



Ward & Uptigrove
Human Resources Solutions



Termination Meeting Tips

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Termination Meeting Tips

About this Tool:

This tool is intended to help employers plan a meeting for an employment termination. Employee terminations are highly emotional situations. This tool will help you consider practical ways to plan the meeting and prioritize the employee's dignity, privacy and confidentiality and avoid doing damage that may be costly to rectify.

When to Use this Tool:

We recommend that you reference this tool whenever you are planning an employee termination.

How We Can Help:


- Help you be objective about a termination decision
- Potentially avoid termination altogether by getting the employee back on track
- Assess the risks associated with a termination decision
- Ensure the employee is treated fairly and in compliance with legislation
- Reduce potential costs
 - Help you save up to two years of pay in termination costs
 - Other monetary damages to the employee
- Help you prepare documentation including disciplinary warnings, performance improvement plans, termination letters, termination pay calculations, letter of reference, Record of Employment
- Prepare you for the meeting including what to say and how to say it
- Help you conduct the termination meeting to minimize risks of damage
- Sort out how to collect company property in a safe and legal manner
- Help you communicate effectively with staff, the public and other key stakeholders about the employment termination considering legal privacy obligations
- Protect your business from competition and solicitation of your customers



How to Contact Us:

For further discussion or assistance, please reach out to:

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Disclaimer:

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Termination Meeting Tips

General Considerations

- If you were being terminated, how would you like the situation to be handled? **Professionally. In good faith. Respectfully.**
- Maintain strict confidence. No one, internally or externally, should be informed of the termination. Employees have a legal right to privacy related to employment.
- Reduce stress and embarrassment for the employee.
- Avoid costly lawsuits and wrongful dismissal claims. Seek legal or HR guidance to assess risks.

Before the Meeting

- Confirm compliance with legislation, employment standards, and any contractual obligations.
- Disable employee's access to sensitive systems before or during the meeting (e.g., email, CRM, databases, key FOBs, remote access, digital authenticators, banking). Change door codes and locks as necessary.
- Determine if the employee owes the business any funds (e.g., pay advances, vacation overpay, tuition).
- Calculate owed severance pay, vacation pay, and benefits continuation. Prepare termination package including letter, full and final release, reference letter.
- Select meeting location to promote utmost privacy
 - Schedule the meeting at a time when minimal staff and customers are present
 - Secure a private location to ensure no interruptions
 - Provide access to drinking water, tissues, etc. in the room
 - Ensure there is a way for the employee to exit the workplace within minimal observers
 - Consider an off-site location if there is no privacy in your workplace
- Consider how the employee will react and if there is risk of violence. Do not put yourself or staff in an unsafe situation. Consider safe meeting spaces such as a public place or virtual meeting. Contact the police in advance for particularly volatile employee.
- Decide if suitable to give the employee notice of meeting and provide a reason, time and place. Blindsiding an employee can do unnecessary harm.
- Avoid scheduling the meeting on a Friday so the employee can seek legal advice and/or counselling.
- Ensure you do not schedule the meeting on a special personal event such as a birthday or work anniversary. Check the personnel file.
- Consider inviting an HR professional or another 3rd party individual to document the meeting.
- Decide if it is appropriate to allow the employee to collect their own personal belongings from their workstation after the meeting.
- Generate a list of passwords and company property in the employee's possession (e.g., keys, fobs, documents, credit cards, phones, laptops, tools, vehicles). Consider the items the employee may have at home, and how these items should be collected.
- Determine how much information to give the employee regarding the reason for the termination. In some situations, providing the rationale can mitigate legal risks. For "without cause" terminations, it may be most appropriate to give minimal information.
- Prepare a script ahead of time and gather all relevant information.

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During the Meeting

- Keep the meeting short, no more than 15 minutes.
- Avoid judgmental or emotionally charged language. Keep the tone calm and factual.
- Get to the point, ensure the message is clear, that the decision is final and NOT open to debate.
- Say the words “Your employment with the company is being terminated...” to ensure clarity.
- Take notes to document the meeting for internal and legal purposes.
- Prepare for a mix of emotions including shock, outrage, hurt, panic, and anxiety. Ensure the employee is able to hear and understand the conversation. If they are visibly shaken and/or unwilling/unable to listen, give them a few moments to collect themselves. Consider leaving the room for up to five minutes.
- If they are unable to collect themselves, provide them with the termination documents and end the meeting.
 - Do not allow an angry or upset employee to return to their work area while staff or customers are present.
- Do not engage discussion regarding poor performance or attitude-related issues.
- Remind of the requirement to keep the meeting and termination details confidential.
- Consider giving the employee a choice regarding the announcement of their exit.
- Arrange for the return of company property in their possession.
- Return the employee’s personal belongings:
 - Have items collected and brought to the meeting room
 - Allow them to collect their belongings if they can do so privately and safely
 - Allow them to return at a later time to pick up their items
 - Ship the items to their home address
- It is not advisable to allow the terminated employee to say goodbye to colleagues. Suggest connecting with work friends outside of working hours.
- Provide employee support resources if available.
- Provide your contact information for any follow-up questions after the meeting.
- Conclude by thanking them for their contributions to the organization and wish them the best in future endeavours. Avoid apologizing or saying something inappropriate. Less is more.
- Provide safe transportation home if they are unable to drive.

After the Meeting

- Plan for an announcement to all staff as soon as possible following the termination meeting. Consider a staff meeting, employee-wide email, or other means of communication.
 - Be prepared to reassure remaining staff to maintain morale.
- Announcements should NEVER indicate a termination. State the employee is “no longer with the company.”
- Determine if the end of the employment relationship should be announced to the public or key stakeholders.
- Remove the employee from your website, company directories, etc.

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- Update the terminated employee's voicemail.
- Forward their emails or set an out of office message.
- Consider the need for a follow-up call or email to check if the employee has questions about their termination package.