

In Their Own Words

Employees within the Boca Raton Utilities Services Department were asked to answer the following question:

“What are the most important things that need to change inside the Utilities Services Department and why”

Leadership

It has become a very normal practice amongst the City of Boca Raton U.S. management to willingly and knowingly to violate the environmental laws. I can list the following events: withhold crucial environmental information from the public, employees and CA [control agencies], to submit and sign false information on the environmental report sent to the CA (DEP.DOH) to delete crucial information for the city computer, to endanger the public health by withholding from the public very important information on water quality. In my opinion the lack of enforcement from DEP and DOH has made the situation deteriorate in a very fast rate. We, the employees, are aware that if we contact DEP or DOH no action will be taken and it may lead to the loss of our job, therefore we have no other choice than to compromise our moral believes by supporting our managers unethical behavior.

Upper management needs to go. At this point, all employees are in fear for their jobs. The threats and bullying ... is very real. First line supervisors are constantly being harassed. They cannot have any good relations with their employees because management does not allow it. Any employees that have spoken against the mafia have been fired such as _____. Unless there is a breakup of these two bullies all will continue to be the same. This survey was taken by Chris [utility director Chris Helfrich] for consultation to the city attorney to see if he could get away without us receiving the survey. Please help us.

The senior management "lead" by intimidation and fear. If an employee tries to alert management to problems that currently exist or that may exist with a future project this leads to senior management taking personal offense and then looking for ways to make the employee fear for their job for bringing it up.

Management as a whole. They have no people skill; and top management only cares about what makes them look good on paper. My opinion - get rid of the director Chris Helfrich and things would be a lot better - this place operates on fear.

The Director and operations managers should be terminated. They lack management skills and are unable to be taught the skills. We work in a very hostile environment.

The only management at the Utility Services is middle management. The senior management does not consider the "lowly" employees worthy of their attention unless it's to intimidate them into doing and saying what senior management wants. Middle management is open to employees and does a good job of trying to work with the limited resources available to them and their immediate subordinates.

Ways to intimidate, belittle, and ensure total obedience is the main goal of senior management. More effort goes into trying to find any little thing that an employee does wrong, than any effort that goes into providing the best, safest, and most efficient way of running the department. By doing this they empower themselves to keep the fear alive in most of the employees.

While middle management does try to keep the direction of the department heading in the proper direction, senior management cares only about their public appearance and making sure their employees can't bring up any concerns or serious issues due to fear of reprisal.

INTEGRITY - I don't believe this word can be used in the same sentence when discussing the senior management at the Utility Services Department. Fear and intimidation keep most employees mouth shut when it comes to operations.

The operations manager, utilities director used to play golf before the director was hired. This buddy system needs to change. They hired _____ who now is the maint. Superintendent who is their hatchet man. He fires more new employees than they keep... They promote people on the buddy system and not hard work and merit. In the past their have been employees making life threatening comments but eventually got fired from their jobs. This letter was postmarked on the 7th Oct, why did we not receive it till 10/21/10? An employee told me the utility director held it up.

Resources

Resources are either scare or don't exist. Training, education, and other ways employees try to stay educated about their plant is routinely denied. If this problem is brought up to senior management the response is usually in the form of intimidation by making the employee feel that maybe they are not qualified for the job.

Cost of living wage increases - because of inflation and other things that keep me and my family from making ends meet! Insurance issues - that has also kept me and my family secure!

Malcontents

Over the years the City of Boca Raton Utilities Services Dept. has been a model Dept for other departments in Palm Beach County. Expenditures on Technology and infrastructure improvements has been extremely generous. Communication from management to subordinates has been satisfactory. Pay and benefits are competitive. It is common knowledge in the Department that the PEER involvement is the result of a disgruntled former employee who was terminated for justifiable reasons.

This witch hunt you are on needs to stop so that the rest of us can do our job.