

# Quickly correct payroll deduction errors to avoid gross-Negligence suits

Nothing upsets employees more than opening their pay envelopes and discovering their checks are for less money than they expected. But errors do happen. When they do, it's important to act quickly to fix the problem.

That's because annoyances, such as payroll deduction discrepancies, can become one more arrow in the quiver an employee brings to a court fight. Delay in fixing payroll errors, and the employee just may sue you for gross negligence under New Jersey law. Then, you'll have to explain the clerical or computer error and why you didn't fix it as soon as you possibly could.

**Recent case:** Vassos Marangos, who is of Greek ethnicity, worked as an engineer for Flarion Technologies. He grew increasingly resentful of other engineers who conversed in the Russian language, and he even sent anonymous e-mails to management, warning that business might suffer if all the Russians left at once.

Marangos eventually quit and sued, alleging national-origin discrimination and gross negligence. He claimed that the "Russians" were favored and that Flarion Technologies deducted the wrong amount of child support from his check.

The court tossed out all claims, reasoning that Flarion couldn't have told the Russians to speak only English. Plus, since Flarion quickly fixed the incorrect deduction, it couldn't be liable for gross negligence. (*Marangos v. Flarion Technologies*, No. 05-4919, DC NJ, 2007)