

2016's Top 7 Most Interesting Terminable Incidents



Accountability Matters

During a daily review of video surveillance, a manager was observed vandalizing an elevator wall with a sharp object. When the manager was shown the video, her response was “I do not remember.” The manager was shown the video a second time and, even though the person in the video was unquestionably the manager, the manager continued her claim of “I do not remember.” The manager was terminated for vandalism and for her dishonesty.

Anger Management

An employee told his manager that a machine had been damaged because “an object had dropped on it.” The manager conducted a workplace investigation, which included a review of video surveillance. The video showed the employee punching the machine with his fist, causing it to shatter. The employee was confronted with the video. He admitted that he had punched the machine, along with the excuse, “I was angry.” The employee was terminated for vandalism and for his initial dishonesty.

On Shift Happy Hour

A fast food employer received a complaint from an employee that five team members and the shift manager had been drinking while on the clock. According to the complaint, the six employees had “spiked” their sodas with vodka and were drinking their cocktails throughout the entire shift. A review of video surveillance from that evening showed that all six employees were drinking something, but there was no video evidence of alcohol being added to drinks.

The employer questioned the six employees about the incident. Four of the five team members admitted that they were drinking vodka during work time. The fifth crew member and the shift manager both denied drinking on the job. However, the other four crew members told the employer that all six employees were guilty of consuming alcohol during their shift.

Despite denials from two of the employees, based on the statements of the other four employees the employer determined that all five of the crew members and the shift manager violated company policy by drinking alcoholic beverages on the job. All six employees were terminated.

Food Porn

A female employee filed a complaint that, while on shift, she had witnessed two male employees use parts of a sandwich to fashion fake male genitalia and then post their creation on the social media app Snapchat.

The employer investigated the claim by reviewing the store's video surveillance, which confirmed that the employees had engaged in the misconduct. When confronted with the evidence, the men admitted they were the two employees in the video and tried to excuse their behavior by claiming that they were "just having fun." Both employees were terminated for violating the company's Anti-Harassment Policy.

Sticky Fingers

After conducting a recent audit, an employer discovered over \$19,500 in missing deposits. The employer reviewed all transactional history and determined that the missing deposits occurred only when a certain manager was on duty. When questioned about the missing deposits, the manager stated that he was having "personal issues" and admitted to taking the money. He offered to replace the missing money as soon as he possibly could. The employee was terminated for theft.

That's Dope!

An employee returned from her meal period smelling of marijuana. When questioned by her supervisor, she admitted to smoking marijuana during her break. She apologized, along with the claim, "I thought that I had put on enough perfume to cover up the smell." The employee was terminated for violating the company's drug policy.

Uninvited Guests

A hotel manager was scheduled to work the night shift from 10pm - 7am on Valentine's Day. He did not arrive at the hotel until 11:45pm.

When he arrived, he was not in his uniform and was accompanied by a female companion. Over the proceeding 2 hours, the manager and his companion sat together in the lobby, eating food and at times kissing and caressing each other. At one point, the manager went to the hotel bar and prepared a drink for his companion (without paying for the cocktail). At 1:45am, the companion left the hotel and the manager went into the back office. The manager then left the hotel property at 4:30am (2.5 hours before the scheduled end of his shift).

These misdeeds were uncovered upon a review of surveillance video by the hotel owner. The manager was terminated for violating numerous company policies.

Conclusion

The common factor in the above stories – the employees engaged in outrageous behavior which warranted immediate termination (following the employers' investigations into the misconduct).

In most cases, the termination decision will not be as "clear cut" as those depicted above. As such, it is important to approach the termination decision carefully. Investigate the misconduct, identify the exact policy violation, and determine whether termination is warranted based on the identified circumstances and the company's past practices.

In addition, before terminating any employee, it is critical that you conduct an analysis of any potential "red flags" (e.g. protected class, possible retaliation, recent workers' compensation injury, recent leave of absence, etc.) relating to this employee that can potentially expose you company to a lawsuit.