

EMPLOYMENT UPDATE

TIPS FOR THE WORK CHRISTMAS PARTY

Most workplaces will have some event to celebrate the festive season so here are some tips to help you organise the work Christmas party.

Before the party

It is advisable to have a policy or statement on the acceptable standards of behaviour at the work Christmas party and bring it to the attention of the workforce. Whilst certain standards of behaviour at such events can be more relaxed, employees should be aware of what is still unacceptable. Examples include alcohol abuse, drug-taking, violence, fighting and harassment. Remember that employers can be held vicariously liable for discriminatory acts by its employees and therefore having such a policy will not only help reduce the risk of discrimination and harassment but also provide a defence.

During the party

Employers should consider limiting the amount of alcohol available at work Christmas parties. Providing free alcohol throughout the event will encourage excessive alcohol intake and the problems that accompany it.

Ensure that all dietary requirements are catered for so that those employees who are prohibited from drinking alcohol and/or eating certain foods on religious grounds are not discriminated against or excluded.

Employers also have a duty of care to ensure the safety of its employees so issue advice about travel arrangements; provide local bus or taxi details or even hire transport to take staff home.

After the party

Employers should make clear their expectations regarding absences if the party is mid-week or a lunch time gathering. If employees are expected to work the next day or later in the afternoon, employers should ensure that employees are aware that disciplinary action will be taken if they fail to turn up to work because of over-indulgence. Remember that evidence rather than suspicion that the employee is suffering from a hangover will be required.

If you would like to receive further information on this update or if you would like to unsubscribe, please contact Elizabeth Pollock by email at eep@brookenorth.co.uk or by telephone on 0113 297 9000.

You should not act upon the matters referred to in these updates without first seeking specific advice.