

Columbia Partner Discusses How Returning to the Office May Reignite Harassment Claims

News

10.19.21

In an interview with HR Dive, **George Reeves** weighs-in on how employers should approach potential harassment and ADA claims as employees return to the office. George says that accommodation requests are likely one of the first hurdles, and he advises that employers remain consistent with their case-by-case decisions. More complicated, George says, will be how HR departments investigate discrimination claims. "Doing investigations logistically may be harder because you can't just go visit someone in their office," George says. "For those doing the investigation, you lose the ability to get a read on someone's demeanor, which goes a long way in these investigations." Additionally, George advises that employers should be mindful that discrimination claims may have been festering before the pandemic. "I think there's some legitimacy to the idea that it's something the individual tolerated or maybe didn't realize prior to the solace of work from home, but now they know it's there."

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