



Terminating Employees: Top 10 Tips

1. Do not make “snap” or “knee-jerk” decisions to fire an employee. Even if the employee has committed a serious offense, immediately suspend (rather than fire) the employee first. Then, evaluate the situation and when appropriate, make the decision to terminate.
2. Investigate the facts **FIRST** before firing the employee. Too many employers rely upon what later turns out to be unfounded assumptions about why they decided to fire the employee.
3. Review the personnel file of the employee before termination. Does the file support the termination decision?
4. Review your written policies and revise them if needed. Many employers have outdated policies that no longer reflect how the employer handles the termination, discipline or evaluation of its employees.
5. Draft appropriate policies if you don't have any. Having a formalized procedure in place will help ensure that terminations are handled consistently and not haphazardly.
6. Treat the employee respectfully during the termination process. Employees who feel they are being treated callously are more likely to want to do something about it.
7. Think about how other employees in similar circumstances were treated. If employees are normally not fired under such circumstances, then why are you firing this particular employee?
8. Document performance problems with the employee as they occur. An employee who is consistently told that there are problems in his or her performance later will not be shocked if they are let go.
9. Train your employees on personnel issues, especially managers and supervisors. There are now abundant resources available to help employers train their employees on topics such as sexual harassment.
10. Don't be afraid to contact an attorney to seek legal advice before terminating the employee. Many employers avoid legal advice to save costs – only to find that they have bought into an even more expensive lawsuit by a former employee.

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