

Ethics in the Workplace: Hired or Fired?

Topic #1: **The Reward of the Eager Beaver**

You start work at a cable company. You have been well trained and know what you're doing. You are given a list of eight home connection requests for each day of work. You find the work easy and usually finish your assignments three hours early, before the end of the scheduled work day. You notice that the other installers come back to the shop precisely at the end of the scheduled work day. The oldest, most seasoned installer approaches you at the end of your first week. He tells you, "Look, you need to pace yourself better. You see these other guys?" he says pointing to the other drivers walking into the building. "They're much older than you. They're married and have children. They can't work as fast as you. In fact, your speed is making us all look bad. When we have extra time between work assignments, we park in the shade behind malls and read the paper until the next scheduled appointment. You need to learn to do the same." His tone is a bit threatening.

QUESTION #1: What is your responsibility to your employer? What would you do in this situation and why?

Related questions and issues to consider incorporating into the decision-making and the essay:

Should a worker compromise his work ethic to peer pressure in order to be accepted? If you want to provide for yourself and your family, can you afford to risk meeting that responsibility by "telling" on your co-workers? How do you assess the consequences personally and professionally?

Topic #2: **The Attack of the Herd of Bullies**

You work in an office setting with many others. One of the best workers in the department is a large, gregarious fellow who many consider to be a bit of a "dork." You notice that recently he has become much quieter. Your co-workers seem gather in groups laughing at something secret. You overhear one of the groups talking about the latest rumor they spread on Twitter about "the dork." Another tells what she posted on Facebook about him. They go on to laugh at him, hoping he'll soon leave the company. Later, you walk into the breakroom and see him sitting in the corner, his hands over his face.

QUESTION #2: As an employee, what is your responsibility to uphold the culture of the company? What would you do in this situation and why?

Related questions and issues to consider incorporating into the decision-making and the essay:

Should you offer comfort to your co-worker? Should you confront those who are harassing him? Should you report the behaviors to your supervisor? Assess the consequences to the bullied co-worker, those who are harassing him, your company, and yourself.

Topic #3: **Who Owns Your Cell Phone?**

You've just been hired for a job that could lead to the type of career that you've been planning for. After two-weeks on the job, you get called into your supervisor's office. She tells you that although your work is satisfactory, she has noticed that you are always checking your phone for messages and sending Snapchats of yourself at work. She explains that these breaks, while very short in duration, result in a loss of concentration, and the cumulative downtime is causing a detrimental impact on your productivity. Furthermore, she states that each time you use your phone, you are conducting personal business on company-paid time. Ultimately, she asks that you leave your phone in your desk and check it only during planned breaks in your day. You have not seen a cell phone use policy in the employee handbook.

QUESTION #3: Is the supervisor's position unreasonable?

Related questions and issues to consider incorporating into the decision-making and the essay:

Do you think the company "owns" your time and attention during your working hours? Can a phone create such a distraction that it leads to a loss of productivity in the workplace? Does or should a company have the right to limit access to something as personal as a phone? Are there valid reasons to check your phone fairly frequently? In what way does personal phone use violate company policies that prohibit conducting personal business when the company is paying for your time and attention? Should you look for a job in a company that has less restrictive policies? Is there a compromise position?