

## Polygraph tests forced on employees

Contributed by Faith Sankwasa  
Thursday, 26 November 2009

A Windhoek company, Blue Marine that specialises in preserving food, dismissed employees who failed a forced polygraph test last week.

Three employees - known to Informanté - were allegedly dismissed over allegations of theft, under performance, lack of interest and were not served with written warnings but paid out their week's salary.

“I was trained for one week then expected to perform without supervision and a contract. I was extremely under pressure, underpaid and overworked. The work environment was just pathetic,” alleged one of the dismissed employees.

Some of the employees allege that they were forced to take the polygraph test at intervals, contrary to the labour law, as a means of curbing theft.

“They forced us to take a polygraph test so they know who has been stealing from the storage. Management asks us to snitch on each other through those tests so they can fire the thieves and under-performers,” alleged one of the employees.

Blue Marine is also alleged to be dismissing employees without warning or hearings and does not allow them to join trade unions when one-sided conflicts arise at work.

Blue Marine Manager, Stephan van Doorn refuted the allegations and denied knowledge of dismissed employees saying the company requires the staff to take random polygraph, alcohol and drug abuse tests as part of contracts signed.

“Blue Marine never dismissed anybody in that nature as management accords equal opportunity of warnings, hearings before dismissal. The employees signed contracts that stipulate that they will be subject to random tests,” said Doorn.

Attempts to get Namibia Food and Allied Workers Union (Nafau) stewards were futile as the Personal Secretary said those allowed to talk to the media were all out in the field and their private numbers could not be availed to Informanté's.

“They are all out of office until next week and am not allowed to give out their private numbers,” said the Secretary.