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- 260+ premium templates to create contracts, employee manuals, forms, spreadsheets and manager guides
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Bottom line, involuntary termination based on poor performance should never be a surprise to the employee. However, there are other circumstances under which involuntary termination may be necessary. This guide describes these circumstances, and provides step-by-step guidance on how to prepare for and conduct an involuntary termination. It answers questions like:

- ♦ What happens if an employee does not successfully complete a Performance Improvement Plan and the decision is made to terminate employment?
- ♦ What's the process for involuntary terminations when no Performance Improvement Plan has been completed?
- ♦ As a manager, what's my role in the involuntary termination process of a direct report? Who does what?



If you require support or guidance relating involuntary termination, please contact CUSTOMIZER: Insert the title of the contact (not their name). Example: HR Manager.

Supporting Documents

There are a number of templates and guides available to support you through the involuntary termination process. The rest of this Guide describes when to use each one, but they're all listed below for quick reference.

Click on an icon in the table below to open that document.



Note: The **Doc ID** column contains a unique identifier for all our HR documents. Think of it like a bar code you don't have to pay attention to, unless you want to double-check you have the right document.

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Ensure there is sufficient evidence and/or witnesses to confirm the behavior.

If the termination is “with cause” there must be appropriate documentation available to support the decision should it be challenged in court by the employee.

Step 1. Make a Decision

This may seem like an obvious step, but it’s an easy one to postpone. Don’t waste time or prolong a decision unnecessarily, particularly if it’s a termination ‘with cause’ or the employee is creating friction due to poor cultural fit. It’s rare to hear a manager say, “I acted too quickly” when it’s clear an employee is not working out. Prolonging the decision only leaves you with more to fix after they’re gone.

➤ MANAGER

1. Once you’re sure an employee’s position with our company must be terminated, determine the reason and consult with CUSTOMIZER: Insert the title of the contact (not their name). Example: HR Manager.
2. Make a decision. Ensure you have the support of HR and your manager.
3. Once the decision’s been made, review the steps in this document and work with CUSTOMIZER: Insert the title of the contact (not their name). Example: HR Manager to create a plan with timelines and responsibilities.

Step 2. Create a Plan

Note: Use utmost discretion in making plans once a decision to terminate employment has been made. Out of respect to the individual and to avoid putting the company at risk, the decision must remain confidential until the employee has been told.

➤ MANAGER ➤ HR

Create a plan for termination of employment and work out the details. Things to consider:

- ♦ **Eligibility for severance pay**, if applicable.
- ♦ **Eligibility for additional support such as outplacement counselling.**

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- Payment up to the end of day of the termination.
 - Unused vacation pay accrued up to the employee's last day of employment.
 - Any banked overtime.
 - Any commissions or bonuses where calculations can be determined.
 - Deduction of any monies owing to the Company by the employee.
 - CUSTOMIZER: Insert regulatory requirements and processing of payroll paperwork for your jurisdiction
2. Ask Payroll for benefit extension and/or termination details and dates. These will be included in the termination letter.

Step 4. Prepare Termination Documents

➤ HR

2. The terminated employee **must** be provided with notification of the termination in writing. HR prepares all termination documents, including:
- Termination authorization
 - Termination letter and waiver/release
 - CUSTOMIZER: Insert regulatory requirements and processing of paperwork and payments for your jurisdiction. For example vacation pay and lieu of notice
 - Information on outplacement services offered, if applicable.
3. If applicable, prepare a severance package offer.

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- CUSTOMIZER: List any additional departments in your company that must be notified when employment is terminated, e.g., finance for company credit card cancellation, cell phone cancellation, etc.

➤ MANAGER

8. Review the following documents:
 - The termination documents HR has prepared for presentation to the employee at the meeting, so you are familiar with their content.
 - The *DP-ALL-4610-M. Staff Departure Checklist*, to make sure that all employee departure items have been considered prior to the termination meeting.
9. Compile a list of all passwords or job procedures that need to be collected from the employee. Pass this list on to the HR representative who will collect them from the employee at the end of the meeting.

