

Abusive Communications Are Not Acceptable in the C-Suite or On the Plant Floor

“In recent weeks, because of the remoteness of our work forces, we have seen an increased incidence of abusive written communications between employees. It’s fair to say that we all have certain frustrations with our current situation, but in the past, when we all worked in the office or plant together, we could often work out those frustrations through face-to-face conversation. In face-to-face conversations, it is more difficult to say rude or abusive things to other employees. Unfortunately, a similar social barrier does not seem to be present when employees write emails or text messages,” warns Thomas H. Wilson in *Vinson & Elkins’ Insights*.

“In the recent General Motors case, the facts indicated that the employee in question, over the course of several meetings, used profane language toward managers, threatened them, and played loud, explicit music on his phone to interrupt the conversation. The administrative law judge, citing to the Board’s prior rulings on these types of communications, found that General Motors’ discipline against the employee—namely, a series of suspensions—constituted an unfair labor practice. The current Board overturned that opinion and the prior cases that supported it in its decision.”

Read the article.