

# Handle a hostile termination

Being fired isn't an easy thing for employees to handle. With emotions running high, some situations escalate quickly. *Be prepared to handle emotional outbursts:*

- **Use your witness wisely.** Get a credible, appropriate witness—for example, an HR employee—and seat the person near the door. Should a problem arise, he or she can make a quick exit to get help.
- **Have all the documentation ready to go.** Don't cause tensions to rise by stopping to print something out or make copies or by leaving the room to grab something you forgot.
- **Be direct.** It's important to be upfront and specific. Resist providing a laundry list and narrow the focus to three reasons.
- **Provide clear instructions.** Explain what the person will need to do and what you will do on your end.
- **Don't let it drag out.** When you've said all that you can say, end the meeting. Be empathetic but stand strong about the discussion being over.
- **Document your account.** Write a summary of the termination meeting. Be sure to note behaviors and any verbal threats the employee made toward you.

— Adapted from “Discipline and Termination: Ensuring Employee Safety in Stressful Situations,”  
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