

Announcing terminations: What's the smartest way?

A reader of our weekly email newsletter, *The HR Specialist Weekly*, recently posed this question: **"How do you let other employees know when you've fired someone?"** Following are some of the responses from other readers:

1. "We stopped sending announcements regarding separations several years ago. They just generated rumors and a general work slowdown. The separated employee's name is dropped from the phone list and their out-of-office message is changed." —Sheila, Arizona
2. "I send an e-mail letting everyone know that the employee has been terminated and that we wish the person well. I feel it is important to notify everyone for security purposes. That way, they know the terminated employee should not have access to the building." —Tammy, Irvine, Calif.
3. "If possible, we gather together the department that the terminated person worked in to announce the termination during the same time that the person is back at his or her desk gathering personal items. That way, terminated people aren't subjected to stares as they clean out their desks, and the others in the department aren't taken by surprise when security walks through." —Sandi, Atlanta
4. "We don't characterize the employee's departure. The typical language we use is, 'Joe Jones has left the firm to pursue other opportunities. The plan for handling Joe's workload is as follows ...'" —N.S., Pennsylvania
5. "The only time we announce terminations is in layoff situations. HR sends an e-mail blast and simply states, 'The following people have been laid off effective _____. We wish them well in their future.'" —Carol, St. Paul, Minn.
6. "One of the best ways to avoid retaliation is to preserve the dignity of the terminated employee. We don't announce a termination until the employee has departed the property. For security reasons, a brief e-mail is transmitted explaining the termination was for violation of company policy, for example. If employees see the terminated person on the property, they usually report it. If a termination is for reasons other than company policy violations, you must minimize the announcement's contents in anticipation of potential litigation." —K.J.