



ALFA International
THE GLOBAL LEGAL NETWORK

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LIMITLESS PAPER IN A PAPERLESS WORLD

A Day in the Life of In-House Counsel at a Manufacturing Company

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EVERY DAY IS DIFFERENT. EVERY DAY IS UNIQUE.

Revered business executive Michael Scott, from Scranton, Pennsylvania, said it best: “I knew exactly what to do, but in a much more real sense I had no idea what to do.”

How do we stay on top of new and unique employment issues in an ever-evolving business with multiple divisions, particularly those companies that manufacture products? No day is the same as the last.

In our presentation at the 2025 ALFAI Labor and Employment seminar, attendees will be employees of a fictional manufacturing company, Dunder ALFAI. They will be assigned to different divisions within the company, and will discuss problems and solutions within their division before hearing from our panelists about how they solved those problems.

We’ll be exploring the everyday but difficult employment law issues that arise in the operations of a manufacturing company, and will be guided by two women who represent the legal leadership of two manufacturing companies in the bedding/ furniture and manufactured homes industries. They are, respectively, Jennifer Davis, the Executive Vice President and General Counsel of Leggett and Platt, and Caren Ries, Associate General Counsel at Champion Homes, Inc.

With active roundtables, we’ll tackle real life scenarios that arise from unique employment issues in production, engineering/ R&D, transportation, purchasing, sales divisions and more.

Scenarios may include:

1. A regional vice president was on site today to terminate an employee because a performance improvement plan is failing her PIP. This morning, the employee emailed asking about how to file for intermittent FMLA for her husband’s illness. The company confirmed this was the first time anyone was aware of this. Can we terminate?
2. An employee was caught using a needle in a bathroom stall with the door open and dropped the needle under the partition into another stall. Falling all over himself. Failed onsite test. Sent to the clinic. Failed – positive for amphetamines and methamphetamines. Claiming has an Adderol prescription. Can we terminate?
3. Employee background check positive for drug-related workplace offense at prior employer. When hired, it was only a charge, not a conviction. Has been working for us for 4 years, and they want to promote her to GM – hence the background check, which now shows conviction. We are a Drug-Free workplace as a federal contractor. Can we take adverse action?
4. Payroll “accidentally” input a period wrong, and an employee who was supposed to make \$176 was paid \$17,600. How do we recoup?
5. A terminated remote employee will not return over \$5,000 worth of company property. Response to our request is “stop talking to me. My lawyer will contact you.”
6. Employee injured while performing normal job duties – something overhead fell on him. The plant sent for “post-accident drug testing” even though no reasonable suspicion and no plausible connection between possible impairment and injury. Tests positive for meth. Plant claims “no choice but to terminate”. How does legal respond?

7. Independent contractor – leased over the road driver – others reporting he is a registered sex offender for offenses against minor(s). The company has no knowledge of this. Can we act on it? Can we run non-MVR background checks on IC-leased drivers?
8. GM and RVP relays that one of his favorite sayings is “In the absence of feedback, anything is permissible.”
9. Responding to daily/ weekly Executive Orders from the Executive Branch relating to our employees;
10. Giving plants guidance on what to do if ICE shows up;
11. An employee in the manufacturing division said that she needed an accommodation due to a back issue; she wants a wheelchair ramp on the job. How does the company respond?
12. In customer service, a representative wanted to go on medical leave for stress because her manager was yelling at her; she has Bell’s Palsy; investigation revealed the manager was indeed yelling at her; how does the company resolve?
13. In the purchasing department, the company hired an employee whose family owns a lumber mill; his job is to choose the mill to buy the lumber. How does the company respond?
14. Issues arising out of warehouse operations: theft, fraud, internal auditing, wage and hour issues relating to meal breaks and rest breaks, alleged sexual harassment and discrimination; drug issues (random versus reasonable suspicion); retaliation
15. Employment issues with Corporate: sexual harassment allegations; favoritism; executive transitions; Upjohn warnings; non-compete agreements
16. Employment issues with the Sales division: sexual harassment; lots of drinking and hotels; issues with earning and calculating commissions
17. How companies with different divisions and multiple locations set up their HR management structure to be most effective.