



102 Things You Ought'a Know About Your Rights At Work

Shawn Sher

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Shawn Sher's book is worthwhile for two reasons: first, it really does include 102 insights about an employee's rights at work (plus the outcomes of twenty-two relevant court cases). Second, while the book addresses legal considerations, it does so "minus the legal mumbo jumbo," as the author writes, which makes 102 Things You Ought'a Know About Your Rights At Work both useful and easy to read.

Sher loosely organizes the book into sections that cover various aspects of the employer-employee relationship: the Fair Labor Standards Act, contractors, wages, hours, sexual harassment, discrimination, privacy rights, whistle blowing, interviewing, medical and disability, and termination/leaving a job. Within each section are several short entries related to the subject area. In the section on wages, for example, the reader will find: "Avoiding Minimum Wage is a No-No," "Know What Your Employer Cannot Deduct From Your Wages," "Don't Dock My Pay, Please!" and "You're Entitled to Overtime No Matter How Much You Earn If You Perform Manual Work." Each entry is written in simple, direct language, with clear explanations of laws and regulations when appropriate. On occasion, a cartoon or illustration appears within the text to lighten up the subject matter.

If the book has a weakness, it is the fact that covering more than one hundred items necessitates an abbreviated discussion of all of them. Nevertheless, the reader is likely to benefit from the breadth rather than the depth of the work, since it does address most every conceivable type of situation. If the author's intent is to paint with a broad brush and not engage in a lengthy discussion of any one topic, then he succeeds admirably.

Wisely, Sher encourages readers to avoid litigation against employers whenever possible, noting that "lawsuits are expensive and do consume a huge amount of emotional and mental energy." Instead, he suggests that the reader use the information in his book to "educate and encourage your employer to take corrective action instead of suing him." The author's advice is sensible. Maintaining a non-confrontational posture can only serve to help an employee, especially when there is a dispute.

Shawn Sher's book makes it possible for virtually anyone to identify and address a violation of employee rights within the context of a positive employee-employer relationship. Sher's book is no replacement for legal counsel, but it should go a long way in enhancing the reader's understanding of his or her rights in the workplace.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (July 5, 2011)

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