



Fisher Phillips Attorneys Advise Employers To Avoid The Spiked Eggnog At Holiday Parties

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Michael Abcarian was quoted on *Dallas CityBizList* on December 15, 2014. In the article, “Fisher Phillips Attorneys Advise Employers To Avoid The Spiked Eggnog At Holiday Parties” Mike provided legal advice on managing alcohol consumption at company holiday parties.

Michael said, “Alcohol obviously lowers inhibitions and impairs judgment, resulting in employees saying and doing things they ordinarily wouldn’t. Such unpredictable behavior in today’s litigious work environment can leave employers open to frustrating and expansive harassment claims.”

In addition to harassment issues, Michael warned that companies may be liable if an employee leaves an office holiday party in an intoxicated condition and is thereafter involved in an accident. Pricey workers’ compensation claims can also result if an employee under the influence slips and falls, or otherwise gets injured.

If employers decide that their event just won’t be the same without the spiced eggnog, Michael recommended making sure rules and procedures are in place to keep the holiday office party out of court.

- Always serve food if alcohol is offered and be sure to have plenty of non-alcoholic beverages on hand.
- Avoid an “open bar” where employees can drink as much as they want. Consider using a drink-ticket system or a cash bar.
- Do not serve alcoholic punch or other beverages that make it difficult to gauge how much alcohol one person consumes.
- Hire professional bartenders and instruct them to discreetly let you know if they feel someone has had too much to drink.
- Schedule parties on a weeknight when employees may be less likely to over indulge.
- Arrange for designated drivers, reduced cab fares or a no-cost taxi service if employees are obviously impaired by alcohol.

In addition to these tips, Fisher Phillips advised employers review insurance policies for alcohol-related exclusions and make sure supervisors are up-to-date on policies dealing with harassment

related exclusions and make sure supervisors are up to date on policies dealing with harassment.

“Without sounding like a Scrooge, it’s important to put guidelines in place to avoid creating an opportunity where too much holiday cheer leads to a costly holiday lawsuit,” said Michael.

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

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