

12 Signs You're About to Be Fired

Think a pink slip could be headed in your direction? Most people who are let go know their time is up or (in retrospect) say they should have seen it coming. While there are no sure signs of professional apocalypse, here are 12 clues your job may be in peril:

1. You're Out of the Loop.

You no longer get advanced notice of company news or reports; and you seem to be losing your voice in organizational matters. You are not copied on memos you normally receive or invited to meetings you usually attend.

2. Your Boss Has an Eye on You.

You feel as if you're being scrutinized more closely and that your boss no longer trusts you. Your decisions are constantly questioned, your expense reports put under a microscope, and you have less latitude to work independently.

3. You're Getting the Siberia Treatment.

You used to know all the scoop -- be it business or social in nature. Now your co-workers avoid you and the last conversation you had with your superiors was a lame attempt at pleasant banter.

4. You Had a Bad Review.

You received a poor performance rating and a disproportionate amount of negative feedback. If you received a warning or were given a "performance improvement plan," it's really time to start packing!

5. Your Superior is Leaving Paper Trails.

Your boss communicates with you predominately in writing. You receive memos pointing out errors, criticizing your performance and confirming any meetings or discussions the two of you have had.

6. You and Your Boss Are Not Getting Along.

Corporate management will swear it's not personal, yet many downsizings are actually ways to get rid of unpopular or "black-listed" employees. Performance is a subjective judgment and managers are more likely to get rid of people they don't like.

7. Your Mentor is Gone.

The executive who always championed you has left the company or been rendered powerless.

8. You Publicly Messed Up.

You made a blatant error that embarrassed your boss or made the company look bad. Or, you're part of a team that goofed up and they need a scapegoat.

9. New Blood Has Taken Over.

Your company is about to merge, be acquired or undergo reorganization and your leader suddenly disappears. New hires have become the wave of the future and they've been given the directive to "shake things up."

10. You're Being Set Up to Fail.

You've been assigned to an undesirable territory or given impossible tasks with unrealistic deadlines and little support.

11. You've Been Stripped of Your Duties.

You've been asked to compile a report of all your ongoing projects and pushed hard to finish one or two specific projects. Or, you've been relieved of your core duties so that you can work on meaningless "special projects." You are encouraged not to do your usual long-term planning.

12. You're Hearing Rumors.

If you're hearing rumors of your demise, take heed: Where there's smoke, there's fire!

At one point or another we're all vulnerable to the proverbial corporate ax. Don't live in denial. If you recognize more than one of these signs, it's time to look for greener pastures and take steps to reverse your fate.