

Household Employee Termination Best Practices

These household employee termination guidelines will help ensure that you follow proper procedure when terminating your employee.

When Hiring Your Employee

- Establish detailed information in your employee handbook regarding your firing policy and practice as well as severance policy.
- Obtain a signed confidentiality agreement from your employee.
- Detail termination procedures in the work agreement.

Before you Inform Your Employee of Termination

- Prepare a concisely-worded termination letter with information on final payment.
- Practice what you will say. Be prepared, consistent and concise.
- Gather materials kept in the employee's file — signed work agreement, performance reviews, history of absences, etc. — to support your termination decision.
- Ensure that all explanations are legitimate and that your actions can be documented.

When to Inform Your Employee of Termination

- Avoid any lead time between firing and departing. The best time to set a termination meeting is at the end of the workday.

How to Break the News

- Meet without children or dependents present.
- State the decision to terminate twice.
- Have an adult witness present.
- Allow for your employee's response to avoid one-way communication.

What Else You Need to Say

- Review your severance policy.
- Let them know they can apply for unemployment compensation (you have been paying federal and state unemployment taxes, right?).
- Reiterate the confidentiality agreement that the employee signed at the beginning of employment. What the employee has learned about the family is private, and that confidentiality was agreed upon for the term of employment, as well as after employment ended.

What Else You Need to Do

- Provide the employee with a checklist and deadline to return employer property, such as the employee handbook, security codes, keys, car seats, and other family items.
- Escort the employee from the premises.
- For security reasons, notify neighbors and your child(ren)'s school that your employee is no longer works for your family.
- Pay your employee for all hours worked up to termination.
- Provide a letter of reference for future work (if appropriate).
- Follow COBRA by offering the employee the option to continue her or his health insurance coverage. Even if exempt from COBRA requirements, consider extending to the employee an option for continued health insurance coverage.