

Checklist for Conducting a Smooth Termination Meeting



Pick a good day and time of day for the meeting. Hold the meeting somewhere private that will allow for an easy exit for the employee and know when you want them to leave.

Tell the employee the effective date of the termination. If applicable, schedule an exit interview with the employee for this date.

Explain the reason for the termination truthfully and clearly. Follow a general script, don't exaggerate or minimize the problems, and be prepared to answer and stop answering questions.

If the employee argues the decision, or makes continual requests for reconsideration, compassionately, but firmly, tell the employee that the decision is final. Stick to your factual message, as the termination is not up for debate. Recap the reasons for the termination **once**, and when in doubt, politely end the conversation.

In some rare instances, you might want to mention that alternative positions were explored and everyone involved in management activities agreed to the decision. In most situations, you would not need to do or mention either of these things.

Review with the employee a written summary of benefits. This summary should include, where applicable, severance pay, compensation for vacation and sick time, continuation of health and life insurance benefits, and other benefits and re-employment assistance.

Review the terms of any confidentiality or non-compete agreements that the employee may have signed upon hire and ensure that the employee understands what is expected.

Have final paychecks ready on their last day. If the employee needs to leave immediately following this meeting, have any final checks and benefits or vacation payouts prepared and inform the employee how to collect their personal belongings and leave the premises.

You may provide an employee's final paycheck later than the last day if state law allows. Providing it on the last day is recommended for a clean termination process, but if you choose to pay employees later, give them an estimate of when they can expect their final paycheck and what it will include (such as final wages, vacation payout, any bonuses owed, etc.).

If this meeting is not the employee's last day...

Outline the next steps in the termination process, such as last day of work logistics and how to return company property (ID, keys, laptop, etc.).

Provide a summary of how projects and responsibilities will be transitioned between the meeting and their official termination date.

Ensure that the employee's access to systems and facilities is removed at the end of their last day.

End the interview by letting the employee know you will follow up if needed. You don't need to go into detail, but let them know you might be reaching out about any open matters, such as any unreturned company property or the status of their 401(k).



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