

Gather examples if you decide to fire because worker isn't a 'team player'

Some jobs require co-workers to get along and support one another. An employee who isn't a team player may cause enough problems to warrant termination.

But "team player" is a subjective term; merely saying a worker isn't one isn't enough. Make sure you support the subjective conclusion with objective examples.

Recent case: Ann, a registered nurse, was hired to join an ambulance crew, a job requiring her to work with a driver and another nurse.

Within a few days of starting her initial training, it became apparent that Ann was going to have trouble getting along with her team. On her second day, she refused to let a paramedic train her and went home. On the third day, she got into an argument with the nurse who was going to help train her over what her job duties should include.

That's when a supervisor checked with the training site and learned that Ann had acted oddly during classes. Other nurses complained that she engaged in extended sexually oriented commentary and once refused to participate in a lesson because she was, in her alleged words, "getting high on."

She was terminated for not being a team player and sued.

She didn't get far since the employer had concrete examples of her erratic and disruptive behavior to justify the conclusion she wasn't a team player. (*Tolan v. Temple*, No. 13-1916, 3rd Cir., 2014)