

“What You Don’t Know Might Hurt You”

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Sage Advice for Managers and Supervisors

If employee relations issues arise, involve human resources to investigate quickly and appropriately.

It is better to have NO policy at all, than to have one and not follow it.

Confidentiality and trust are critical to managing employee relations issues. Managers lose credibility by breaching confidentiality.

Don’t grant favors for one employee unless you’re prepared to do for all.

Collaborating with HR regarding requests for time off is critical. Granting an employee time off for a medical issue may implicate FMLA/ADA.

Third parties may be offended by jokes that others find amusing. Supervisors must get involved in stopping. Supervisors must ensure no retaliation for complaints.

Take time to assess situations. Routinely consult with HR regarding existing policies, appropriate action and past practice.

Emails are not private. Emails are discoverable and may be used as evidence in a courtroom. Don’t commit anything to email that you would not commit to paper. Deleting emails does not make them disappear. Emails sending inappropriate “jokes” are not a joking matter. Duty to preserve emails for ongoing or potential litigation.

Involve HR in termination decisions to ensure consistency, compliance with policy and adequate support for the decision. Pay attention to termination paperwork; have HR review.