

## 10 WAYS TO AVOID CHRISTMAS PARTY HANGOVERS

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A Christmas party can be a great idea for building your team, for rewarding your staff and just to celebrate the festive season and the end of a busy business year; but for employers, the mix of staff letting their hair down and alcohol means anything can happen, and unfortunately often does, ending up in court and industrial or discrimination tribunals.

### Work Related Functions

While it may not be possible to protect against all eventualities, employers should at least consider setting rules and appropriate standards of behaviour for any work related function where they have responsibilities to ensure the safety of their employees.

### What You Should Do

Taking the following actions as a minimum before any function can assist in minimising breaches of your OHS obligations, possible workers compensation claims and other possible legal claims such as sexual harassment or racial harassment:

1. Have a code of conduct and drug and alcohol policy in place and remind employees of them before the function
2. Train managers and employees in behavioural requirements at work related functions
3. Prepare a staff function letter for all employees (including detailing expectations for conduct and behaviour, and making it clear that any behaviour that is discriminatory, offensive, demeaning or sexually inappropriate will not be tolerated and could result in disciplinary action including demotion or termination)
4. Advertise the start and finish time of the function (and make it clear that once the function has ended, the employer does not have any responsibility for employees if they choose to go out afterwards)
5. Check and rectify any OHS concerns in relation to the venue
6. Ensure responsible service and consumption of alcohol by using accredited servers and not serving intoxicated people
7. Provide adequate food and alternatives to alcohol such as water and soft drink
8. Make appropriate transport arrangements at the end of the function if alcohol is to be provided
9. Provide appropriate supervision of the function, such as assigning a function organiser who should remain sober during the event
10. Have a complaints process in place and if a complaint is made deal with it in a timely and appropriate manner. Don't dismiss a complaint "because everyone was a bit drunk"

While the above may go some way to providing protection for employers, the development of a work culture that is inclusive, respectful and requires personal responsibility will always provide the best protection for employers.

Contact us for further assistance with meeting your human resource, industrial relations and OHS obligations

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0428 929696