

Model Tool: Checklist of steps to take when conducting an investigation

Why you need this checklist:

When an employee makes a complaint, whether it's an accusation of sexual harassment, bullying or an alleged workplace safety hazard, you have an obligation to conduct a thorough and timely investigation. In many circumstances, the filing of a complaint sets in motion several legal and regulatory requirements for a business.

How this checklist helps you:

This checklist will help you conduct a timely and thorough investigation so that you can determine a proper and appropriate response.

How to use this checklist:

Use this checklist to gather the necessary information you need to obtain a clear picture of what happened.

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✓	Step	Action	Considerations
	Notification is made / Allegation made by one person	Investigation should begin within 72 hours	Is this a concern or a formal complaint? A concern gives the complaining party some cover while a formal complaint is formal and out in the open.
	Investigation: pre steps— get organized and set time aside to conduct a timely and thorough investigation.	Look at and consider the files on each of the parties	Ask yourself, “ <i>is it in their character to do what is alleged?</i> ”
	Interview the alleged victim first	Ask the <i>who, what, when, where and why</i> questions. Determine if this is a concern or complaint? Ask for names of potential witnesses (actual or character).	Look for specifics and consider “ <i>is this plausible?</i> ”
	Interview the alleged perpetrator next.	Tell them that a concern or complaint has been raised and ask for their response and their side of the story. Ask for names of potential witnesses (actual or character).	Look for specifics and consider “ <i>is this plausible?</i> ”
	Interview all the witnesses from both sides.	Ask them if they knew about the micro incident? Ask them if they think it is in the person’s character to do what is alleged?	
	Assemble the findings.		

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	<p>Draw a conclusion.</p>	<p>There are three possible conclusions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The findings substantiate (prove) the allegation to be true;2. The findings fail to substantiate or overturn the allegation (suggest allegation is false);3. The findings cannot substantiate or overturn the allegation—the findings are inconclusive.	
	<p>Make a decision regarding next steps.</p>	<p>There are two possible steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Close the case because the allegation was overturned.2. Assign a punishment (warning or termination) because the allegation was substantiated.	

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