

# Suspensions and Terminations for Persons of Concern<sup>91</sup>

When terminating an employee or expelling a member, organizations should be thoughtful and respectful, and they should develop an approach designed to achieve a safe end state. Organizations should conduct every termination and suspension in the context of threat management, especially if the reason for the termination involves behaviors tending toward violence. Consider the following actions:

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**Have a plan to retrieve the person's personal belongings** and to stop their physical and logistical access.

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**Designate the space, place, and time of the meeting;** it should be somewhere safe and private.

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**Have security present or standing by.** Consider law enforcement, if applicable and available.

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**Describe the purpose of the meeting.** Present observations and concerns about behaviors and impacts on the organization.

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**Address behaviors as a performance issue** and describe problems in behavior-specific terms.

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**Do not use language that refers to attitudes, beliefs, or motives.** Focus on the behaviors and the impacts.

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**Offer a face-saving outcome for the employee,** including a termination package that allows the employee to move forward in life with dignity and self-respect intact. Organizations should consider such a package in the interest of safety, even if not typically offered by the organization, during terminations for cause.

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**Extend health benefits, including Employee Assistance, to the terminated employee** to ensure adequate mental health treatment continues. In cases where the terminated employee possess unique capabilities (e.g., hacking, IT administration, etc.) or retains sensitive organizational information, consider making severance benefits and/or compensation contingent on appropriate behavior over an extended period of time.

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**Formulate a response to provide coworkers or organizational members** in the event of future queries about the former employee or member.

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**Consider implementing ongoing security measures following the termination** to look for any efforts by the employee or member to continue contact with the organization and/or its members.

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**Identify existing social systems that could provide insight** into the former employee's or member's behavior, including social media, EAP support, the police, family, and/or friends.

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**Consider monitoring open source social media** of the person of concern post suspension or termination, if appropriate and authorized. Often, such persons will reveal concerning behaviors, such as a recent weapons acquisition or stalking behaviors, on those sources.

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**Seek the advice of legal counsel** to ensure an understanding of legal obligations and any constraints, particularly regarding termination, flexible separation arrangements, or securing restraining or protective orders.

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<sup>91</sup>Adapted from American Society for Industrial Security. (2020, May 7). Standard: Workplace Violence and Active Assailant-Prevention, Intervention, and Response. (pp. 25-26). ASIS WVPI AA-2020. ASIS International, ISBN 978-1-951997-03-8