

## Modules 3: Officers

# - Rebuking Officers

What happens when an officer is way out of line in something they've said or done? How do you deal with it while attempting to maintain your relationship with your officer? This is one of the least enjoyable tasks as a guild master and I sincerely hope that you won't have to deal with it often, if ever.

There are several reasons you might have to sit down and have a chat with an officer. We'll focus on four of the more common reasons.

### 1) Poor performance.

As mentioned above, one of the important assets of your officers is that they are good players. That's not to say that they never screw up, but it means that they can continue doing their in-game job (damage, healing, tanking) as well as handling other tasks related to the raid (or BG or what-have-you) pretty consistently.

Sometimes, an officer will have trouble doing a new task in your guild event. Let's say that Player A has been amazing at calling for people to get to a certain node in a rated battleground version of Arathi Basin. This player has got a clear grasp of which nodes are able to be defended (or attacked) and has a good idea of where everyone is and what the opposing team is planning. Having them do the same sort of thing in a capture-the-flag game, such as Warsong Gulch, may not have good results, because it's a different format of the game. Being able to orchestrate the offense, midfield or defense is a very different set of skills from being able to allocate resources on a node-based map.

If Player A is asked to take on that *new*, additional duty and doesn't do well, then just find someone else to do it. This kind of poor performance should not reflect poorly on your officer because it's just something that they're not comfortable in doing and it's not been a requirement to be an officer thus far. (Unless it is, in which

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case, you shouldn't have promoted them to officer without knowing how they'd do in that area.)

However, if Player A's overall raid or PVP performance takes a sudden dip that they don't seem to be able to overcome after a few days, it's time for a chat. Here's a template for you to use, that you can edit to make more sense for your situation.

Hey (name),

I've noticed that recently, you've been having some problems with regards to your performance in (raids/BGs/RBGs/arenas/challenge modes/etc). Is there anything going on that I should know about? Are there external problems affecting you, like lag or framerate issues? Is "real life" causing problems?

Please let me know what's going on so we can figure out what to do about it, together. :)

(name)

Normally, in talking to guild members, I recommend using the royal "we", since you're the guild master and you're contacting guildies *on behalf* of the officers. However, in talking to an officer in a one-on-one scenario, you want to make sure you use "I" and "me", to help ensure the officer knows that you're a human being and feels as though you, personally, are offering to help them. The major problem a lot of people have when approaching someone who is underperforming is that they approach them either angrily or with a lot of frustration. The key is to do it in a way that allows the individual to know you're there to *help*, not to judge or criticize.

Once they respond, you can tackle the problem(s) together. You'll have to make a judgement at one point to see if the situation is salvageable or if you'll have to cut them loose, but we'll touch on that later.

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### **2) Unacceptable behaviour.**

This needs to be nipped in the bud. If your guild's policies state that everyone should be treated with respect and one of your officers starts attacking someone else, you have to shut that down immediately. If you're online at the same time, here's the best way to deal with it:

In guild/public: Okay, that's enough, everyone. Knock it off, please.  
To the attacked: I'm so sorry about that, I'm about to speak with (officer) about that behaviour. It's not reflective of how we want people in our guild to behave.

To the attacking officer: Not cool. You are an officer and you have standards to uphold. Now, do you want to tell me what happened?

If it continues in guild/public, be more authoritative: "GUYS. I said KNOCK IT OFF and I meant it. Stop right now."

To the attacked: Please drop it immediately so I can deal with this.

To the attacker: Seriously, I said to drop it. Let's discuss what happened.

At this point, you should be able to talk to the officer and figure out what the issue is and come to some kind of decision on it. If things are still ongoing, go into the settings and remove people's ability to speak in guild chat or, if you're in a raid, remove them from the raid for being disruptive.

### **3) Loss of interest, lack of interaction, unhappiness.**

Sometimes, your officers will just lose their interest in what your guild is doing. Maybe they have all the loot they originally wanted and don't care any longer. Maybe they've achieved all they wanted to achieve and are bored. Maybe real life is causing issues. Maybe they've just become disenchanted with the game. The good news is that if this is happening, you will usually see it coming. Some warning signs include, but are not limited to: being late to events, not following up on their assigned tasks, complaining more than usual, being in a bad mood more frequently and their overall performance dropping.

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The way I'd handle this is with a note. (I do that a lot.)

Hey (name),

I just wanted to touch base with you and see what was going on. I've noticed that you've been (late, grumpy, etc) lately and wondered what, if anything, I can do to help.

Let me know!

(name)

This is similar to the last template, but points out the *specific things* that have been problematic without going into detail about performance issues, even if they exist. If many or all of these things are happening, chances are it's not just a performance issue, it's an unhappiness issue or it's a loss of interest.

### **4) Absence.**

Sometimes, officers will fall off the face of the planet. (So can guild masters – don't be one of those!) The best way to deal with this is to reach out as soon as you've noticed they've missed an event they had previously mentioned they'd attend.

Hi (name),

You were signed up as accepted for the (event) on (day, date), but were a no-show.

Happily, we didn't have to cancel the (event), but not showing up without letting us know is unacceptable unless there's an emergency. / Sadly, due to your unexplained absence, we had to cancel the (event).

I hope everything's okay, so please check in and let me know what's up. I'm a little concerned since you didn't even (tweet, email, private message) me to let me know you'd be late/miss

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the raid/etc.

Let me know what's up,

(name)

If they respond, that's great. You can open a dialogue with them about their absence. Maybe it really was an emergency or something. If they don't respond, give them 48 hours and then follow up with something like this:

Hi (name),

I'm concerned that I haven't heard back from you since I last sent you a note, two days ago. I haven't seen you on the forums or in-game, either. I hope everything's okay. Please get back to me as soon as you can to let me know what's going on.

Thanks,

(name)

If they respond, also great, open a dialogue as you would with the previous case. If there's still nothing, here's what your third note should say, two days after being sent.

Hi (name),

I'm going to assume that there's something preventing you from getting word to us about your situation. I really do hope everything's okay with you, but unless I hear back from you by (date – three days from the sending of this note), I'm afraid we're going to have to demote and potentially replace you in order to ensure the overall success of the guild.

I know that, if things are crazy for you, a game isn't on your list of top priorities and I totally understand that. If you need to step away, by all means let me know, but if things are too hectic to drop me a line, I know it must be serious.

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Hope to hear from you soon and that you're okay,

(name)

Then if you hear back, great, open the dialogue as above. If you don't hear back, here's what you can write:

Hi (name),

Well, it's been a full week since I first tried contacting you and I still haven't heard back and there's been no sign of you online. I have to assume that real life issues have cropped up. As such, I'm going to have to demote you to ensure the guild can continue moving forward. You are, of course, welcome to remain in the guild as a (insert rank here) for as long as you like. When things settle down for you, you're welcome to apply again to be a regular (raider/PVPer/etc). That said, I sincerely hope everything's okay and that we'll see you online again soon.

(name)