



**For Immediate Release**  
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**Sex Harassment, Workplace Romances and Dress Codes;  
What Employers Need to Know to Avoid Costly Mistakes and Litigation**

ALGONA, IOWA - The Kossuth County Employers' Council (ECI) will be meeting on Wednesday, October 22, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at Iowa Lakes Community College, 2111 Hwy 169 N, Algona, Iowa 50511. All employers, human resource personnel, accounting, payroll, and other staff members are invited to attend. Featured speaker will be Barbara Tapscott, Employment Attorney for Iowa Workforce Development.

Barbara Tapscott 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.

Ms. 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 sex harassment and how it relates to sex discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Does Iowa require sex harassment training for supervisors?
- Friendly behavior or sex harassment? Is intent the same as the impact?
- Preventing sex harassment: what sex harassment policies and procedures ought to include.
- Is an employer liable for acts of sex 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.

Participants are encouraged to register by Oct. 17, 2008, by calling Paula Seely, (515) 295-4602 or [seelyp@mercy.health.com](mailto:seelyp@mercy.health.com) Please note time change from regular hours. A certificate of attendance will be provided to attendees for recertification purposes.

The Lakes Area Employers' Council is a local employer group supported by Iowa Workforce Development Region 3 and 4, 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 Bob Becker at [Robert.Becker@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:Robert.Becker@iwd.iowa.gov) if you have questions about this training session or about the Lakes Area Employers' Council.