

INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL WORKPLACE INVESTIGATORS

Reference Guide for Organizations

FACTORS	INTERNAL INVESTIGATOR	EXTERNAL INVESTIGATOR
Typical Advantages	- Lower cost - Faster deployment - Familiarity with organizational policies, workplace culture, operational realities, and workplace dynamics	- Neutral third-party perspective with specialized training in investigations - Ability to apply trauma-informed approaches where appropriate - Experience with complex or high-risk matters - Credibility in litigation-sensitive files and with unions - Fresh perspective on organizational policies, workplace culture, and best practices
Potential Risks & Limitations	- Real or perceived bias impacting neutrality - Limited experience and/or capacity of investigator - Increased scrutiny if findings are challenged - May overlook broader workplace culture or systemic policy concerns	- Higher cost than internal investigations - Organization needs to ensure external investigators have the appropriate training for complex casefiles - Requires coordination for scheduling and logistics
Preferable in following situations	- Lower complexity and lower organizational risk files - o Single or limited parties involved - o Interpersonal conflict, isolated workplace concerns, low-level breach of conduct, policy interpretation issues - o Parties are lower on organizational hierarchy - o Low risk of litigation or public scrutiny - Investigator has the appropriate training, credibility, and capacity - Investigator has no real or perceived conflict to interest	- Higher complexity and higher organizational risk files - o Multiple respondents and complainants - o Sexual harassment, bullying & harassment, discrimination, reprisal, human rights exposure, significant breach of policy - o Senior leadership is implicated - o High risk of litigation or public scrutiny - When the organization lacks trained internal investigators - Mitigation of further disruption in workplace through trauma-informed approaches - Maintaining trust and relationships with unions
Organizational Considerations	- What is the complexity and nature of the allegations? - Is there a potential risk for litigation and/or public scrutiny? - Is there a risk of bias and/or perception of bias? - Does the investigator have the appropriate training and experience?	- Is the investigator available and do they have the capacity and time? - What is the current and potential future disruption to the workplace, productivity, and working relationships? - What are the immediate and long-term impacts to organizational credibility?