

## Office Romances Require a 'Love' Contract

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Employers have struggled with how best to deal with office romances. Federal and state laws forbid sexual harassment on the job, employment discrimination because of sex, and retaliation for refusing to enter into a romantic or sexual relationship. There can be significant exposure to an employer when an office romance comes to an end.

In addition to nonfraternization policies that prohibit dating between supervisors and their subordinates, many employers are turning toward "love Contracts" to manage the situation. While the terms of such contracts differ, they usually provide the following:

- Confirmation that the relationship is consensual.
- Acknowledgment that both employees understand and have received copies of the company's policies prohibiting sexual harassment.
- Notice of the appropriate contract person in the human resources department who is available if anyone feels that the relationship is adversely impacting his/her work.
- Notice that neither employee can supervise the work of the other.
- Acknowledgment that, should the relationship come to an end, neither employee will do anything at work to retaliate against the other employee.

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