

Insubordination always a legitimate reason to fire

Employers have the right to expect employees to listen to reasonable directions, accept criticism and otherwise behave in a civilized way. When an employee becomes insubordinate—by arguing, yelling or behaving aggressively—the employer has the right to discipline her, including firing if necessary.

Recent case: Sheri Blaney was over age 60 when her supervisor retired and a new, younger woman replaced her.

Soon, it became clear that Blaney wasn't listening to directions. Then, during a meeting to discuss specific work requirements, Blaney turned her back on her new boss and walked out, slamming the door. She was fired.

Blaney sued, alleging age discrimination. But she lost because it was clear her employer had a good reason for firing her—namely her obvious insubordination. (*Blaney v. Cengage Learning*, No. 1:09-CV-934, SD OH, 2011)