Check Before Firing

With all the regulations, rules and ridicule facing an employer, firing can be a dangerous act

By T. L. Fair

Dismissing an employee from your staff, not so many years ago, was a fairly simple matter. Today, it can be complicated, and a single mistake made in firing someone can turn out to be costly.

Here are good check steps to use whenever the occasion for an employee dismissal arises:

Whenever a union contract of any kind is involved no dismissal is advisable without virtually absolute compliance with that contract. This is necessary in order to be certain that no small point has been forgotten or overlooked. That is easy to do where the contract has not been examined for a number of months.

Next point to check would be any possible Federal Wage and Hour, or state regulation that affects the employment of that specific individual. Again, don’t trust to memory unless such a check up was just made during the past four to six weeks.

An often overlooked point, before tiring any employee, is to be sure a replacement for that specific individual is readily available. Any replacement who needs a great deal of training can be an expensive one. It’s safer to hold onto an individual until someone can be found or trained for the spot.

Can the dismissed employee possibly be taking any of your confidential business information away when he or she leaves? If that person goes to another contracting firm it may create greater problems than would be present if he or she were retained on the staff. Second thoughts on any dismissal are advisable where this point has major importance, especially if that employee will remain in your local marketing area.

Time should be taken to discover whether or not it is wiser to straighten out the problem that is creating the dismissal than to follow through. Firing someone may not be the right answer. Changing a method of doing something with which that individual was involved, could have greater value to the business.

Whose Business?

Does that person have a loyal following among customers of your business? Could he or she influence some of them to go to the next business where that person finds a job? If he or she does, then some rethinking on a first impulse toward dismissal may also be in order here.

Has the firm made commitments to the employee that are as yet unfulfilled? If so, these could form the basis for a major and expensive lawsuit later on. If the suit goes against your business it could turn out to be mighty expensive.

A check on whether or not the employee is involved in a major task that is uncompleted should also be made. It might become necessary to start all over again without this particular employee.

Check Carefully

Spur of the moment employee dismissals are sometimes dangerous procedures. Be sure that the step has been thought out and that all facts involved have been gathered and authenticated. This takes so little actual time in ninety-nine out of a hundred cases that there is little excuse why it should not be done.

Pick the right time for any dismissal. If the step can be handled better in two weeks later that may be a better occasion. This rule also provides a safeguard against an impulsive action which you may regret later.

Be sure that the dismissed employee understands the real reasons for the action being taken. His or her imagination just might conjure up some reasons that would, in the long run, result in a great deal of harm to your business.

Finally, make sure that you have the right persons on each such occasion. It is easy to make a mistake on such matters. That can be a mistake which could turn out to be costly to your business.