

Zoo Fires Employee For Social Media Comment About Serving “Rude A** White People”

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In suburban Chicago, the Brookfield Zoo has fired one of its employees for complaining in a social media post about having to serve “rude a** white people.” The employee posted an Instagram selfie, which she then shared to Facebook, in which she is wearing her Brookfield Zoo uniform and in which she tagged the location as the Brookfield Zoo. The post went viral, being shared over 6,000 times and receiving approximately 20,000 likes. Hundreds of customers complained to the zoo and called for the employee’s termination. The zoo fired the employee, stating: “Yesterday, we became aware of the actions of a single employee which we agree are unacceptable. This employee’s statements in social media are in violation of our policies and do not reflect our institution’s values. We have zero tolerance for these kinds of divisive behaviors. We treat all employment matters confidentially, but rest assured that we have taken prompt action to remedy the situation.” The employee’s termination is a reminder to employers that there are many circumstances in which they may discipline an employee for improper conduct on social media. Many employers’ social media policies state that their policies, including their anti-discrimination policies, are in full effect regarding social media posts, and that discriminatory or harassing statements made about customers or coworkers on social media will result in discipline. Review your social media policy and speak with your employment lawyer today to make sure your policy clearly bans discriminatory and harassing employee social media posts.

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