

# Are Office Romances a Thing of the Past? New Study Suggest Fewer Employees Willing to Mix Love and Work

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Office romances can be tricky for both employers and employees, particularly because of their ability to disrupt the work environment. However, a [recent survey](#) suggests that the poor job market may have caused employees to think twice before mixing love and work.

The survey, conducted by Monster in collaboration with Spherion Staffing Service, found that nearly half of the respondents would not consider dating a coworker or boss, even if that person worked in another department. In 2008, only a third of people were leering of romantic relationships at the office. Based on these finding, the report concludes, “When facing an economic environment where mass layoffs, restructuring and unemployment reign, workers appear to be less willing to risk their jobs for love.”

*While the economy might have done employers a favor by reining in office romance, this does not mean that employers should stop taking measures to address it, particularly when it disrupts the workplace.*

A recent survey by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) found that most companies it surveyed do not have a formal policy for workplace romance. Of the 617 members who responded to the SHRM survey, 72 percent do not have a written policy and only 14 percent said they have an unwritten policy in their workplace. Only 13 percent do have a policy.

This is ironic because the Monster survey found that almost half (46 percent) of the respondents felt that workplace relationships should be governed by formal company policies.

The lack of formal policies on workplace romance may reflect employers’ hesitation to enter into their employees’ personal lives or the practical complications of enforcing such policies. These are all valid concerns, and the decision to create a formal policy can certainly be made on a case-by-case basis.

Nonetheless, even if a written workplace romance policy is not implemented, employers should still be prepared to address related issues that can lead to liability, such as sexual favoritism, which can often occur when a subordinate is dating a supervisor, or sexual harassment



## About Beth Lincow Cole

*The Law Office of Beth Lincow Cole is committed to helping employers comply with federal and state employment law and avoid potential business-wrecking lawsuits. If your company needs employee or management training or assistance in drafting, reviewing, or revising its EEOC/discrimination policies, contact employment law attorney Beth Lincow Cole.*