in Singapore



Corporate Law, Employment Law, Immigration Law, General Business Law, Compliance



Agenda

- The Basics Of Grievance Handling
- What Are Grievances?
- What Is Required Under the Workplace Fairness Act?
- The Inquiry Process
- The Review Process
- Other Points That Should Be Included in the Policy
- What Businesses Should Do Now

The Basics of Grievance Handling

- Grievances are grievances, allegations or complaints by an employee in relation to feelings of discontent or unfairness at work or at the workplace.
- A Grievance Handling Policy (**“Policy”**) is a policy which sets out a process
 - for employees to bring their Grievances to the employer’s attention, and
 - for the employer to handle such Grievances.
- Regulatory requirements for the implementation of a Policy:
 - Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices.
 - Workplace Fairness Act 2025.
- Practical argument for the implementation of a Policy: harmonious workplace.

What Are Grievances? (1/2)

- *General Comments* -

- Grievances may be felt by an individual employee or a group of employees.
- Grievances may concern all workplace-related topics and behaviours, e.g.,
 - the employer's practices and policies such as leave management, work practices and hiring practices (or a violation of such practices and policies),
 - job descriptions, job duties, functions and activities,
 - favouritism,
 - performance evaluations, and
 - promotions and demotions.

What Are Grievances? (2/2)

– *Categories under the WFA* –

Discrimination:

- Any discrimination by the employer based on characteristics such as age, nationality, sex, marital status, pregnancy, caregiving responsibilities, race, religion, language ability, disability, mental health condition.

Harassment:

- Any harassment by the employer or by another employee of the employer.
- Harassment can especially be caused by
 - threatening, abusive or insulting words, behaviour or communication,
 - publishing any identity information of an employee or a person related to the employee,
 - by any other actions that cause or are intended to cause alarm or distress (e.g., cyber bullying or sexual harassment).

What Is Required Under the Workplace Fairness Act?

- (1) An employer must develop a process under which the employer commits in writing to —
 - (a) **inquiring** into each grievance in a stated manner,
 - (b) **reviewing** each grievance in a stated manner,
 - (c) **informing** the employee who has raised a grievance of the outcome of the review,
 - (d) keeping a **written record** of every inquiry and review, and
 - (e) keeping the identity of employee, inquiry and review **confidential** (unless disclosure is reasonably necessary).

- (2) An employer must **inform** all its employees in writing of the process mentioned in subsection (1).

The Inquiry Process

- Policy Requirement: employer to commit to “*inquiring, in a stated manner, into each grievance raised by an employee to the employer*”
- Suggestions for Inquiry Process:
 - Confirm the receipt of the Grievance to the employee who raised the Grievance.
 - Conduct an initial Grievance handling session to get the complete picture and to ascertain the underlying facts.
 - Conduct such additional reasonable investigations as deemed necessary to fully understand the Grievance (important: obtain confidentiality!).
 - Document everything.

The Review Process

- Policy Requirement: employer to commit to “*reviewing, in a stated manner, each grievance raised by an employee to the employer*”
- Suggestions for Review Process:
 - Review the Grievance independently and objectively.
 - Develop appropriate steps to bring the Grievance to a solution which is fair to all parties involved, i.e., the aggrieved employee, other employees involved (if any), and the employer.
 - Conduct a second grievance handling session to discuss these steps.
 - If no solution can be found, advise aggrieved employee on further available options.
 - Document everything.

Other Points That Should Be Included in the Policy (1/3)

- How shall a Grievance be raised?
 - As soon as possible.
 - Verbally or in writing and on-site in the office or remotely.
 - Encourage employees to use a “Grievance Lodgement Form”.
- To whom shall a Grievance be raised?
 - Define Grievance handlers of different levels.
 - Set out that employee shall generally raise his Grievance to the grievance handler of the lowest level possible.
 - Set out when a Grievance can be brought to the next level.

Other Points That Should Be Included in the Policy (2/3)

- Grievance handler's approach, e.g.,
 - adopt a problem-solving attitude;
 - practice active listening;
 - keep the discussion focused on the main issue; and
 - highlight necessity of compromise (where appropriate).
- Response times
- Employees responsibility, e.g.,
 - collaborative and cooperative attitude;
 - speak respectfully about the employer/management/colleagues; and
 - stay engaged in his duties.

Other Points That Should Be Included in the Policy (3/3)

- Information for Grievance handler on
 - how to keep records of inquiry, and review process, and
 - how to inform stakeholders.
- Grievance lodgement and Grievance handling forms.

