

THE *Front-line Supervisor*

Presented by *dor and associates, inc.*

Helping you to manage your company's most valuable resource -- your employees.

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CASE 1

Q. Our company has a reasonable suspicion policy, but I don't know of any supervisors who have acted on it. Why would supervisors have difficulty acting on this policy?

A. Common reasons supervisors or managers resist acting on an organization's reasonable suspicion policy include fear of harming an employee's reputation; denial that the smell of alcohol is real; fear of confronting the employee; fear of damaging their relationship with the employee; fear of personal liability if the test is negative; and, concern that the process will not be kept confidential. Education and training help supervisors overcome resistance associated with these myths and misconceptions. Reviewing your organization's policy is a good idea. It is easy to ignore behavioral symptoms that can justify a reasonable suspicion test but may not be obviously related to drug or alcohol use. These may include belligerent behavior, problems with coordination, physical appearance, speech problems, confusion, disorientation, and marked swings in mood or emotions. Supervisors often dismiss these symptoms and miss opportunities to arrange reasonable suspicion tests that can help employees and protect the organization.

CASE 2

Q. An employee I supervise is a tremendous gossip. The negative effect of his private conversations on morale concerns me. Is it appropriate to refer him to the EAP? How do I document the behavior if I don't witness it?

A. Malicious gossip, rumors, and hearsay can be a destructive force within a work unit or organization. It is natural for supervisors to be concerned about it and its effect on morale. If you do not overhear the gossip, you must rely upon the complaints of others before intervening. The evidence that gossip contributes to morale problems within your workplace may be difficult to measure because its effects may not be clearly or readily seen. However, if other employees complain and are offended by this behavior, corrective action becomes your responsibility. Direct your attention to behavior you would like changed, but do not label an employee a gossip. Since two people must engage in gossip for it to exist, make it known to employees what standards of civility you expect in the workplace. If you provide feedback to your employee and see no changes in behavior, consider a formal referral to **dor and associates, inc.** on the basis of the impact this behavior has on your work group.

dor and associates, inc.

Employee Assistance Services

1-800-367-3271 * 612-332-4805

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