



Mineral



Question of the Week

March 13, 2024

Question

What are whistleblower protections?

ANSWER

Whistleblowing occurs when an employee reports wrongdoing (dangerous, illegal, or unethical activity or practices by the company or its employees) either directly to the employer or to an outside authority. Many laws, including the Occupational Safety and Health Act, consider whistleblowing a protected activity, meaning you can't lawfully retaliate against an employee for making such a report. If you were to retaliate, for instance, by disciplining the employee or excluding them from promotional opportunities, the employee could file a complaint.

You can reduce the risk of employees "blowing the whistle" to an outside agency or authority by establishing clear internal channels for employees to report issues, addressing these reports promptly and fairly, and having zero tolerance for retaliation. Employees should feel safe bringing concerns to your attention and be able to trust that you'll respond appropriately. If they fear that they'll be punished for raising issues or concerns internally, they may opt instead to report the matter externally.

This Q&A does not constitute legal advice and does not address state or local law.