Captain’s Vulgar Terms for Female Firefighters Warranted Discipline



Noting that a fire station had more female firefighters than most, a captain filling in from another station asked why there were so many “gashes” at this station. When asked what he meant, he said he meant “c**ts.” A female firefighter overheard and filed a complaint. The captain was eventually suspended and had his rank temporarily reduced. The union argued that the discipline was too severe. The Arbitration Board noted that negative attitudes and hostile conduct towards female firefighters undermined the fire department’s efforts to create an inclusive workplace. In addition, captains are in positions of authority and thus are expected to be role models. And the language used by the captain was repugnant and demeaning towards women. But the captain made what appeared to be a heartfelt apology, had 32 years of service and a clean disciplinary record. So the Board ruled the discipline was appropriate [*Calgary (City) v. Calgary Fire Fighters Assn., International Assn. of Fire Fighters, Local 255 (Hendricks Grievance)*, [2012] A.G.A.A. No. 37, July 9, 2012].