

What to Know: Management Communication About the Union

Many managers are worried and confused about what you can and cannot say to staff members about the union. Managers must create a delicate balance between staying within the law and signaling an open and pro-union approach. First, there are two important boundaries you want to remember. Even pro-union managers should not become involved in the union or union matters such as collective bargaining.

1. Remember TIPS - It's the law

TIPS is the bare minimum of **what NOT to do or say** during staff unionization.

T - Threats: It is illegal to threaten employees for their support of a union.

I - Interrogation: It is illegal to question employees about their opinions about the union or to ask them what their peers think.

P - Promises: It is illegal to promise or grant special favors or benefits in exchange for being against the union.

S - Surveillance: It is illegal to engage in surveillance or spying on union activity.

2. Remember you are Management - what you say & do matters

Because every management employee is considered an "agent" of management, your employer is accountable for your statements. Therefore:

- **Don't offer** your opinion on the union they chose.
- **Don't ask** how the union effort is going or who is involved.
- **Don't share** your views about what they should or should not do in bargaining
- **Don't engage** with staff regarding dynamics within the union.
- **Don't be a channel** for reporting on employee union activity or things employees say about the union.

Note: it is unlawful for an employer to try to control a union or interfere with a union's autonomy and self-governance. If you are management staff, you should not be influencing or intervening in selection of union officers, formulation of union bylaws and policies, or other internal union matters.

3. You CAN share broad support for unions and collective bargaining

Do work with your attorney to craft and disseminate helpful and objective messages to all staff members. This might include the following:

- **We respect** employees' rights to form a union.
- **We believe** in unions and collective bargaining.
- **We are open** to build a collaborative partnership with the union.
- **We will** bargain in good faith and in alignment with our values.
- **We see** many beneficial aspects of being a unionized workplace.

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