Workplace Investigations

Contributing Editors

Phil Linnard at Slaughter and May Clare Fletcher at Slaughter and May

17. What other support can employees involved in the investigation be given?



Netherlands

Author: Barbara Kloppert, Mirjam Kerkhof, Roel de Jong at De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek

The employer can offer employees to be accompanied by another person, or by legal counsel, especially if the outcomes of the investigation could have consequences for their employment.

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Switzerland

Author: Laura Widmer, Sandra Schaffner at Bär & Karrer

The employer does not generally need to provide specific support for employees that are subject to an internal investigation. The employer may, however, allow concerned employees to be accompanied by a trusted third party such as family members or friends.[1] These third parties will need to sign separate non-disclosure agreements before being involved in the internal investigation.

In addition, a company may appoint a so-called lawyer of confidence who has been approved by the employer and is thus subject to professional secrecy. This lawyer will not be involved in the internal investigation but may look after the concerned employees and give them confidential advice as well as inform them about their rights and obligations arising from the employment relationship.[2]

^[1] Roger Rudolph, Interne Untersuchungen: Spannungsfelder aus arbeitsrechtlicher Sicht, SJZ 114/2018, p. 390.

^[2] David Rosenthal et al., Praxishandbuch für interne Untersuchungen und eDiscovery, Release 1.01, Zürich/Bern, 2021, p. 133.



Author: Ratthai Kamolwarin, Norrapat Werajong

at Chandler MHM

The employees may then file a complaint with the labour inspection officer of the Labour Protection and Welfare Department to investigate the situation if they view that the conduct of the employer in the investigation violates the LPA. For example, if the employer issues a written order for suspending an employee for more than seven days. The labour inspection officer may issue an order requesting compliance, where failure to comply with such an order would result in a criminal penalty.

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Contributors



Netherlands

Barbara Kloppert Mirjam Kerkhof Roel de Jong *De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek*



Switzerland

Laura Widmer Sandra Schaffner *Bär & Karrer*



Thailand

Ratthai Kamolwarin Norrapat Werajong *Chandler MHM*

www.internationalemploymentlawyer.com