

# To Be Silent and Patient or Be Fired



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In a country where losing a job is acceptable, it is still very difficult to find workers who confess their challenges, or even those of their families and colleagues. Among many reasons, the potential danger that comes from identification, makes violations or even fatalities in the workplace to still be a public secret.

In majority of the cases, cause is the fear of not being able to find a new job due to the influence of the previous employer. Also, the workers often do not testify fearing that family members and friends who work in the same businesses or other businesses related to the owners of the business in question, may be endangered. The main burden at this point falls on the monitoring capacities, which in reality are very deficient, influenced by many factors, especially the low number of inspectors.

Workers often do not believe that complaints can solve the problem, especially in the private sector.

It is not uncommon for an employee to be forced to leave the job due to pressure from the employer, which is in fact dismissal.

It is exactly the same case with worker T, who for more than two years endured very difficult working conditions, being aware that unemployment is very high and would be easily replaceable in the job position she held.

In the supermarket where she worked, there was no heating at all during the cold winter months. Although heating was one of the prerequisites for the smooth running of the work, for two years T endured standing all the time in the cash register but was also forced to work even in the cold. She did not dare to ask the employer to improve working conditions, always for fear of losing her job.

The manager in charge protected and helped the workers because she was aware that it

was very difficult to work in these conditions, therefore she tried to make a partial solution by bringing a small heater for her workers who worked at the cash register. Quickly, the director noticed what had happened and asked for an explanation. The director of the company considered this a serious violation of workplace. Due to this, he fired the manager.

In his charge against the manager and the three employees, he addressed their action as "stealing electricity" and abusing the company.

After the dismissal of the manager by the director; after being considered guilty; from what they heard from the director, the workers realized that at the same time their job was terminated, so they left on their own.

T had an employment contract as well as the manager, but in these circumstances, it is understood that the basic procedures for dismissal were not respected, based on the contract and the Labor Law.

In a decent job market, business owners or directors of institutions should be aware that job performance and profit maximization for a business or institution can only come from workers who work in conditions that initially provide the well-being of workers.

On the other hand, the employees themselves must respect the written criteria and rules of work in the Law and the contract signed on the occasion of employment.

In the elaborated case where a worker that lost the job due to lack of basic working conditions such as heating in the workplace was interviewed, it is clear that in the first place the health of workers was violated. When health is compromised, we have a chain of problems that arise as a consequence, such as absence from work due to health reasons, and long rehabilitation time in many cases, which directly affects productivity at work.

However, in this case and many other cases these are not concerns of employers, because they do not deal with the health of workers or medical leave, but easily replace them with another worker who waits in long queues due to high unemployment.

Only by strengthening of monitoring capacities, an high number of inspectors, and enforcement of the law, these defects can be eliminated.