Step 6. Conduct Termination Meeting

The termination meeting is always attended by the employee's manager and a representative from HR.

◆ HR ◆ MANAGER

1. Before the meeting starts, ensure tissues (not in an obvious place) and water are available in the room.
2. Once the manager and HR representative are ready, ask the employee to come into the meeting room.
3. When the employee arrives, ask them to sit down, so that all three of you are seated.

➤ MANAGER

4. Present the employee with the termination paperwork in an envelope.
5. Communicate the news to the employee. HR will counsel you on what to say. Following are some example sentences:
 - I am sorry to advise you we've made a business decision that effective today, your employment with the Company is being terminated. The decision is not related to your performance.

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- Schedule a time with you to drop off the items.
 - Communicate with an identified liaison before entering the building.
10. Ask the employee if they have transportation to get home, or if there is anyone they would like to call to come and collect them. If not, advise the employee they are welcome to take a taxi home at the company's expense.
11. Talk to the employee about how and when to collect personal items from their workspace. For example:
- They may return to their desk after the meeting only to collect necessary personal items, such as a purse.
 - They may schedule a time with **CUSTOMIZER: Insert the individual's title, not name** to pack up personal belongings at a later date, at their convenience. Assure the employee that no one will go through their personal effects before the scheduled packing date.
12. Stay with the employee for as long as is needed, particularly if they are visibly upset.

TIPS FOR THE MANAGER

- ♦ Be gentle, but don't beat around the bush. Your participation in the meeting should last no more than 5 minutes, but be careful not to give the employee the impression that you are rushing the process.
- ♦ Show genuine empathy and concern for the employee.
- ♦ Avoid extended discussions and rehashing the issues that have led to the termination. This is not the time for a performance review.
- ♦ If the termination is without cause and the employee insists on debating it, or asks "Why me?", consider saying something like:
"Unfortunately, this is not the forum to discuss this. We are making an organizational change. Your employment is not ending because you did something wrong. We have made a business decision that is not reversible. We may be able to have a discussion at a later date after all the paperwork has been signed and this news is not so raw."
- ♦ If the employee threatens reprisal, alleges misconduct by you or other employees, or alleges harassment or discrimination, do not get drawn into a debate. Do, however, take detailed notes.
- ♦ If the termination is without cause, do not pressure or allow the employee to sign the release during the termination meeting. They have 5 business days to seek legal advice and should take every opportunity to do so.

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- If the termination was without cause, offer: “I know you must be concerned about XX, and I wanted to assure you that this decision was not made lightly. It was a difficult decision to make but we believe it was the right decision for the business. . XX has been provided with assistance and support from the Company, which we feel is fair while he/she is looking for other employment.”
- Discuss transition procedures - who will be responsible for what.
- Reassure staff that the employee’s departure is not an indication of imminent terminations.

➤ HR ➤ MANAGER

2. Announce the employee’s departure by email to all staff. See example script, below.

Example Script – Announcing Departure of an Employee

It is with regret that we announce the departure of <Jane Doe> effective today. We are currently in the process of finding a replacement for <Jane>, but in the meantime, <John Day> will be the contact person for <Jane’s> job responsibilities.

If you have any questions regarding <Jane’s> departure, please direct them to your manager or me. We wish <Jane> all the best in her future endeavors.

➤ MANAGER

3. Announce the employee’s departure externally, where necessary. This may need to be done by you—in person, by phone or by email—or delegated to other staff, as appropriate.

Step 8. Follow-up

➤ MANAGER

1. Ensure:
 - The employee’s email and voicemail are being forwarded correctly.
 - **Example - Reception** knows where to forward phone calls for the employee.
 - **Insert the individual's title, not name** knows where incoming mail for the employee should be delivered.

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