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HR WORKBENCH



March 2019 Newsletter

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DOL Increases Civil Penalty Amounts for 2019

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) recently increased the civil penalty amounts that may be imposed on employers under the following federal laws:

- The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)
- The Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA)
- The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)



These increased amounts apply to civil penalties that are assessed after Jan. 23, 2019. Employers should become familiar with the new penalty amounts and review their pay practices, benefit plan administration, and safety protocols to ensure compliance with federal requirements.

Retaliation Claims Are Up. Are You Prepared?

Recent news has reflected that the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has been successful in retaliation claims against employers. In 2019 so far, the EEOC has won over \$775,000 for employees in retaliation and sexual harassment lawsuits.



What Does This Mean for You

Per federal law, an employer may not fire, demote, harass, or otherwise retaliate against an individual for filing a charge of discrimination, participating in a discrimination proceeding, or otherwise opposing discrimination.

Despite this, retaliation claims are historically the most common workplace discrimination claims. Employers should take the following steps to protect themselves from retaliation and other discrimination claims:

- Create a clear anti-retaliation policy that includes specific examples of what management can and cannot do when disciplining or terminating employees.
- Provide training to management and employees on anti-retaliation and other discrimination policies.
- Implement a user-friendly internal complaint procedure for employees.

Workplace Wellness is About More Than Just Physical Health

Cultivating a culture of wellness at organizations is a common trend for employers across the country. In fact, according to the Employer Health Benefits 2018 Annual Survey, 82 percent of large firms and 53 percent of small firms offer some sort of wellness program. Historically, many of these

programs focus on physical well-being, with employers creating programs intended to encourage smoking cessation and exercising. Unfortunately, health-conscious employers and employees alike often overlook one important component to wellness: financial health.



The Hard Truth

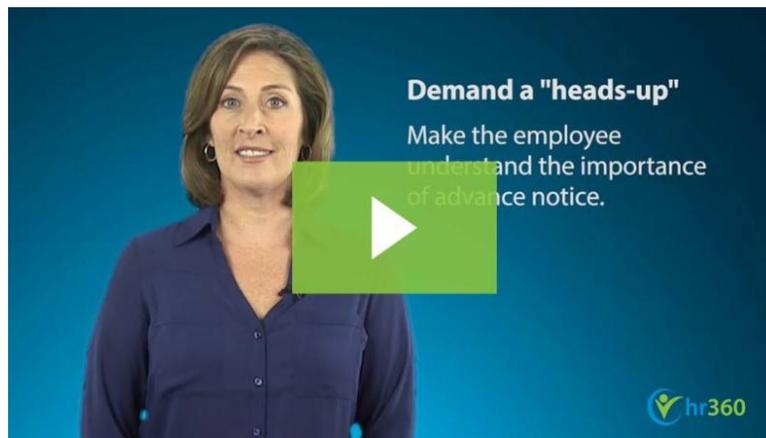
A recent Bankrate survey revealed that 65 percent of Americans save little or nothing at all from each paycheck. This, compounded with the fact that over 40 percent of Americans have less than \$10,000 saved for when they retire, is alarming.

How You Can Help

When employees are stressed about money and saving for their long-term goals, the chronic stress can be detrimental to their overall health and workplace engagement. Investing in employee financial wellness can be beneficial to both you and your employees. Consider implementing a financial wellness program that focuses on planning for the future and budgeting. You may want to bring in a financial expert or consultant for your employees as well.

Managing the Excuse-Maker

Some employees always seem to have an excuse for failing to meet expectations. Luckily, there are strategies managers can use to turn repeat excuse-makers into productive team members. Learn about these strategies in the video below



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