

N.J. Human Resources Law Alert - December 2012

November 30, 2012

Holiday Party Liability

Employers should be mindful that holiday parties, especially those at which alcohol is served, have the potential to lead to inappropriate behavior and may lead to claims brought by employees or third parties based on injuries suffered during or after the event. While planning and monitoring the event, employers should consider these risks and take precautionary measures:

- review your insurance coverage to confirm you have adequate coverage;
- remind employees of the Company's expectations;
- remind members of management to set a good example;
- limit and monitor the amount of alcohol consumed;
- avoid customs that have the potential to create romantic or sexually charged situations, such as hanging mistletoe;
- hold the event at an outside venue that has a liquor license so that alcohol is distributed by a professional;
- arrange for alternate transportation;
- consider allowing employees to bring guests because employees may be more reserved and less likely to engage in offensive behavior when accompanied by their significant other or unfamiliar faces; and
- consider making the event after work hours and voluntary.