

Promise discretion, not confidentiality

An employee wants to confess wrongdoing or alert you to sensitive personnel or safety matters. But before opening up, the worker asks, "Can you keep this confidential?"

Don't guarantee full confidentiality. If the person raises legal issues, such as harassment, you'll need to inform others and launch an investigation. Your safest answer: "I can't promise confidentiality until I hear what you have to say. But I can promise you that I'll use the utmost discretion and that we'll work together on this."