



Question:

We expect an upcoming termination meeting to be more emotional than usual. How should we prepare?

Answered by the HR Experts

Termination meetings are always difficult, and many of the preparations you might make for an especially tense meeting would be suitable for any termination. That said, there are a few extra steps you can take to prepare yourself in the event emotions run high.

First, prepare a script (or thorough outline) to follow during the meeting. It should cover the legitimate business reasons for the termination without exaggerating or minimizing the relevant performance or behavior issues. Stick to the facts about what the employee did or didn't do and the outcomes for the organization. Remind the employee about any prior warnings, performance improvement plans, and disciplinary actions.

Second, figure out where the termination meeting will occur and who will attend the meeting. If you are meeting in person, we recommend holding the meeting in a private location close to an exit. As this termination might be more emotionally charged than usual, we also recommend inviting an HR representative or another manager to join you. This person can serve as a witness and provide support if the situation becomes difficult to manage alone. If you anticipate the employee needing to be escorted out of the workplace, have someone on hand to do that.

Third, notify IT in advance so they can terminate access to devices, software, and facilities during or immediately after the meeting.

Fourth, prepare yourself emotionally. Plan to stick to the script and avoid getting into a debate about the decision itself or the details leading up to it. It's fine to acknowledge and validate the employee's feelings, but don't say the decision is hard for you as well, even though it is.

Finally, be prepared to immediately end the meeting, step out, and get help if the situation calls for it.

You can learn more about terminations [on the platform](#).

This Q&A does not constitute legal advice and does not address state or local law.