

# Workplace Investigations

## Contributing Editors

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## 01. What legislation, guidance and/or policies govern a workplace investigation?

### Hong Kong

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The Employment Ordinance (EO), which is the primary legislation governing employment relationships in Hong Kong, does not provide for a statutory workplace investigation procedure.

The Labour Department of Hong Kong has, however, published a Guide to Good People Management Practices<sup>[1]</sup> which recommends that employers lay down rules of conduct, grievance and disciplinary procedures. Such rules should be simple and clear, logical and fair, and in line with the provisions in the EO.

As part of risk management and internal controls, Hong Kong-listed companies are expected by The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Limited (SEHK) to establish whistleblowing policies and systems for employees to raise concerns about possible improprieties with independent board members. Listed companies are also expected to establish policies for the promotion and support of anti-corruption laws and regulations. Such policies and systems may include workplace investigation procedures.<sup>[2]</sup> If a listed company chooses to not establish such policies and systems, it is required to explain how it could achieve appropriate and effective risk management and internal controls.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Hong Kong Labour Department, “Guide to Good People Management Practices” (June 2019)  
<<https://www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/wcp/practice.pdf>>.

<sup>[2]</sup> SEHK, Rules Governing the Listing of Securities on The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Limited, Appendix 14, Provision D.2.6, D.2.7. SEHK, “Corporate Governance Guide for Boards and Directors” (December 2021)  
<[https://www.hkex.com.hk/-/media/HKEX-Market/Listing/Rules-and-Guidance/Corporate-Governance-Practices/guide\\_board\\_dir.pdf](https://www.hkex.com.hk/-/media/HKEX-Market/Listing/Rules-and-Guidance/Corporate-Governance-Practices/guide_board_dir.pdf)>.

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### Switzerland

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There is no specific legal regulation for internal investigations in Switzerland. The legal framework is derived from general rules such as the employer's duty of care, the employee's duty of loyalty and the employee's data protection rights. Depending on the context of the investigation, additional legal provisions may apply; for instance, additional provisions of the Swiss Federal Act on Data Protection or the Swiss Criminal Code.

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## **16. If there is a works council or trade union, does it have any right to be informed or involved in the investigation?**



### **Hong Kong**

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Unless the employment contract or the relevant internal policies specify otherwise, there is no automatic right under Hong Kong law for a works council or trade union to be informed or involved in a workplace investigation.

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### **Switzerland**

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In general, works councils and trade unions are not very common in Switzerland and there are no statutory rules that would provide a works council or trade union a right to be informed or involved in an ongoing internal investigation. However, respective obligations might be foreseen in an applicable collective bargaining agreement, internal regulations or similar.

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