

What does “Zero Tolerance” mean?

Zero tolerance fundamentally removes the consideration of "extenuating circumstances" regarding a violation or infraction, and imposes a penalty or consequence without subjective judgment of the behavior.

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1. (Law)

a. the policy of applying laws or penalties to even minor infringements of a code in order to reinforce its overall importance

b. (as modifier): *a zero-tolerance policy on drugs.*

2. the policy of applying laws or penalties to even minor infringements of a code in order to reinforce its overall importance

Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged, 12th Edition 2014 © HarperCollins Publishers 1991, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2014

"Zero Tolerance" defines the practice of applying mandatory enforcement policies for specific offenses. With zero tolerance policies, persons in authority are compelled to act without regard to severity and intent of specific offenses. Instead, they are compelled to take compulsory action concerning individuals who violate pre-determined policies designed to maintain order, or minimize behavioral infractions. It is the act of punishing all unacceptable behavior severely even if it is not very serious.

This practice negates “Last Chance” rules or “Three Strike” rules. It disallows the possibility for:

- Educational opportunities to allow the employee to more clearly understand the consequences of substance abuse to themselves, fellow employees, family and the public.
- Intervention for assistance should the employee need or desire help.
- Restorative processes during which the employee might identify harms or the potential for harm and then make amends resulting in a better, more productive employee and citizen.