

## XpertHR Advises on How to Plan a Safe Holiday Party: Skip the Mistletoe

### *Six Ways to Avoid Liability from Harassment and Intoxication at Employee Functions*

New Providence, NJ (November 25, 2013) – With the holidays right around the corner, many employers are starting to [plan an office holiday party](#) or end-of-year celebration to show appreciation to employees. However, employers need to make sure they offer a festive, yet safe atmosphere by preventing a few main problems: intoxication, harassment and religious discrimination, says [XpertHR](#), a leading employment law resource.

“Providing employees with the opportunity to socialize with co-workers in a relaxing environment is an excellent way to improve employee morale,” says Peggy Carter-Ward, Head of Content, XpertHR. “However, serving alcohol to employees is a risk and a potential liability. [Overindulgence in alcohol](#) can lead to negligence claims for property damage or physical and emotional injuries, whether the employee is on or off the clock. And something as simple as decorating with mistletoe could lead to potential claims of sexual harassment and religious discrimination.”

For employers who want to [plan a safe and liability-free party](#), XpertHR offers these six tips:

1. Avoid offensive and risqué entertainment and keep the festivities workplace appropriate.
2. Inform all employees that there is a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination and harassment.
3. Be cautious about serving alcohol as this may lead to myriad issues such as injuries, discrimination, harassment and other inappropriate or offensive conduct.
4. Do not conduct business-related activities at the social event and avoid making attendance mandatory to minimize the potential for workers’ compensation and wage and hour claims.
5. Train supervisors to set a good example and enforce company safety and behavior policies.
6. Take immediate action on any complaint regarding discrimination or harassment (or any other inappropriate and unprofessional conduct).

XpertHR is offering a free webinar on holiday party liability with attorney Robin Shea, Contributor, XpertHR, on December 3 at 2 pm ET. Robin will discuss the legal risks associated with workplace holiday parties, alternatives to parties and averting problems before they happen. To register, visit [www.xperthr.com/pages/how-to-make-your-workplace-holiday-party-sparkle-with-no-legal-hangovers/](http://www.xperthr.com/pages/how-to-make-your-workplace-holiday-party-sparkle-with-no-legal-hangovers/).

#### **About Robin Shea, (@RobinEShea)**

[Robin E. Shea](#) has more than 20 years of experience representing employers in labor and employment law and is a partner in the Winston-Salem, NC, office of [Constangy, Brooks & Smith, LLP](#). Ms. Shea is a frequent speaker and writer on employment law

topics, and is editor in chief of Constangy's client publications. She is the author of Constangy's award-winning blog, Employment & Labor Insider, which in its first year was named one of the top 25 labor and employment blogs in the LexisNexis Community and one of the ABA Blawg 100.

### **About XpertHR**

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