



- Are resources to investigate available within the region?

Prior to referring an allegation to a licensee, all reasonable efforts should be made to inform alлегers or confidential sources of the planned referral. This notification may be given orally and subsequently documented in an acknowledgment letter. If the alлегer or confidential source objects to the referral, or does not respond within 30 calendar days, and the NRC has considered the factors described above, a referral can be made despite the alлегer's or confidential source's objection or lack of response. In all such cases, an attempt will be made to contact the alлегer by phone just prior to making the referral.

Also, referrals are not to be made if it could compromise the identity of the alлегer, or if it could compromise an inspection or investigation. Note: Document the basis for referring allegations to a licensee in those cases where the criteria listed above indicate that it is questionable whether a referral is appropriate.

Factors to Consider at Second ARB of a Discrimination Case:

- History of discrimination cases (DOL settlements, DOL findings of discrimination, or related to NRC enforcement actions ).
- DOL is investigating (or adjudicating) this case.
- Statistical information available concerning allegations, investigations, and enforcement.
- Generic or unique legal implications.
- Generic or programmatic weaknesses identified by OI in the course of investigation(s).
- Determine if any new technical or regulatory issues were raised by the alлегer during the interview and, if so, disposition them appropriately.

Factors to Consider Prior to Deferment of OI Discrimination Case (provided DOL is pursuing an investigation into the same or similar matter):

Defer unless:

- (1) there has been a finding by NRC or DOL in the previous 24 months that the licensee discriminated against an employee,
- (2) the alleged discriminatory act is particularly egregious, or
- (3) the existence of related licensee performance issues indicating a deteriorating safety conscious work environment (e.g., the findings of other ongoing discrimination investigations, or relevant licensee problems in identifying and resolving safety concerns) lends credibility and/or potential significance to the discrimination allegation under investigation.

**Factors to Consider When There Appears to be a Deteriorating Safety Conscious Work Environment (SCWE):**

Indicators of a deteriorating SCWE include:

- (1) a lack of effective evaluation, follow up, or corrective action for findings made by the licensee's Quality Assurance or oversight organization or concerns raised to the Employee Concerns Program (ECP),
- (2) licensee ineffectiveness in identifying safety issues,
- (3) delays in or absence of feedback for concerns raised in the ECP,
- (4) breaches of confidentiality for concerns raised in the ECP,
- (5) multiple open discrimination allegations involving a licensee with a history of adverse OI or DOL discrimination findings, or
- (6) other relevant performance characteristics which would indicate an environment not conducive to raising safety concerns,

Possible actions to address SCWE:

- meeting with licensee management,
- review of the licensee's employee concerns program (Inspection Procedure 40501), or
- request or order that the licensee obtain an independent evaluation of its environment for raising concerns; an order to establish independent third-party oversight of the environment for raising concerns; or other actions as appropriate

**Distribution:** Panel Attendees, Regional Counsel, OI, Responsible Persons (original to SAC)

**Options for Resolution:**

**Licensee Referral** (Div. Dir. Concurrence Required (First Consider Factors Prior to Referral) / Document NRC Review of Response - Resp. - AOC)

**Referral to Another Agency** (OSHA, etc. - Resp. - SAC)

**Referral to an Agreement State** (MD, ME, NH, NY, RI - Resp. - SAC)

**Referral to Another NRC Office** (OIG, NRR, Other Regions - Resp. - SAC)

**Request for Additional Info.**(From allegor, licensee, others - Resp. - AOC)

**Closeout Letter/Memo** (If no further action planned - Resp. - AOC)

**Inspection** (Resident/Specialist routine or reactive)

**IF H&ID INVOLVED:**

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 1) has the individual been informed of the DOL process and the need to file a complaint within 180 days (has DOL information package been provided?) | Yes | No |
| 2) has the individual filed a complaint with DOL   | Yes | No |
| 3) if the complainant filed directly with DOL, have they been contacted to obtain their technical concerns (Resp. - SAC)                             | Yes | No |
| 4) is a chilling effect letter warranted:<br>(DOL finding in favor of allegor)<br>(conciliation w/licensee prior to DOL decision)                    | Yes | No |

**Possible reasons OI will not open a case:**

1. Based on legal review, information provided is insufficient - not a clear nexus between the adverse action and protected activity (30.7 or 50.7). (not a prima facie case)
2. Lacking specific evidence of wrongdoing. More information needed before OI will consider opening a case.
3. Clear evidence of wrongdoing. Staff can proceed through the enforcement process.

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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