

If angry employee announces, 'I quit!' tell him you accept his resignation

Employees occasionally have what can be called “I’m mad as hell and I can’t take it any more” moments. They make a lot of noise and storm out the door. Maybe they toss an “I quit” over their shoulder on the way out.

In such cases, it’s best to let those employees know as soon as possible that you accept the resignation and consider that the end of their employment.

Recent case: Jerry had worked for decades as a television reporter in Kentucky, but he felt he was being squeezed out when new management took over. Things came to a head when Jerry wanted to cover a snowstorm story but his new boss told him to handle school-closing news.

Jerry got angry and stormed out. Several co-workers thought he said he quit. (Jerry later said he was merely threatening to quit.)

Nonetheless, management accepted his resignation and told Jerry he wasn’t welcome back because he had refused an assignment. Jerry sued, alleging age discrimination and arguing that he had been goaded into quitting.

The court disagreed. It said the station was within its rights to accept his apparent resignation and refuse to reinstate him. (*Sander v. Gray Television*, No. 10-6120, 6th Cir., 2012)

Handling rescinded resignations

What if an employee quits but comes back later to say he changed his mind?

It depends how you’ve handled such situations in the past. If you’ve allowed other mind-changers to return to work after resigning, treating this employee differently would be risky. But if you have no experience with this issue, it’s OK to say “no” to a rescinded resignation. You’ll be on safer legal ground if you’ve documented the employee’s bad performance.