



Employers Scramble to Address Ebola Concerns

News

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Howard Mavity was quoted on *CNBC* on October 15, 2014. The article “Employers Scramble to Address Ebola Concerns” discussed how an increasing number of employers have been seeking legal advice on what to do if they find themselves in a situation where one of their employees has been exposed to the virus.

“The most common question right now is: If I have a person returning from an affected country or a neighboring country, should I make them stay at home?” said Howard.

The answer, generally, is no. While it may be tempting, doing so could set the employer up for a complaint to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. They’re better off following the lead of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, he said, which recommends anyone who’s traveled to an Ebola-affected area monitor themselves for symptoms for 21 days but doesn’t impose movement restrictions. (If employees disclose they had close contact with an Ebola patient, however, that’s a different story. Medical evaluation is recommended then, even if the person has shown no symptoms.)

Howard recommended using the same questions the CDC asks—such as which areas they visited and whether they’ve experienced any of the known symptoms—and making sure the worker doesn’t have a fever. Some companies and boarding schools, Howard added, are actually taking such steps already and having a nurse take temperatures daily. But employers need to be wary of violating a worker’s right to privacy or of exposing them to public embarrassment by singling them out, even if it’s well-intended. “Do not say: ‘Joe’s okay; we’re following protocol,’ ” Howard stated.

Co-workers’ concerns should be handled gingerly, as well. “Generally the law is very insensitive about employers concerned about co-workers,” said Howard.

“We’ve had this come up not just with Ebola. It’s also been with tuberculosis, hepatitis, HIV,” he said, adding that the best response is to share information from the CDC and assure them the situation will be monitored. “Educate employees right now to disabuse them of any conspiracy-type notions,” said Howard.

To read the full article, please visit [CNBC](#).

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