What Businesses Should Do Now

- Make yourself familiar with requirements under the Workplace Fairness Act and under the Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices.
- Review the resources provided by TAFEP (see next slide).
- Develop a Grievance Handling process/Policy.
- Inform employees in writing about Grievance handling process/Policy.
- Train Grievance handlers on the Grievance handling process/Policy.



Got questions?

Contact Us!

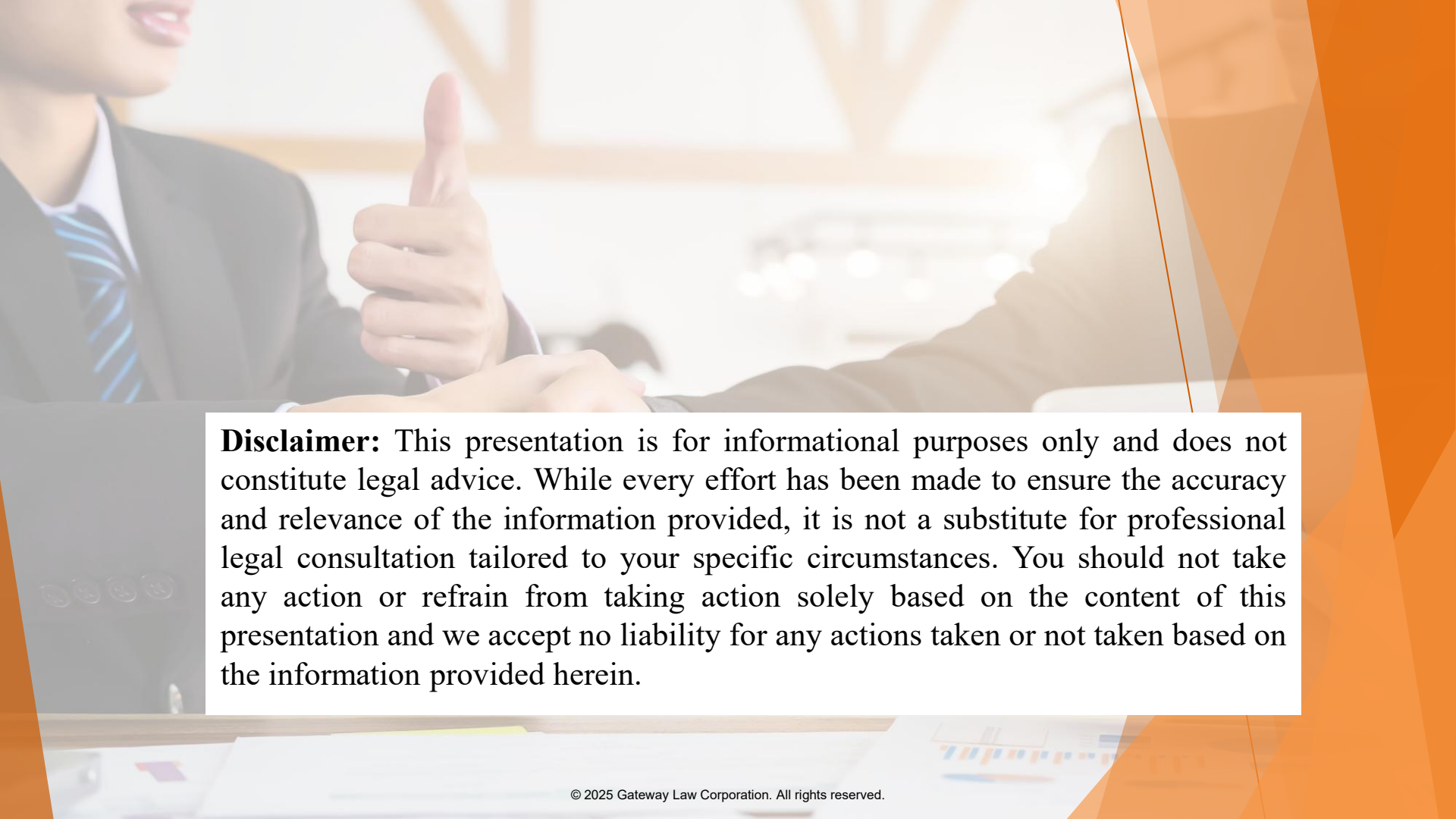


+65 8902 8272



Sebastian.Blasius@Gateway-Law.com



A person in a dark suit and blue striped tie is giving a thumbs up gesture. The background is a bright, out-of-focus office interior with wooden beams and large windows. The image has a semi-transparent orange overlay on the right side.

Disclaimer: This presentation is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the information provided, it is not a substitute for professional legal consultation tailored to your specific circumstances. You should not take any action or refrain from taking action solely based on the content of this presentation and we accept no liability for any actions taken or not taken based on the information provided herein.