

Should Your Company Rehire Workers? Establish guidelines for job candidates

It is difficult to find good workers and often even tougher to keep them. That is why you might entertain the idea of rehiring someone who left the business and is now hoping to return. However, this scenario is not without potential pitfalls, especially if you encountered problems with the worker the first time around.

First, you should address the issue of whether it is a good idea to rehire an employee who was disruptive in the past. Unless the business is truly desperate for someone with his or her particular skill set, it is usually not recommended. The same types of incidents—such as tardiness, inability to work with others or displaying a poor attitude—are likely to resurface.

Second, consider those employees who left on reasonably good terms and thus may be classified as being “rehireable.” Although this could work out for both sides, and it has on numerous occasions, employers should still proceed carefully. A possible solution is to document company policy concerning these situations.

Typically, the policy should cover the basic rules and limitations involved in a rehire. For instance, it might list restrictions when an employee was previously terminated for just cause. Similarly, it can establish when an employee is eligible for rehiring. Here are several possible qualifications for allowing a rehire based on the employee’s past performance:

- Completion of a probationary period;
- Submitting appropriate notice of resignation;
- Participation in an exit interview, if applicable;
- Performance evaluations reflecting that the employee’s work consistently met the requirements of the job; and
- Termination was due to company actions (e.g., layoffs or workforce reduction).

Conversely, former employees may not be eligible for rehiring if there was an involuntary termination for wrongdoing or misconduct or if a termination was based on violations of company rules.

Educate all your employees on the policy so they are aware of their responsibilities in this area. Ex-employees seeking to be rehired should indicate their former employment with the company on any application for employment. Assign verification to a specific individual or the Human Resources Department, if you have one.

Finally, the policy should require rehired employees to be treated like any other new hire for purposes of employment documents, orientation and benefits waiting periods. Rehired employees generally cannot have their prior benefits reinstated. Rely on your business advisers for assistance.