

Workplace Investigations

Contributing Editors

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

10. What confidentiality obligations apply during an investigation?

Philippines

Author: *Rashel Ann C. Pomoy*
at Villaraza & Angangco

Since the right to investigate ultimately belongs to the employer, it may impose strict confidentiality obligations upon the individuals involved, not only to ensure unhampered investigation proceedings but also and more importantly for the protection of the company and employees involved.

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Switzerland

Author: *Laura Widmer, Sandra Schaffner*
at Bär & Karrer

Besides the employee's duty of performance (article 319, Swiss Code of Obligations), the employment relationship is defined by the employer's duty of care (article 328, Swiss Code of Obligations) and the employee's duty of loyalty (article 321a, Swiss Code of Obligations). Ancillary duties can be derived from the two duties, which are of importance for the confidentiality of an internal investigation.[\[1\]](#)

In principle, the employer must respect and protect the personality (including confidentiality and privacy) and integrity of the employee (article 328 paragraph 1, Swiss Code of Obligations) and take appropriate measures to protect the employee. Because of the danger of pre-judgment or damage to reputation as well as other adverse consequences, the employer must conduct an internal investigation discreetly and objectively. The limits of the duty of care are found in the legitimate self-interest of the employer.[\[2\]](#)

In return for the employer's duty of care, employees must comply with their duty of loyalty and safeguard the employer's legitimate interests. In connection with an internal investigation, employees must therefore keep the conduct of an investigation confidential. Additionally, employees must keep confidential and not disclose to any third party any facts that they have acquired in the course of the employment relationship, and which are neither obvious nor publicly accessible.[\[3\]](#)

[1] Wolfgang Portmann/Roger Rudolph, BSK OR, Art. 328 N 1 et seq.

[2] Claudia Fritsche, Interne Untersuchungen in der Schweiz, Ein Handbuch für Unternehmen mit besonderem Fokus auf Finanzinstitute, p. 202.

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

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Turkey

Author: *Elvan Aziz, Gülce Saydam Pehlivan, Emre Kotil, Osman Pepeoğlu*
at Paksoy

As a general practice, workplace investigations need to be kept confidential for the integrity of the process. In some cases, employees can specifically request their identity or involvement be kept confidential. In such cases, additional measures need to be taken to protect confidentiality. In any case, obligations and rights arising from the DPL and Labour Law must be respected and complied with by the employer and the investigation team.

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Contributors

Philippines

Rashel Ann C. Pomoy
Villaraza & Angangco

Switzerland

Laura Widmer
Sandra Schaffner
Bär & Karrer

Turkey

Elvan Aziz
Gülce Saydam Pehlivan
Emre Kotil
Osman Pepeoğlu
Paksoy