

Businesses Grapple With Ebola Fears in the Workplace

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Howard Mavity was quoted in *The Wall Street Journal* article “Businesses Grapple With Ebola Fears in the Workplace” on October 16, 2014. The article discussed how employers are dealing with legal questions about managing safety concerns in the workplace, as concerns grow about containing the spread of Ebola in the U.S.

Howard said he has received a flurry of calls from clients who have employees who have returned from personal, rather than work-related, trips to Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, the countries hardest hit by the Ebola virus.

“I’ve had over 25 different inquiries in under 24 hours,” Howard noted. “The most common question is, ‘Can I ... tell them to stay home for 21 days?’ And what I’m recommending is no.”

Doing so could set the employer up for a complaint to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, said Howard. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention “is not saying it’s so dangerous you should exclude someone who’s just returned, and if the employer does that it’s likely they’re violating the law,” Howard stated.

“There are legal protections for people who choose to refuse,” Howard told *USA Today*. “Under OSHA anti-retaliation law, if you have a reasonable fear for safety and refuse to work, that’s protected, but if it’s frivolous it’s not. So right now it’s anyone’s guess how that would be perceived.”

To read the full article, please visit [The Wall Street Journal](#).

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