



Safe Bets: Super Bowl Gambling, Monday Absenteeism

News

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The article, “Safe Bets: Super Bowl Gambling, Monday Absenteeism,” featured in *SHRM*, discussed gambling and absenteeism in the workplace, spurred by the Super Bowl.

Rich provided insight on office betting pools and how to prevent problems by implementing policies.

It’s exceedingly rare for the authorities to investigate your typical office pool,” agreed Rich. “As long as the organizers don’t skim money off the top, you restrict the pool to people in your office or close family members and friends (don’t advertise your pool on Craigslist), and the stakes are relatively low, the odds of the police or the FBI raiding your office are fairly slim. Another way to reduce the risk of legal liability is not to allow wagers from across state lines, even if your company operates in more than one state.”

Having a gambling policy is a “wise move,” Rich said, “as most employers do not want large amounts of cash floating through the office, nor do they want the distraction that gambling could cause or the sore feelings of those losing money to workers.” He noted, “Some studies have shown that employees with gambling problems could be more prone to commit embezzlement or theft, so it is worth drawing a bright line to limit those kinds of issues from cropping up in the first place.”

Rich said that many state leave laws let employers request medical certification for workers who call in sick or late, especially if the employer suspects a pattern of abuse—such as repeated absences on Fridays and Mondays. “Let your employees know ahead of time that you will consistently enforce your attendance policies and will require certification where allowed, which might cause someone to think twice about their weekend activities.”

“Perhaps allowing those workers to wear football-themed attire, such as their favorite team’s jersey, would help ease the pain of working on Super Bowl Sunday,” Rich noted. “Throwing a lunch party with typical ‘football food’ might help, too.”

And, if the nature of the work permits, have the game on in the background, he said.

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