When Employees Take Workplace Communication Offline

By Natalie Lynch
Lynch Law Firm PLLC

Today, many people prefer texting over many other forms of communication such as calling or emailing the recipient. This is an efficient form of communication because individuals can send a quick message about something important to them within a few seconds rather than being busy on a call for several minutes. Despite its expedience, texting in the workplace can carry certain risks for employers and may pose some problems.

Potential Problems

One of the most serious concerns that employers have about texting in the workplace is its association with productivity. Employers do not want to see their staff distracted and busy concentrating on personal matters instead of the job at hand.

Another concern is that texting in the workplace can cause dangerous distractions. For example, employees may drive forklifts in industrial settings and may drive to complete sales calls or work errands. Texting while driving continues to be a major source of concern with distracted driving being the primary cause of accidents today.

Texting in the workplace also poses risks concerning privacy issues. Work videos sometimes go viral and often in a negative way for employers. Employees may send a video message to a friend, family member or rival that does not paint the employer in the best light. These messages can damage the company’s reputation. Also, confidential information or trade secrets may be stolen when employees take pictures of this information and send it to someone else.

Creating a Policy

Due to the many risks that texting in the workplace can cause, many employers may decide to institute cellphone policies that discuss the use of cellphones, texting and calling in the workplace. These policies set out the rules and expectations of the business. For example, there may be a complete prohibition on texting while driving for work purposes. Additionally, they may state that employees are not permitted to text while they are meeting with a customer or client in person. A common and important policy many employers implement is that no video or audio recording is permitted at work. The policy may outline certain disciplinary measures that the employer may have the discretion to take if the employee does not follow the rules. These actions may be progressive in nature, such as starting with a verbal warning and then moving up to a written warning. The employer should carefully consider a number of factors before implementing a cellphone policy in the workplace.

Considerations

While the simplest solution to avoid the problems texting in the workplace poses may be to ban all use of cellphones, this action will likely negatively impact employee morale. Many individuals depend on their cellphones to keep them in touch in important ways and employees may fear what to do in case of an emergency. A complete ban on cellphone use or texting may be considered antiquated and isolating to employees. When developing a policy for the business, it is important to consider the size of the business and the realistic ability to monitor employees' observation of the cellphone policy. Additionally, the culture and type of business is important to consider.

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