

# 26

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## No Smoke Without Fire

### Description

This is a case study activity for groups of three or four participants.

### Learning Points

After completion of this activity participants will have:

- worked in a team
- reached a decision
- gained a better understanding of their company's disciplinary procedures
- learned how to deal with a problem after hours when the supervisor might be the senior representative on site.

### Timing

Total time: 25–30 minutes

- 15–20 minutes for the group to reach a decision
- 10 minutes for discussion

### Equipment

None

### Materials

- A copy of Exercise 26.1 for each group

- Notepaper and pens or pencils for participants
- Flipchart and pens for the trainer

### Preparation

1. Read the Trainer Guidance and Conclusion sections.
2. Photocopy Exercise 26.1 to hand out to each group.

### Method

1. Divide the group into subgroups of three or four participants.
2. Read aloud Exercise 26.1 and give one copy to each subgroup.
3. Explain that the subgroups may ask any questions of the trainer for guidance during the exercise.
4. At the end of the 20 minutes, a spokesperson from each subgroup will be asked to explain what action their group would take to deal with the situation and to explain how they arrived at their decision.
5. The subgroups need to consider what disciplinary action the company should take and how the supervisor should deal with the situation.

### Trainer Guidance

This situation needs careful handling. There was only one witness. The person concerned has to admit to the offense before any disciplinary action might be taken by the company. If the person denies the offense then it is simply one subordinate's word against another.

### Conclusion

The procedure that the supervisor must follow is:

1. Gather the facts. Do not jump to conclusions. Do not accuse the subordinate. This is a serious incident that could result in the subordinate's dismissal.
2. Upon the subordinate's return to work, invite him into an office and ask, in front of a witness, if the subordinate had been smoking in a "No Smoking" area of the factory.
3. If the subordinate denies the offense, then no disciplinary action can be taken. The supervisor must end the matter by reminding the subordinate of the company's "No Smoking" policy.
4. If, on the other hand, the subordinate admits the offense, the supervisor should follow the correct procedure for disciplinary action.

The company dismissed the subordinate but had to be very careful to follow the correct procedure for disciplining union representatives who could demand to be represented by the union's district official.

Conclude the discussion by explaining your company's procedure for dealing with disciplinary action, including any special cases.



## Exercise 26.1: Case Study

An subordinate was reported smoking in a “No Smoking” area.

In this case study the person concerned was a union member. He had requested, and was granted, permission to leave company premises during working hours for an appointment at his bank. He had clocked out and changed out of his working clothes. Upon leaving the locker room he lit a cigarette and walked through a “No Smoking” area in the factory on his way to the exit. He was only in the area for about 30 seconds. A supervisor from a different section saw him and reported the incident to the subordinate’s supervisor.

