TERMINATION CONVERSATION GUIDE

THE ARNOLD GROUP
Recruiting & Staffing · Executive Edge · C3 Compensation

Use this worksheet to help with Meeting preparation fields, recommended conversation flow, sample language, responses to difficult questions, and documentation space.

Meeting Preparation

Employee: _____

Position: _____

Date/Time: _____

Location: _____

Decision-maker: _____

HR/witness: _____

Verified reason for separation: _____

Effective date: _____

Follow-up contact: _____

Recommended Meeting Flow

1. State the decision clearly near the beginning.
2. Give a brief, factual reason consistent with the documented decision.
3. Acknowledge the impact without suggesting the decision is negotiable.
4. Explain final pay, benefits, belongings, property return and follow-up contact.
5. Close respectfully and document the meeting afterward.

Note: Managers should avoid making spontaneous commitments about references, severance, unemployment eligibility, or future reemployment without confirming company policy and applicable requirements.

Note: Mention prior warnings, coaching or improvement opportunities only if they actually occurred and are accurately documented.

Sample A | Performance-related separation

Manager: “Thank you for meeting with us. We have decided to end your employment, effective [date]. The reason is [brief, accurate description of the documented performance concern]. This decision is final. We will explain the next steps, including pay, benefits, and company property, and provide a contact for follow-up questions.”

This guide is general information, not legal advice or a substitute for reviewing applicable laws, agreements, and company policies. Consult qualified professionals about specific circumstances.

Last Reviewed: November 2026

THE ARNOLD GROUP
Recruiting & Staffing · Executive Edge · C3 Compensation

Sample B | Position elimination or restructuring

Manager: "Thank you for meeting with us. As part of [accurate business change], your position is being eliminated, effective [date]. This decision concerns the position and is not being presented as a performance issue. We will review the separation information and next steps with you."
Note: Use this example only for a genuine position elimination. Group layoffs, selection decisions and notice obligations require separate review.

Useful responses to difficult questions

Employee: "Can you reconsider?"
Manager: "I understand you want to discuss that. The decision is final. I can explain the next steps and who to contact with questions."

Employee: "Why is this happening?"
Manager: "The reason is [accurate, concise explanation consistent with the records]."

Employee: "What happens to my pay and benefits?"
Manager: "Here is the information we have prepared. [Name/contact] can answer any remaining questions."
Note: This is an educational example only, not a script for every situation. Never invent a reason, promise an outcome, or characterize a performance termination as a layoff. Seek qualified HR/legal guidance when warranted.

Separation details to have ready

□ Final pay and expense reimbursement information
□ Applicable benefits/coverage notices
□ Personal belongings and company property
□ Access and departure arrangements
□ Follow-up contact
□ Any applicable agreements or required notices

Meeting notes and follow-up

What was communicated: _____
Employee questions / commitments: _____
Responsible person and due date for follow-up: _____

This guide is general information, not legal advice or a substitute for reviewing applicable laws, agreements, and company policies. Consult qualified professionals about specific circumstances.

Last Reviewed: November 2026