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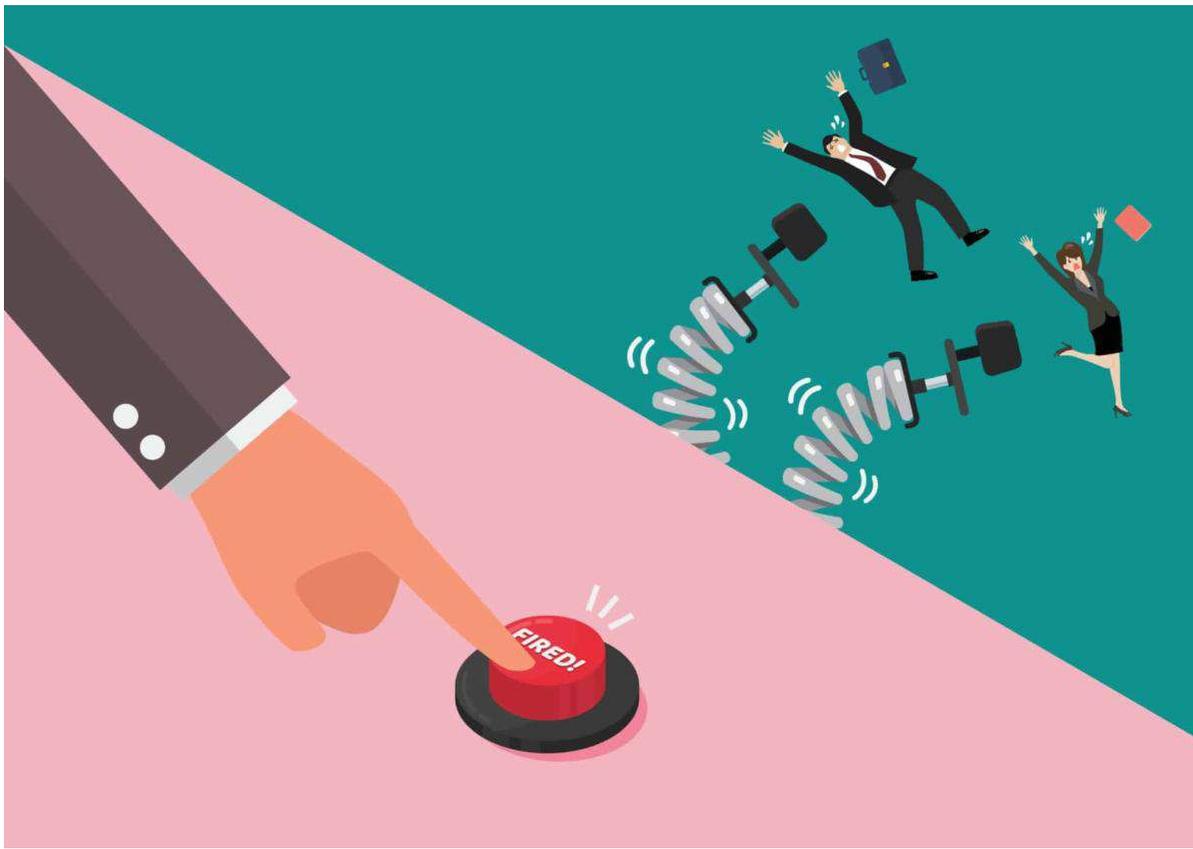
WHAT IS QUIET FIRING?

Most people are familiar with the concept of “quiet quitting” — when employees do the bare minimum required of their job description without going above and beyond. But there is a counterpart to this phenomenon happening from the other side of the desk: “quiet firing.”

This subtle yet damaging tactic involves employers making a workplace so uncomfortable or unrewarding that an employee feels they have no choice but to leave. Instead of handling performance issues directly or going through formal termination processes, managers might reduce an employee’s responsibilities, exclude them from key meetings, or subject them to excessive scrutiny.

While it might seem like just another form of poor management, quiet firing can have serious legal implications. Understanding the line between a bad

boss and illegal workplace discrimination is crucial for protecting your career and your rights, and the wrongful termination attorneys at Barrett & Farahany can determine whether your treatment is illegal.



Understanding Quiet Firing

Quiet firing is often a passive-aggressive strategy used to avoid the confrontation of a direct firing, as well as the potential costs associated with it, such as severance packages or unemployment claims. By making the job undesirable, the employer hopes the employee will voluntarily resign.

This process doesn't happen overnight. It is usually a slow erosion of an employee's standing within the company. You might find yourself gradually pushed to the sidelines, wondering if you are imagining the shift in dynamic.

What Quiet Firing Looks Like

Recognizing quiet firing can be difficult because the actions are often subtle or disguised as organizational changes. However, there are common tactics that serve as red flags:

- **Exclusion:** You are left off email chains, not invited to meetings relevant to your role, or bypassed for important decisions you used to be part of.
- **Reduced Responsibilities:** Your workload is significantly cut without explanation, or your most meaningful projects are reassigned to others, leaving you with menial tasks.
- **Excessive Scrutiny:** Sudden micromanagement where every small action is critiqued. You might receive unfair performance reviews that

don't align with your actual output.

- **Isolation:** There is a deliberate lack of communication from leadership, or you feel ostracized from the team dynamic.
- **Stagnation:** You are passed over for promotions or raises without valid reasoning, or you are told bluntly that you should resign if you aren't happy.

The Legality of Quiet Firing

Is quiet firing illegal? The answer is nuanced. In many cases, bad management is not illegal. In “at-will” employment states, employers have broad discretion to manage their workforce and can generally change job duties or terminate employment for almost any reason — or no reason at all — as long as it isn't an illegal one. If a manager is simply incompetent or conflict-averse, their passive-aggressive behavior might be unprofessional, but it doesn't necessarily break the law.

However, quiet firing crosses the line into illegality when the motivation behind the treatment is discriminatory or retaliatory...

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