

'TIS THE SEASON FOR RAUCOUS HOLIDAY OFFICE PARTIES: 6 TIPS TO AVOID BEING SUED

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Jeff Mandel's article "'Tis the Season for Raucous Holiday Office Parties: 6 Tips to Avoid Being Sued" was featured in *Orlando Business Journal* on December 8, 2015.

The holidays often are known around the office as a time of Secret Santas, vacations and shortened workdays.

Each year, many employers also host an office holiday party, and the combination of a more relaxed after-hours environment, coupled with alcoholic beverages and an overall sense of merriment, can lead to a variety of transgressions that employers need to be concerned about.

In the article, Jeff provides the six following tips for avoiding litigious action following an office holiday party:

- Consider hosting an office holiday lunch, sans the alcohol. You can have lunch catered into the office and have just as much fun as a team, but eliminate the threat of any alcohol-related transgressions.
- If you do serve alcohol, do not have an open bar where employees can drink as much as they want. Instead, have a cash bar or use a ticket system to limit the number of drinks. And be sure the menu involves plenty of food and selections of non-alcoholic beverages.
- Let your managers know they will be considered to be "on duty" at the party. They should be instructed to keep an eye on their subordinates to ensure they do not drink too

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much. Also, instruct managers that they are not allowed to attend any post-party events.

- Remind employees that, while you encourage everyone to have a good time, your company's normal workplace standards of conduct will be enforced at the party, and misconduct at or after the party will result in disciplinary action.
- Arrange for no-cost taxi service for any employee who feels he or she should not drive home. At management's discretion, be prepared to provide hotel rooms for intoxicated employees.
- Never, ever hang mistletoe at an office holiday party.

To read the full article, please visit [Orlando Business Journal](#).