

WeirFoulds Employment Law Hot Takes: The Pot Thickens – Creating a Safe Workplace

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WeirFoulds Employment Law Hot Takes is our new series where we address the buzzy, quirky, and sometimes infamous moments making headlines and unpack what they mean for employers.

Our latest hot take is about a recent example where “throwing ideas around” the workplace was taken a little too literally. Turkish tech CEO Hakki Alkan made [international news](#) after throwing a flower pot at an employee during an argument. The incident, caught on CCTV, went viral within hours, sparking both legal proceedings and public attention. Alkan later apologized, calling the episode a lapse in judgment brought on by stress, and promising a “more peaceful work environment.”

The first takeaway should be obvious: don’t throw things at your employees. Beyond that, this viral moment highlights employers’ obligations to maintain a safe workplace under occupational health and safety legislation. For example, for employers in Ontario, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* imposes obligations regarding workplace violence and harassment including establishing policies and procedures, providing employee training, and investigating and addressing complaints. Employers who turn a blind eye can face liability for statutory non-compliance, constructive dismissal claims, human rights complaints, or even bad faith damages (see our article [Workplace Investigation Gone Wrong: Court Awards Bad Faith Damages Due to Improper Investigation](#)). In short: the pot may have missed, but liability won’t.

Having effective workplace policies regarding violence and harassment is not just a compliance checkbox; it’s the foundation of a healthy culture and necessary to avoid reputational and legal risk. Regular training, accessible reporting channels, and prompt follow-up help stop workplace drama from turning into courtroom drama. Employers should have employment counsel review and update these policies regularly to meet their obligations under occupational health and safety legislation and ensure they reflect current workplace realities. If a line is crossed (or a pot is thrown), employers should be prepared to respond promptly, investigate thoroughly and where appropriate, call their legal counsel.

The information and comments herein are for the general information of the reader and are not intended as advice or opinion to be relied upon in relation to any particular circumstances. For particular application of the law to specific situations, the reader should seek professional advice.

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