



North Carolina Law Life

Bad Comments No Secret in Massachusetts' Workplaces

By: Karen Elliott. *This was posted Friday, September 3rd, 2010*

A new revision to [Massachusetts' Personnel Records Law](#) requires employers to notify an employee within 10 days of the employer placing in the employee's personnel record any negative information. To reprimand an employee in secret makes no sense, so one has to wonder what is happening in the Massachusetts workplace that [legislators](#) deemed this relevant legislation.

It also makes one wonder what ever happened to the management style promoted in the book, [One Minute Manager](#). In that book, the authors Kenneth Blanchard and Spencer Johnson propose that one of the [key secrets to managing employees](#) is to give the immediate reprimand followed by the immediate reassurance to the employee of their worth to the organization.

Many managers will do just what the [One Minute Manager](#) authors prescribed, and then in their desk file make a note of the interaction. The manager's "desk file" is often the main unofficial personnel file on an individual. With Massachusetts' new law it would appear that every time a manager now makes such a note, the employee must get notice.

The entire purpose of the verbal reprimand is to give the employee encouragement to improve without the employee feeling oppressed by a formal process. The Massachusetts law would seem to encourage more "write-ups" so the employer will not be accused of violating the law with the end result of creating a workforce of "nervous" employees.

North Carolina employers with a Massachusetts presence will need to take note of this law for their Massachusetts offices. In North Carolina, for now and into the foreseeable future, employers may continue to be comfortable following the style of the [One Minute Manager](#).

What do you think?

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