

Sample research paper on privacy in workplace

[Business](#), [Company](#)



Understandably, employees must relinquish some of their privacy while at the work place, nonetheless, this can at some point become a contentious issue. There have been numerous debates on whether it is ethical, moral and legal for an employers to monitor the action of their employees. Monitoring the employees is believed to be a necessary undertaking that is able to discourage both that aspect of illicit activities and also limiting liability. Normally, employers monitor their employees using techniques such as hidden surveillance cameras, or even recording what activities their employees are doing while using company owned gadgets, such as telephones and computers. In the business realm, privacy rights at the workplace refers to primarily protecting an individual's personal life from any forms of unwarranted intrusions by the employer. Some of the major privacy issues that the employers largely seeks to monitor is with regard to electronic monitoring, drug and alcohol abuse, office romance, and honesty testing. This is a very important facet of the workplace environment that can either motivate or demoralise the employees and consequently affect their work output. Therefore, operating at best practice when it comes to the issue of privacy at the workplace creates trust, security and certainty for both the employers and their employees.

Generally, advancement in technology has seen employer monitoring get to a point of becoming obsolete. In fact, courts in the contemporary world are finding that disputes between workplace freedom and privacy are becoming very complicated due to the aspect of advancement in technology making the traditional rules that used to govern the areas of privacy law debatable and further less important. In regard to electronic monitoring, new

technologies have also enabled corporate companies to gather, store and also monitor information about their employee's activities. At times, this need for whatever the employees may be doing may result into infringing on the employees right to privacy. In most cases, the management justifies that their increased monitoring is due to certain reasons such as ensuring employee efficiency, and also due to the fear of lawsuits in situations where the employees acts inappropriately. Additionally, the issue of office romance is a matter of concern to the employer since they believe that for work to be done as effectively as possible, there ought to be a care balancing between legitimate employer concerns and employer privacy. Nonetheless, in most corporate companies, the employers have resorted to just managing office romance instead of completely banning them. It is also imperative for the employer to monitor the use of drug abuse since it is one of the irresponsible behaviours that leads to absenteeism, conflicts with company values and generally causing poor performance.

There are numerous news stories that pertains to the privacy in workplace. For instance, in 2011. The US Supreme court took up a case involving a cop and his employer, the Ontario Police Department over the issue of monitoring and the privacy rights in the workplace. The NBC News reported that, in this case, Jeff Quon, a California SWAT Sargent, had been given a pager by his employer. However, he was later found to be using the pager not only for his official duties but also to text sexually explicit messages to his wife and his mistresses (Turnbull, 131). Jeff's employer discovered the personal use of this gadget after an investigation which was looking into the excessive texting at the department. Quon was angered by the act of his

employer saying that he thought that the messages were confidential. As a result, Jeff, his wife Jerilyn who is also a police officer, and April Florio, who is the mistress sued the department of police and the paging service company Arch wireless company for violating their privacy rights (Turnbull, 132). The lower court ruled in favour of the employee, Jeff Quon but the defendant appealed making the case to be taken up by the Supreme Court. This is a good example that shows the privacy in workplace regard monitoring electronic equipment and office romance.

In a different context, the CBC News reported that the Supreme Court of Canada was examining the case of a high school teacher at Sudbury, Ont. Was charged with child pornography after nude photos of students were found in the school issued laptop by the school's board IT staff. However, Richard Cole, the high school teacher, explained that in his supervisory role, he accessed the email of a male student who had sent the nude photos to a fellow student and he copied them into his computer. The judge ruled that the teacher had reasonable expectation of privacy especially with regard to the contents of his laptop and his hard drive. In general, these are examples of news stories that shows the extent to which the privacy of workplace and knowing the boundaries between rights of freedom, monitoring and the privacy of a person's information can lead to. Therefore, it is important for every player in the business setting i. e. both the employers and the employees to respect each other's boundary with regard to the privacy of their information and activities, and to also ensure confidentiality of the information when access to the information or surveillance has been granted.

Works Cited

Turnbull, Ian J. Privacy in the Workplace. Toronto: CCH Canadian, 2009. Print.