

Workplace Investigations

Contributing Editors

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

12. Can the identity of the complainant, witnesses or sources of information for the investigation be kept confidential?



Netherlands

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Such information can usually be kept confidential in an internal investigation, subject to potential disclosure obligations (see question 25). As indicated in question 10, depending on the nature and subject matter of an investigation, the identity of employees involved and investigative findings shall be shared with an employer on a need-to-know basis only. Specific requirements apply to the protection of the identity of whistleblowers since the Whistleblower Directive was implemented into Dutch law.

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Switzerland

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As mentioned under Question 10, the employer's duty of care (article 328, Swiss Code of Obligations) also entails the employer's duty to respect and protect the personality (including confidentiality and privacy) and integrity of employees (article 328 paragraph 1, Swiss Code of Obligations) and to take appropriate measures to protect them.

However, in combination with the right to be heard and the right to be informed regarding an investigation, the accused also has the right that incriminating evidence is presented to them throughout the investigation and that they can comment on it. For instance, this right includes disclosure of the persons accusing them and their concrete statements. Anonymisation or redaction of such statements is permissible if the interests of the persons incriminating the accused or the interests of the employer override the accused' interests to be presented with the relevant documents or statements (see question 11; see also article 9 paragraphs 1 and 4, Swiss Federal Act on Data Protection). However, a careful assessment of interests is required, and these must be limited to what is necessary. In principle, a person accusing another person must take responsibility for their information and accept criticism from the person

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

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23. Should the investigation report be shared in full, or just the findings?



Netherlands

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Employers are typically not required to share the investigation report with implicated persons or other employees involved in an investigation. Depending on the nature and subject of the investigation, the principle of due care may require an employer to share (draft) investigative findings before concluding on such findings.

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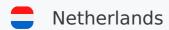
Switzerland

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In principle, there is no obligation to disclose the final investigation report. Disclosure obligations may arise based on data protection law vis-à-vis the persons concerned (eg, the accused). Likewise, there is no obligation to disclose other documents, such as the records of interviews. The employee should be fully informed of the final investigation report, if necessary, with certain redactions (see question 22). The right of the employee concerned to information is comprehensive (ie, all investigation files must be disclosed to him).[1] Regarding publication to other bodies outside of criminal proceedings, the employer is bound by its duty of care (article 328, Swiss Code of Obligations) and must protect the employee as far as is possible and reasonable.[2]

[1] Nicolas Facincani/Reto Sutter, Interne Untersuchungen: Rechte und Pflichten von Arbeitgebern und Angestellten, in: HR Today, to be found on: <Interne Untersuchungen: Rechte und Pflichten von Arbeitgebern und Angestellten | hrtoday.ch> (last visited on 27 June 2022).

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