

How to Respond to Drinking on the Job

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Debra Friedman was quoted in *SHRM* discussing how employers should handle the suspicion of an employee drinking on the job or being intoxicated at work. Discipline can range from a final written warning to suspension without pay to immediate termination, said Debra. "Once the drinking is confirmed, the employee should stop working and the employer should meet with them in private," she said. "The employer should share their observations of the employee's behavior and ask if anything is wrong," she said. The employer "should not try and diagnose the cause of the behavior." "If the employee claims to have an addiction to alcohol, a common response among employers is to provide both a leave of absence to attend a treatment program and a last-chance agreement," she added. "If the employee claims to be addicted to alcohol and immediately enters treatment, the employer may still discipline the employee for violating company policy. The employee is being disciplined for their job performance or behavior, not their disability," she explained.

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