

Recent Study Reveals Top HR Concerns

Categories : [EMPLOYER HOT TOPICS](#)

Date : August 1, 2011

A recent [top 10 list, published by the Employers Resource Association](#), reveals HR professionals' biggest concerns – and they're more basic than you might think.

Rapidly evolving legal and economic issues have transformed the HR landscape over the past several years. But while workplace issues like social media and background checks have been sources of mainstream media buzz in the past year, this top 10 list (compiled from over 8,000 calls from member businesses) shows that HR still worries about fundamental issues such as FMLA, performance management and termination.

So what are HR's top concerns? Here is a summary of the list:

1. **Family and Medical Leave Act.** Questions focus on who is covered, what is deemed a serious health condition and how to control intermittent leave.
2. **Advice and counsel for taking adverse actions, including employee termination, suspension and discipline.** Calls include requests for information on: documentation required to fire someone; how an FMLA request can affect the decision to terminate; and whether or not an employee can sue for termination.
3. **Performance management strategies.** Issues related to problem employees still plague HR professionals. Managers seek effective strategies for dealing with under-performing new hires and protected-class employees. Calls regarding group performance issues continue to come in, as well.
4. **Fair Labor Standards Act issues.** Primary concerns center around how to: correctly classify a position as exempt; correctly calculate overtime for multiple rates; accurately pay travel hours for an hourly worker; adhere to federal and state child labor rules.
5. **Immigration.** The Employers Resource Association receives frequent calls regarding proper I-9 documentation and procedures, especially when a Social Security number mismatch occurs.
6. **Lunch hour and breaks.** Questions include how many breaks employees should be given per day, whether or not a lunch period is required, and if breaks need to be paid or not.
7. **Employee access to personnel files.** HR professionals want to know if the law requires them to allow an employee to see or copy his own files, as well as the rules about sending employee information to lawyers.
8. **Independent contractor vs. employee.** Employers contact the hotline with questions about employment status, particularly the difference between an independent contractor and an employee.
9. **Employee privacy.** HR managers often want to know if they can legally read employee e-

mails, monitor internet usage, use surveillance cameras and/or conduct employee searches.

10. **Drug and alcohol issues.** Rounding out the list are questions related to conducting legal drug tests and what to do (i.e., can an employee be terminated?) if the results come back positive.

What are Your Top HR Concerns?

The Employer's Resource Association, a Cincinnati-based not-for-profit organization which specializes in HR consulting, training, development and legal updates, compiled their top 10 list using data from more than 8,000 calls to its human resources hotline in 2010. Their results reflect the concerns of HR professionals in Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio.

How do these issues align with your own? What are the biggest personnel challenges *you're* facing right now? Most importantly, how can we help? We at [Snelling](#) would like to know, so please leave your comments below. The better we understand your workforce problems, the better equipped we'll be to help you overcome them.