

Conciliation Service
Labour Relations Division of the Labour Department

VO: Ming and his Boss are arguing

Male VO (Boss): Ming, you messed up again. You are fired!

Male VO (Ming): Boss, please give me one more chance. I will not mess up next time.

Male VO (Boss): I have given you enough chances! Leave now!

Male VO (Ming): You need to pay me the wages in lieu of notice if you ask me to leave now.

Male VO (Boss): It is you who have made the mistake. You still ask me to compensate you? No kidding!

Female VO: Hey guys, instead of arguing here, why not seek help from the Labour Department and use their conciliation service.

Male VO(Boss)(Ming): What is conciliation service?

Female VO: The Labour Relations Division of the Labour Department provides conciliation service to help employers and employees in the non-government sector resolve their labour disputes. Both employers and employees may request for the conciliation service. In case of a labour dispute, either party to the dispute may approach the branch office of the Labour Relations Division near his place of work to seek assistance. The staff of the Labour Relations Division will interview the enquirer to understand the issue of dispute and explain the relevant provisions of the Employment Ordinance. If the enquirer requires conciliation service, the staff will arrange a conciliation meeting and invite the other party to the dispute in writing to attend the meeting at the scheduled time. The conciliation meeting may also be conducted by telephone under special circumstances.

Male VO (Boss): What is a conciliation meeting?

Female VO: Attendance at conciliation meetings is voluntary for both the employee and the employer. The purpose of the conciliation meeting is to assist both parties in exploring the crux of the issue concerned, analyzing the situation and understanding the relevant statutory requirements and terms of the employment contract with a view to facilitating both parties to reach a mutually acceptable settlement. If necessary, a settlement agreement would also be signed by the parties. If the settlement involves compensation by cash payment, the conciliation officer would assist in making arrangements for effecting payment.

Male VO (Ming): That's good. I now approach the conciliation officer for help

Male VO (Boss): Who will help me if the conciliation officer helps him?

VO: Role of Conciliation officer

Female VO: The conciliation officer is a neutral intermediary. His role is to assist both parties to understand the problem and to have a frank dialogue so as to resolve each

other's differences and help the parties reach a settlement which is mutually acceptable.

Male VO (Ming): If the dispute cannot be resolved through conciliation, does the conciliation officer have the power to adjudicate?

Female VO: The conciliation officer does not have the power of adjudication. If no settlement can be reached between the parties at the meeting, and if the claimant requests, the conciliation officer will refer the case, depending on the claim amount, to the Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board or the Labour Tribunal to seek adjudication by the Adjudication Officer of the Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board or the Presiding Officer of the Labour Tribunal.

VO: Employers and employees are encouraged to resolve labour disputes through conciliation service.

Male VO(Boss): Do I need to pay for the conciliation service? Is it effective?

Female VO: Conciliation service seeks to help employers and employees resolve their disputes through informal, time saving and relatively simple procedures. The service is provided free of charge. Records reveal that most of the labour disputes have been satisfactorily resolved through the assistance of the Labour Relations Division. Labour disputes commonly arise from misunderstanding between employers and employees, inadequate knowledge of the provisions of the Employment Ordinance and different interpretation of the terms of the employment contract etc. Employers and employees should resolve the dispute through frank dialogues and mutual respect and understanding. Where necessary, employers and employees may make use of the conciliation service of the Labour Relations Division to resolve their dispute.

Male VO (Boss): Ming, I forgive you this time. Stay and continue to work. Just don't mess up again.

Male VO (Ming): Thanks Boss.

Female VO: Currently, the Labour Relations Division has 10 branch offices in the territory. Employers and employees may approach the branch office near to their workplace to seek help. Employers and employees who would like to know more about their respective obligations and rights under the Employment Ordinance are also welcome to visit the branch offices of the Labour Relations Division to make consultation, or call the Labour Department's 24-hour Enquiry Hotline at 2717 1771 (The Hotline is handled by "1823").