

Sex and Violence Cause Christmas Dismissals

Date added: Wednesday, December 2nd, 2009 at 1:14 pm



The CIPD's Ben Willmott warns about the dangers of Christmas parties in a report issued to co-incide with the festive season.

One in ten workers know of someone from their organisation who has either been disciplined or dismissed for inappropriate behaviour at the staff Christmas party, a survey of 2,000 employees by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) reveals.

Of these, over a quarter (29%) said that the reason for the disciplinary action or dismissal was fighting and one-fifth (19%) said that threatening behaviour was to blame. The next most commonly reported reasons for disciplinary action or dismissal were sexual harassment (17%), bullying (12%) and other forms of discrimination (8%), for example on the grounds of disability or religion. Almost half (46%) said the reason was for 'other inappropriate behaviour', which could include unorthodox use of the office photocopier, amorous activity on company premises or insulting the boss.

Ben Willmott, Senior Public Policy Adviser at the CIPD, said the survey results show why it is so important that employers remind staff that inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with in the same way as it would be during normal work time.



Ben Willmott warns about the dangers of Christmas parties

He said: "People should feel able to relax and let their hair down, however it is a good idea for employers to remind their staff that inappropriate behaviour could land them in serious trouble and even lead to them losing their job in the case of serious misconduct.

In the current economic environment with people under increasing pressure at work there is an added risk that people will drink too much, let off steam and do something they might regret in the sober light of the next morning.”

“Employers should provide food as well as soft drinks and be aware that if they provide a free bar then there is a risk that some people may abuse it. If the party is mid-week then it is also sensible for employers to remind their staff that they are expected in work the next day as normal.”

The survey shows public sector workers (12%) are more likely than private sector workers (9%) or those in the voluntary sector (8%) to be aware of anyone in their organisation who has been disciplined or dismissed as a result of their behaviour at the office Christmas do.

Public sector employees are more likely to report that people have been disciplined or dismissed for sexual harassment (32%) than those in the private sector (14%). However private sector employees are more likely to be aware of someone in their organisation disciplined or dismissed following the office festive bash as a result of fighting (33%), compared to staff in the public sector (21%).

