



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Deputy Secretaries
FROM: Randy Greene, COO
SUBJECT: Guidelines for Employee Terminations/Layoffs

DATE: October 16, 2012

Terminating an employee is one of the most difficult steps we as an employer can take, and it should not be taken lightly. Furthermore, layoffs or firings may engender feelings of uncertainty and vulnerability in the workforce. The manager must be prepared for the possibility of an adverse employee reaction, as such news might cause. Therefore, the actions of managers should be to handle the termination in a safe, professional and respectful manner. As with every personnel action, careful documentation of the events and actions leading up to termination as well as a summary of the termination meeting is critical.

Layoffs

I understand that the current State policy is to provide our Career Service employees with 30 working days of notice prior to termination. Generally, this policy can be undertaken with minimal repercussions. However, circumstances may occasionally exist whereby the manager believes it to be in the best interest of the workplace for the employee to serve out their 30-working days off-site but "on call". Should the manager conclude that the integrity of state property (such as files, computers or tools) may be compromised, or that the safety or morale of remaining employees may be adversely affected (such as in the case of multiple layoffs), I recognize that an on-call assignment may be an appropriate solution. Should the terminating manager desire to exercise this kind of discretion, the appropriate Deputy Secretary should be consulted.

The Termination Meeting

Every termination meeting should be planned carefully, and executed quickly and competently. To achieve this, the supervisor should incorporate the following practices as part of our overall termination practice and policy:

- Prior to the meeting, arrange to have the employee's computer access terminated
- Conduct the termination meeting as privately as possible, at either the start or end of the workday. By doing so, an employee's potential embarrassment when later retrieving personal belongings from the work area may be reduced (e.g., fewer employees may be in the work area).
- At least one other member of management should attend the meeting as a witness.
- Keep the meeting brief. Discourage any further or potentially volatile discussion regarding the reason for the termination. The purpose of the meeting is to communicate the message, not to discuss the reasons, or rights and wrongs, behind the decision. Stay focused.
- Remain compassionate, but do not compromise the Department's position by "siding with" the employee.
- Arrange for security to be present.
- Provide information and forms regarding the continuation of group health insurance, unemployment insurance, etc., in order to reduce the need for a former employee to return to the workplace and possibly cause disruption. Contact phone numbers for Personnel should also be provided.
- At the conclusion of the meeting, ask for all DEP issued items, including the employees badge, P-Card, keys (electronic or otherwise), etc.
- Following the meeting, have the employee retrieve his or her personal belongings and immediately leave the premises. In some cases, it may be wise to physically escort the employee to and from the work area.

- If you believe the former employee might damage company property or cause some other disruption in the workplace, have someone escort the former employee to his or her desk to pack up and then escort him or her out. However, this practice should be done on a case-by-case basis.
- Finally, all documentation associated with a termination should be filed in the employee's personnel file. If departmental personnel files are also maintained, they should be kept in a confidential and secure place.