

LEGAL MEMORANDUM

To: Rajarshi Datta

From: Legal Analyst

Re: Wrongful Termination & Retaliation — ABC Industries

Jurisdiction: California, USA

Date: 13/11/25

I. FACTS

You were employed by **ABC Industries** in California. During your employment, you discovered and reported significant **workplace safety violations** that posed a risk to employee health and regulatory compliance.

Shortly after making this report—to a supervisor and/or through the company's internal safety reporting procedures—you were **terminated without notice**, without prior disciplinary history, and without any documented performance issues.

You believe the termination was directly connected to your safety report.

II. ISSUES PRESENTED

1. **Whether ABC Industries unlawfully terminated you in retaliation for reporting workplace safety violations**, in violation of California labor laws.
 2. **What evidence is required** to prove wrongful termination and retaliation.
 3. **Whether California whistleblower protections apply**, including Labor Code §§ 1102.5, 6310, and 98.6.
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III. APPLICABLE LAW

1. California Labor Code §1102.5 — General Whistleblower Protection

This is California's primary whistleblower statute.

It prohibits employers from retaliating against employees who:

- Report unlawful activity
- Report safety violations
- File complaints internally or externally
- Provide information to agencies or supervisors

An employee must show:

1. They engaged in a **protected activity** (reporting safety issues)
2. They were subjected to an **adverse employment action** (termination)

3. A **causal link** exists between the two

Once this is shown, the burden shifts to the employer to provide a legitimate, non-retaliatory reason.

2. California Labor Code §6310 — Safety Complaints

Specifically protects complaints related to workplace safety (Cal/OSHA violations).

Prohibits retaliation for:

- Reporting workplace safety concerns
- Participating in OSHA investigations
- Refusing to work in unsafe conditions

Retaliation includes firing, demotion, suspension, or discrimination.

3. California Labor Code §98.6 — Protection for Filing Complaints

Protects employees who file complaints with:

- Government agencies
- Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE)
- Internal company reporting systems

Employers may not retaliate or discriminate, and employees may be entitled to reinstatement, back pay, penalties, and attorney fees.

IV. ANALYSIS

1. You engaged in a protected activity

Reporting safety violations is explicitly protected under §§1102.5 and 6310.

Internal reports count — you do *not* need to go to Cal/OSHA or a government agency for protection to apply.

2. You suffered an adverse employment action

Termination without notice is one of the strongest forms of adverse action under California law.

3. The timing strongly suggests retaliation

If the termination occurred soon after reporting safety violations, this creates:

- **Temporal proximity**, which courts treat as circumstantial evidence of retaliation
- **A prima facie case** if no legitimate cause exists

If ABC Industries lacks:

- Written warnings

- Documented performance issues
- Policy violations

...the termination appears retaliatory.

4. Employer's possible defenses

ABC Industries may argue:

- Poor performance
- Misconduct
- Restructuring
- Economic downsizing

However, California courts require **actual documented evidence**, not vague justifications.

If documentation is weak or fabricated after the fact, courts typically side with the employee.

V. EVIDENCE YOU NEED

To strengthen your claim, gather:

A. Reporting Evidence

- Emails where you reported safety violations
- Messages with supervisors or coworkers
- Copies of internal safety reports
- Notes or logs of when/how you reported
- Witnesses who knew you reported

B. Termination Evidence

- Termination letter or email
- Performance reviews (positive reviews help your case)
- Absence of warnings or disciplinary actions
- Timeline showing close proximity between your report and termination

C. Safety Violation Evidence

- Photos, videos, or documents
- Co-worker statements
- Prior OSHA citations
- Workplace hazard reports

D. Employer Motive

Anything showing:

- They were unhappy you reported
 - They wanted to avoid OSHA issues
 - They discouraged reporting internally
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VI. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Based on the provided facts, you likely have a **strong prima facie case** for:

- **Wrongful termination**
- **Retaliation under California Labor Code §1102.5**
- **Retaliation under §6310 (safety-related)**
- Potential claims under **§98.6**

Your next steps:

1. **Gather all documentation** listed above.
2. **Write a detailed timeline** of events from the safety report to termination.
3. **File a complaint with Cal/OSHA or DLSE** (recommended).
4. Consult with a California employment attorney (most work on contingency).

You may be entitled to:

- Reinstatement
 - Back pay and front pay
 - Emotional distress damages
 - Civil penalties
 - Attorney's fees
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