

Workplace Investigations

Contributing Editors

Phil Linnard at Slaughter and May
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14. When does privilege attach to investigation materials?



Brazil

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Privilege attaches to investigation materials when attorneys conduct interviews and take notes, and when they write reports and recommendations.

However, if other persons participate in an interview or write a report, and they are not attorneys, they can be required to testify about what they witnessed while participating in the interview or to discuss or disclose their investigation report.

For this reason, when starting an investigation, and depending on the matters to be investigated, it is important to determine whether it is convenient to allocate lawyers to certain roles to increase the company's control of corporate confidentiality resulting from third-party involvement in the investigation.

Attorneys should also clearly state to participants of the investigation that they are attorneys representing the company and that their work papers fall under attorney-client privilege and will not be shared with them.

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Greece

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Regarding L.4990/2022 for whistleblowers' procedures, many categories of privilege may occur during an investigation, such as: attorney-client privilege; doctor-patient privilege; and court or other proceedings' privilege deemed as classified. L.4990/2022 provides that its provisions do not affect any of these privileges and these privileges supersede^[6].

Privilege may also be attached to investigation materials in investigations relating to workplace harassment and violence incidents; however, since L.4808/2021 does not offer a specific provision and criminal proceedings may also commence, the matter of privilege must be examined ad hoc.

[6] Law 4990/2022 art.5 par.2(b) and par.2(c)

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Switzerland

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As outlined above, all employees generally have the right to know whether and what personal data is being or has been processed about them (article 8 paragraph 1, Swiss Federal Act on Data Protection; article 328b, Swiss Code of Obligations).

The employer may refuse, restrict or postpone the disclosure or inspection of internal investigation documents if a legal statute so provides, if such action is necessary because of overriding third-party interests (article 9 paragraph 1, Swiss Federal Act on Data Protection) or if the request for information is manifestly unfounded or malicious. Furthermore, a restriction is possible if overriding the self-interests of the responsible company requires such a measure and it also does not disclose the personal data to third parties. The employer or responsible party must justify its decision (article 9 paragraph 5, Swiss Federal Act on Data Protection).[1]

The scope of the disclosure of information must, therefore, be determined by carefully weighing the interests of all parties involved in the internal investigation.

[1] Claudia M. Fritsche, *Interne Untersuchungen in der Schweiz*, Ein Handbuch für Unternehmen mit besonderem Fokus auf Finanzinstitute, p. 284 et seq.

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