

# WORKPLACE SAFETY INVESTIGATION FOR A PRIVATE, NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

## CLIENT CHALLENGE

Sikich was asked by a private, non-profit organization to conduct a workplace investigation based on an employee complaint surrounding interactions between members of their staff. The client solicited assistance from Sikich for several reasons: they did not feel they had the in-house expertise to address the issues, and the HR person had recently resigned. Due to the sensitivity of the issues, the severity of the complaint, and the number of employees impacted, Sikich was engaged to handle the investigation. Given the nature of the business, privacy and confidentiality were of the utmost importance to the client.

When Sikich was brought in to start the investigation, it was identified that several unresolved incidents had previously occurred which compounded the initial complaint.

## THE SOLUTION

Our solution was to move fast to prevent any further delays. Sikich immediately began working with the client to review the complaint, gather supporting documents and materials, and identify all involved parties and potential witnesses. The workplace investigation protocols were identified and outlined for the client.

Sikich worked with the client to schedule the interviews and was able to conduct the interviews without disruption to the workplace and while maintaining privacy for all parties. The interviews were conducted over two days at a location chosen by the client. The complexity of the investigation grew as interviews were conducted. Sikich was able to gather additional documents and other pertinent evidence from interviewees.

Following the evaluation of all evidence, Sikich staff prepared a detailed investigation report and presented their findings to the client. Those findings included a timeline of all events, a recap of the interviews, the evidence considered, the summary of findings and recommendations for corrective action, and ways the organization can help protect itself in the future from such incidents.

## THE RESULTS

The detailed investigation report will provide the company some protection from lawsuits relating to the investigation and will provide a written record should future misconduct be committed by the involved parties. Based on the final investigation report and the contents presented by Sikich, the client felt confident due to the experience of our staff, the employee perception and viewing Sikich as impartial by the employees involved, the capability of acting impartial and remaining professional, and if necessary, could testify in court – professional about the situation.

As a result of our findings and recommendations, the company felt confident about their decisions on what corrective action was needed and was able to resolve employee confusion on workplace policies and adopt a new process for employees to file complaints. Also, new processes and new training programs were implemented.

Harassment investigations are never an easy process to go through, but we served as valuable resources to the client in reassuring their staff that the organization takes harassment claims very seriously and the client is working to take the appropriate action to address their concerns and correct the situation.

Sikich currently practices in an alternative practice structure in accordance with the AICPA Professional Code of Conduct and applicable law, regulations, and professional standards. Sikich CPA LLC is a licensed CPA firm that provides audit and attest services to its clients. Sikich LLC has a contractual arrangement with Sikich CPA LLC under which Sikich LLC provides Sikich CPA LLC with professional and support personnel and other services to support Sikich CPA LLC's performance of its professional services, and Sikich CPA LLC shares certain client information with Sikich LLC with respect to the provision of such services.

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