

BOLTON *Benefits*

BOLTON & Company

ABOUT BOLTON BENEFITS

For over 70 years, Bolton Benefits has been a leader in providing creative solutions in analyzing, designing and implementing employee benefit programs. In addition to preferred carrier relationships and broad market access, we are able to provide a comprehensive array of services ranging from network analysis to Internet/ Intranet services to human resources consulting.

Products and Services:

- **Group Medical, Vision, Dental and Life**
- **401 (K) Plans**
- **Long Term Care**
- **Employee Handbook Guidance**
- **Employee Assistance Programs**
- **And Much More....**

HELPING EMPLOYEES COPE WITH TRAGEDY

The recent incidents of terrorism have left the nation struggling to manage in the aftermath. Dealing with a national tragedy in the workplace is also a challenging task faced by managers and supervisors. This digest offers tips and information on how to manage tragedy in the workplace and how to help grieving employees. Use it as a guideline and adapt it to your organization's needs.

Communicating with Employees:

- Update employees on any relevant news or information via e-mail, meetings or other mediums. Be sure to include remote employees and other employees who may be traveling.
- If your workplace has been dramatically affected, consider having trained counselors on hand to help employees cope.
- If your workplace offers employees an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), distribute flyers to remind them how to obtain counseling.
- Consider organizing blood drives, food and clothing drives and cash donation programs to enable employees to help the victims and their families.

Tips for Managers: While all employees will respond differently to the tragedy, many employees may be distracted, less focused, and, as a result, less productive at work. Managers need to be supportive of employees while also trying to achieve business goals.

- Readjust priorities and deadlines as much as possible.
- Be supportive of employees who want to listen to the radio and watch television occasionally to keep abreast of the situation.
- Express your thanks and appreciation to employees who are able to work and be patient with employees who may need more time to fully recover.
- Remember to take care of yourself. As a manager, you need to maintain a sense of professionalism while you too are trying to cope with the tragedy.

How to Help Grieving Employees: Grieving and dealing with a tragedy is a personal and unique process, but there are ways of helping employees grieve and cope. Keep in mind that even employees who may have not directly suffered the loss of a loved one, may be grieving and feeling vulnerable, frightened and depressed. The following tips may provide guidance on how to help grieving employees:

- Effectively manage and support grieving employees while also paying attention to the need to get on with business.
- Make sure managers understand all the resources available to employees.
- Search out support groups and counseling resources to help employees.
- Remind and refer employees to appropriate support services such as their Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Keep in mind that emotional and physical reactions to a traumatic event may not appear immediately. Sometimes they may appear hours, days or even months after the event. Keep the lines of communication open, remind employees to seek help as needed, and do your best to create a supportive environment in these difficult times.

RELIEF FOR EMPLOYERS IN DIFFICULT TIMES...

With the US economy in a precarious state, many employers are facing significantly reduced production and profits. As a result, many are facing the prospect of layoffs.

The California Employment Development Department has developed a "Work Sharing Program" designed to help employers avoid a layoff. If you are considering a layoff in your work force, you may want to review some of the criterion for program participation.

Who is Eligible?

Any California employer who has a reduction in production, services or other conditions that causes the employer to seek alternatives to a layoff can participate in the program. To qualify, there must be a minimum reduction of 10% of the wages earned and corresponding hours worked by at least 2 employees. (Leased or temporary employees are not included).

What is the Benefit of Program Participation?

Employers can retain a trained staff and gear back up to normal without the expense of rehiring and retraining staff. The program can be flexible. Employers can determine which employees will have reduced hours and salary each week. In addition, the employer can determine which workweeks will implement Work Sharing.

Employees benefit as well. Participating employees will receive a percentage of their weekly unemployment insurance benefit amount equal to the percentage of the reduction in salary and work hours.

Is there a Cost to Employers?

Work Sharing benefits are charged to employer's unemployment insurance reserve account. This can affect the account balance (which could increase the unemployment insurance tax rate in the future). You receive a statement of your account balance in February of each year. You should review your balance and the possible affect of participation in the program prior to implementation. You can call the EDD at (916) 445-0750 for more information on your account.

How is the Plan Implemented?

Employers must submit a "Work Share" plan to the EDD for approval. The application material can be obtained at the EDD website. You can download this information at www.edd.ca.gov. Then click on "Unemployment Insurance" - "Forms and Publications" - Form DE8684.

If you have any questions, or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We're on the Web!
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