

HOW NOT TO GET FIRED



So you're getting fired or laid off. It happens to everyone at some point. But making the situation worse than it has to be is always a mistake, and will come back to haunt you later. **Don't get emotional.** Actually, I take that back -- *of course* you'll be emotional. But don't show it. Don't get angry, or vindictive, or loud. Remain professional. People will be watching how you react -- and some of those people may have an opportunity to help you in the future with your career. **Don't argue.** By the time someone is informing you that you're out, the decision has been discussed, discussed again, approved and recorded for posterity on paperwork. It's too late for argument -- you won't be able to talk your way back into your job. **Don't threaten.** Don't bring up the many no-doubt-valid lawsuits or complaint actions you've fantasized about. If you have a real claim, bringing it up during the firing process will just endanger the claim. If you don't have a real claim, well then you're just being an ass. **Don't steal from the company.** I know you want to grab as much stuff from your desk as you can on your way out -- don't. If you personally purchased it with your own money, then take it. But if it's the company's, whether a laptop computer or a broken pencil, just leave it. Don't set yourself up for further trouble. What do all these rules have in common? **Don't burn bridges.** No matter what you think of your company now that they're cutting you loose, you gain nothing by causing trouble or taking revenge. If you have a genuine claim against a firm, then pursue it. Otherwise, behave yourself. Future employers will most likely contact the firm that laid you off, and you don't want them saying anything that might hurt your future employment chances. Go home, spend a week in bed, and then get out there and find a new job. And if anyone asks you what happened at the old firm, just grit your teeth and say "they're a good company, but it didn't work out."