

875—9.1(88) Complaints and proceedings under or related to the Iowa occupational safety and health Act.

9.1(1) Complaints about occupational safety and health, if made in good faith, are related to the Iowa occupational safety and health Act, Iowa Code chapter 88, hereinafter referred to as the Act, and an employee is protected against discharge or discrimination caused by a complaint to the employer.

9.1(2) If an employee, with no reasonable alternative, refuses in good faith to be exposed to a dangerous condition, the employee is protected against subsequent discrimination if the following conditions are met:

a. The condition causing the employee's apprehension of death or injury must be of such a nature that a reasonable person, under the circumstances then confronting the employee, would conclude that there is a real danger of death or serious injury.

b. The employee, where possible, first sought to:

(1) Eliminate the danger through resorting to regular statutory enforcement channels unless there has been insufficient time due to the urgency of the situation, or

(2) Obtain from the employer a correction of the dangerous condition but was unable to do so.

9.1(3) Discharge of, or discrimination against, any employee because the employee "has testified or is about to testify" in proceedings under or related to the Act extends to any statements given in the course of judicial, quasi-judicial, and administrative proceedings, including inspections, investigations, and administrative rulemaking or adjudicative functions. If the employee is giving or is about to give testimony in any proceeding under or related to the Act, the employee would be protected against discrimination resulting from such testimony.

9.1(4) An employee need not directly institute the proceedings. It is sufficient if the employee sets into motion activities of others that result in proceedings under or related to the Act.

9.1(5) An employer's failure to pay employees for time during which the employees are engaged in walkaround inspections or in other inspection-related activities, such as responding to questions of compliance officers or participating in the opening and closing conferences, is discriminatory under Iowa Code section 88.9(3) so long as neither the number of employees participating nor the time required to express employee concerns is excessive.

9.1(6) The employee's engagement in protected activity need not be the sole consideration behind discharge or other adverse action. If protected activity was a substantial reason for the action, or if the discharge or other adverse action would not have taken place "but for" engagement in protected activity, Iowa Code section 88.9(3) has been violated.

9.1(7) The prohibitions of Iowa Code section 88.9(3) are not limited to actions taken by employers against their own employees. A person may be chargeable with discriminatory action against an employee of another person. Iowa Code section 88.9(3) extends to such entities as organizations representing employees for collective bargaining purposes, employment agencies, or any other person in a position to discriminate against an employee.

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