

Your Decision Making Boundaries

This assignment has two parts. The first part requires that you to assess your level of authority and your decision making boundaries. The second part is to meet with your supervisor to confirm and clarify these boundaries.

Levels of Authority

Power is your ability to act. Authority is the permission granted to you to take specific actions. The organization and your supervisor grant you permission to take action on certain matters and not on others. Below is a breakdown of levels of authority.

A	You have full authority to act. You decide what to do and how to do it given organizational and system parameters and resources. You should know the parameters so that you can make sound decisions that are organizationally appropriate. Example: As operations manager, you have the authority to order janitorial supplies as needed within the available budget.
B	You have authority to act, but you must report on the action taken as soon as possible. Certain matters regarding personnel, facility safety, or for critical activities require immediate action, but have consequences that defer to higher authorities in the organization. Example: As operations manager, you have authority to immediately clean up a chemical spill, but should report the incident afterward.
C	You must get permission and guidance to act before acting. Example: You must discuss employee disciplinary actions with your supervisory or with designated staff in personnel before taking action.

Review your job description and rate your level of authority for each job duty. On the following page is a form based on the table below. In the column titled "Duty," write a brief phrase that describes the duty. In the "Level of Authority" column, write "A," "B," or "C" to correspond with your level of authority for that duty.

Duty:	Level of Authority

Once you have completed the form, you should schedule an appointment with your supervisor to review your understanding and to clarify any gray areas. You should also find out the parameters for making decisions in those situations where you have either "A" or "B" level authority.

