



For Immediate Release
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“Valentine’s Day in the Workplace: Sex Harassment, Workplace Romances and Dress Codes; What Employers Need to Know to Avoid Costly Mistakes and Litigation”

Council Bluffs, IOWA – The Southwest Iowa Employers’ Council and Iowa Workforce Development will be hosting a training session for employers to learn about “Valentine’s Day in the Workplace: Sex Harassment, Workplace Romances and Dress Codes: What Employers Need to Know to Avoid Costly Mistakes and Litigation”. This training will be held on Wednesday, February 13th from 11:30 to 1:45 pm. at Tish’s Restaurant in Council Bluffs. All employers, human resource personnel, recruiters, attorneys, paralegals, business owners, line managers and payroll staff are invited to attend.

Barbara Tapscott, an employment attorney with Iowa Workforce Development, will be discussing three topics of interest to all employers -- sex harassment, workplace romances and dress codes. This session is a must for managers and supervisors! Barb will discuss recent sex harassment and consensual romances cases, potential employer liability, conducting investigations, and what employers can do to protect themselves and their company. In addition, she will discuss what kind of dress codes employers may enforce. Sample harassment and dress code policies will be available.

Barbara Tapscott is a frequent speaker and trainer before employer and human resource groups. Before joining IWD in June of 2004, she worked in private practice where she counseled employers on numerous aspects of employment and labor law. She has bachelor and master's degrees in journalism from Iowa State University, and received her law degree from George Washington University Law School In Washington, D.C.

Topics to be discussed at the session include:

- What constitutes sexual harassment and how it relates to sex discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Does Iowa require sexual harassment training for supervisors?
- Friendly behavior or sexual harassment? Is intent the same as the impact?
- Preventing sexual harassment: what sexual harassment policies and procedures should include.
- Is an employer liable for acts of sexual harassment when they don't know it is happening?
- Workplace romance and how it affects office morale, decision making and what to do when it goes wrong.
- Regulating off-duty conduct: how far can employers can go?
- How a dress code policy can help your company, what to include in a dress code policy, options to handle piercing and tattoos, and strategies to deal with the flirtatious dresser.
- Dress code rules to avoid that could leave you liable for claims of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, national origin, or similar grounds.
- Recent court rulings on dress codes and appearance policies and what they mean for your workplace.
- When you must make dress code exceptions for workers who cite religious or health reasons.
- Counseling employees about dress code issues.
- Miscellaneous tough issues involving sex harassment, dress codes and workplace romances

Pre-registration is requested by Friday, February 8th to Carol Morgan, (712) 242-2131 or carol.morgan@iwd.iowa.gov. There is a minimal registration fee to attend which includes handouts, lunch and meeting expenses. A certificate of attendance will be provided to attendees for recertification purposes. Tish’s Restaurant is located at 207 South 35th Street, Council Bluffs, Iowa.

The Southwest IA Employers’ Council is a local employer group supported by Iowa Workforce Development Region 13, and is part of the statewide Employers’ Council of Iowa system. This employer’s group addresses workforce issues, and provides both educational and networking opportunities for employers and human resource professionals. Contact Carol Morgan if you have questions about this training session or for information on a no-cost membership to the Southwest Iowa ECI group.

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