

Name, Rank and Serial Number: What You Should and Should Not Disclose When Providing References for Terminated Employees

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True or false: When asked to give a reference for a terminated employee, you should provide only the person's name, dates of employment and, if asked, salary level? True. Furnish any other information and the former employee could sue your company for, among other things, defamation.

If you expect your company could be asked to provide a reference for a terminated employee, establish a strict "name, rank and serial number" policy now. While you may wish to subtly warn the pursuing employer about a risk, it's best to remain tight-lipped. This is one time when saying very little should say a lot.

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