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Football Managers' Employment Rights by [Fiona Roy](#)

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The 2011/12 Premier League Season has seen the dismissal of three managers - Steve Bruce from Sunderland, Andre Villas-Boas from Chelsea and Mick McCarthy from Wolverhampton Wanderers. Of the twenty Premier League managers that started the season in August 2011, 17 remain, giving an 85% survival rate for the role. An office in which every year 15% of employees were sacked would be regarded as a poor place to work, and yet football managers are regarded as being outside of normal employment practices. For example, managers (and players for that matter) regularly sign contracts committing them to a club for two more seasons, only to be sacked or move on after six months. This would not be tolerated in other professions, and leaves many to consider the employment rights of football managers, and employment rights in general.

In reality, football managers regularly have the same contracts as those operating in less celebrated positions; although because of the nature of managers'™ high pressure and highly scrutinised positions, small issues can quickly become large ones. For example, in most employment contracts there are clauses that allow for an employee's™ dismissal if he or she consistently underperforms. In an office, this can involve a series of warnings, spread over a year or even more. For a football manager, this can involve being bottom of the table at Christmas or six games without a win.

On the flip side, for managers who move onto another club before their contract runs out, they are usually taking advantage of a buyout clause. The move of Alex McLeish to Aston Villa meant that the club had to pay compensation to Birmingham City for McLeish moving out of contract. In the office world, this is a rarer occurrence, as firms can't™t always afford to buy you out of your existing contract. However, in some of the higher paid professions, firms do buy employees out of their contracts.

Regardless of your profession, if you sign a contract, you are bound by the terms and so is your employer. So even if you are more familiar with Emile Zola than Emile Heskey, you should make sure that you take advantage of employment law services that are offered to you. It is best to have a solicitor check any contract before you sign it, to check that you agree with all the terms, and that you can avoid being one of the 15% who lose their job within the year.

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