



How to Fire an Employee for Stealing

A Step-by-Step Guide



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1

Understand Why They Steal

Employees usually steal when they see an opportunity, have financial need and/or feel they can justify the crime. While being overworked, underpaid or under appreciated doesn't excuse theft, consider the employee's motivations and make necessary changes to your policies and procedures. It could prevent future theft!

2

Gather Evidence

As you investigate employee theft, make sure you gather a lot of strong evidence. Secure video surveillance footage or witness accounts if you can. Computer files, financial records and emails can provide proof of theft or fraud, too.

3

Prioritize Confidentiality

Keep details of the situation confidential, from the start of the investigation to the discipline. Only discuss it with the accused and witnesses (if needed). Revealing information to other employees or outside parties may ruin your credibility and invite a lawsuit.



4

Focus on Policy

Using the word “theft” as the reason for termination can lead to a defamation suit or other legal ramifications. Instead, say that the person has violated company policy. Make sure you have strong anti-fraud policies to back this up.

5

Get a Confession in Writing

Did the accused employee admit to the theft? Ask them to write and sign a confession. If you don't, they may later claim they were coerced into a confession or that they never admitted guilt at all.

6

Notify the Police

Before involving the police, organize all the information you'll need to submit a complaint about the theft. If you have insurance that covers employee theft, you'll need to file a police report. If not, you may wish to handle the investigation and disciplining of the employee on your own to save time and effort. However, be aware that failing to report theft allows the thief to move on to another victim organization.

A stylized illustration of a white hand holding three green dollar bills. The bills are tilted and feature a dark blue dollar sign. The background is a dark blue wave-like shape.

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