



Tough Situations

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:

Tougher

SITUATION:

You have to fire an employee.

WHAT YOU SHOULD SAY OR DO:

If you have an HR department, consult with someone in the department who can advise you regarding organizational policy for ending employment. Valid reasons for ending someone's employment normally fall into one or more of these categories:

- **Economic conditions.** The organization cannot justify the employment expenses associated with the position he/she occupies due to general economic conditions.
- **The position is no longer required by the organization.** The organization has no value for the position he/she currently occupies.
- **Failure to perform.** He/she has not met the minimum performance requirements for the position.
- **Breach of policy.** He/she has broken or violated the organization's policy, either repeatedly or significantly.
- **Fit.** He/she just doesn't *fit* into the organization. He/she does not abide by or subscribe to the organization's values, norms, or operating principles.

If ending employment due to economic conditions:

"(NAME), business and economic conditions will no longer allow the company to pay for the position you currently occupy. Because of this reason, your employment is going to be ended as of (DATE). This decision is final. It has nothing to do with your performance or you personally. If conditions change, you will be contacted by us for possible employment. We appreciate your work with us here and wish you the best in your future endeavors."

If ending employment due to failure to perform:

"(NAME), your performance in your current position has failed to meet the minimum performance standards for the position. Because of this reason, your employment is going to be ended as of (DATE). This decision is final. I wish you the best in your future endeavors and career."

If ending employment due to a breach of policy:

"(NAME), you breached the policy regarding (STATE THE POLICY THAT WAS BREACHED). Because of this reason, your employment is going to be ended as of (DATE). This decision is final. I wish you the best in your future endeavors."

If ending employment due to "fit:"

"(NAME), I have made a difficult decision. Your actions, like (YOU SHOULD NAME TWO OR MORE OF THEM), make it clear that you don't subscribe to our values or operating principles. You and we are not a good fit. Because of these reasons, your employment is going to be ended as of (DATE). This decision is final. I wish you the best in your future endeavors."

Special Note - Here are a few general guidelines for firing an employee:

- You should stick to the script. Don't add to them or load them with emotional words.
- Don't entertain questions. By the time you make the decision to fire someone, discussions aren't necessary.
- Get yourself in the proper frame of mind. Try to be as emotionless as possible.
- Nothing you say will make him/her feel better.
- Act professionally.

WHY IT WILL WORK:

Clear, defined, and specific closure helps people move forward. At a minimum, delivering a strong message to him/her communicates your decisiveness and allows him/her begin to move forward.