



Focus

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EEOC

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

EEOC's latest moves: New religious guidance, info on background checks

Religious discrimination complaints have doubled since 1997.

So, perhaps it's no surprise that the EEOC has released new guidance on employers' responsibilities when it comes to employees' religious rights and responsibilities.

Companies are required to make exceptions to their usual policies to permit applicants and employees to follow religiously-mandated dress and grooming practices (as long as it doesn't cause an undue hardship).

The new guidance doesn't change any laws or alter employer's requirements.

What it does do however, is answer 16 common questions from employers about staffer's religious garb and grooming. (http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/qa_religious_garb_grooming.cfm)

Perhaps more helpful are 21 real world examples of when religious issues may crop up in the workplace and how firms should handle them.

For the EEOC, the 16 Q&As and accompanying one-page fact sheet are well done and easy to read and understand, and the real-world scenarios could make for a fine refresher for your managerial team.

Additionally, the EEOC has teamed up with the Federal Trade Commission to address the current thorn in the EEOC's side: employment background checks.

The two agencies have released two new documents: Background Checks: What Employers Need to Know and Background Checks and What Job Applicants and Employees Should Know. (http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/background_checks_employers.cfm)

As with the religious guidance, the documents don't change the law, and both agencies want to make it clear that it's still legal to conduct background checks.

But, as with all guidance from the EEOC on this topic recently, the agencies want to (again) remind employers that it's illegal to discriminate based on a person's race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age (40 or older), disability or genetic info, including family medical history, when requesting or using background info for employment, regardless of where the information was obtained.

Remember: You need written permission from job applicants before getting background reports. And when people are turned down for a job or denied a promotion based on information in their background reports, they have the right to review the reports for accuracy.

Faster way to get back and forth between different files



A faster way to get back and forth between different files, in fact different workbooks is Ctrl + Tab back and forth. Now, when you have only two files open, that's particularly fast. If you have a third file open, Ctrl +Tab takes us to the next one, the next one and then back to the current one and so on.

EARTH DAY!

Earth Day is Tuesday, April 22nd. Here are some tips to help you GO GREEN and mind your energy consumption.

- Automatically turn off lights in empty rooms. Switches that perceive when someone has entered or left a room - and turn on and off accordingly - can significantly lower energy bills
- Investing in a programmable thermostat that adjusts the temperature according to your daily schedule can translate into big savings.



- Encourage employees to enroll in HC's direct deposit or The Global Cash Card. Saving on paper cost and consumption.
- Switch to LED Lights. They use less energy and last longer.

REMINDERS!

Under the Affordable Care Act all employees **MUST** be properly coded in the payroll system as full or part time employees. Employers that fail to comply with these rules can face penalties.

Tuesday, April 15th - Tax Day

Wednesday, April 23rd - Administrative Professionals Day

HC will be **CLOSED** for Memorial Day - May 26th

Tornado Season runs from April to July. Employees need to be trained and plans need to be practiced .



Why Provide Exceptional Service?

- ☺ A dissatisfied customer typically tells 8 others about the negative experience. These people then tell more people, just one dissatisfied customer can negatively influence up to 82 others.
- ☺ Only 4% of all customers ever complain. For every complaint received there are an average of 26 other complaints that were never voiced. Six of these complaints are serious enough to cause defection.
- ☺ Nearly 95% of customers who complain will continue to do business with you if the complaint is handled quickly and to their satisfaction.
- ☺ Depending on your industry, the lifetime value of each customer is 100 to 1,000 times the value of a single transaction.
- ☺ Research shows it costs five times as much to attract a new customer as it does to retain an existing customer. Exceptional service is the best way to retain customers.
- ☺ Existing customers spend more per transaction and purchase higher profit items than new customers, resulting in more profits for salary increases and career advancement opportunities.
- ☺ Providing exceptional customer service makes for happier customers who are easier to deal with, making your job more enjoyable.

The Most Irritating Buzzwords in Today's Resumes

CareerBuilder recently canvassed 2,201 U.S. hiring managers and HR professionals to find what resume terms are the biggest turnoffs, and in all fairness the most effective terms used on the resumes they see on a regular basis.

Biggest turnoff:

Best of breed
Go-getter
Think outside the box
Synergy
Go-to person
Thought leadership
Value added
Results-driven
Team player
Bottom line
Hard worker
Dynamic
Self-motivated
Detail-oriented
Proactive
Track record

Most effective terms:

Achieved
Improved
Trained/mentored
Managed
Created
Resolved
Volunteered
Influences
Increased/decreased
Ideas
Negotiated
Launched
Revenue/profits
Under budget
Won

FMLA Intermittent Leave Tips

- Employees who request FMLA intermittent leave must give you at least 30 days in advance when the need is foreseeable. When it's not, they must notify you "as soon as practicable."
- You are entitled to ask for a second or third opinion (at your expense) before granting FMLA.
- Nail down the expected frequency and duration of FMLA intermittent leave. Demand a medical provider's estimate of how often the employee will need time off. You also can wait until the provider gives you that estimate to approve intermittent leave.
- Under updated FMLA regulations, you can directly contact the employee's physician to clarify the medical certification. Who can make the call? An HR professional, a leave administrator (including third-party administrators) or a management official, but not the employee's direct supervisor.

Feds offer free toolkit to help employees plan for retirement

Help your employees jumpstart their retirement savings by pointing them toward a new planning toolkit prepared by the U.S. Department of Labor and the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards. Featuring worksheets to help new to mid career workers manage their financial lives, including identifying short- and longer-term goals, building a budget, tracking debt and determining a target retirement saving rate.

Consider providing copies to all employees. Download the toolkit free at www.dol.gov/ebsa/pdf/davingsfitness.pdf



DID YOU KNOW?



Customers are more likely to engage with merchandise and staff when a store smells like chocolate.



Dimming the lights could spur creativity. Two recent studies on lighting and creativity in the workplace found that darkness (for dim illumination) helps people feel more free of constraints and triggers a "risky explorative processing style."

Ever hear of the superstition: if you spill salt, toss a pinch over your left shoulder to ward off bad luck? It came from the Ancient Romans who were often paid in salt - it's the origin of the word salary - and many people assumed that if you spilled salt, you'd attract evil spirits. One way to keep them at bay was to throw them a pinch.



New York City Mayor, Michael Bloomberg signed into law a bill passed by the City Council that bans the use of e-cigarettes anywhere that tobacco products have previously been prohibited.



Effective June 1, 2014, same sex marriage will be recognized in Illinois.

What's the American Dream? 73% Owning a home, 68% Not living paycheck to paycheck, 68% Financial security, 67% Financial independence, 67% Taking care of my family financially.

In 2009, the average interview process took about 13 days. By 2013, that number had nearly doubled to 23 days.

"Internet Addiction Disorder" is not listed as a clinical disorder yet, but one that will require more research to see if it rises to that level. If Internet Addiction is declared a psychiatric disorder, employees who suffer from it may be protected by the ADA, requiring you to accommodate the condition.



Employees who attend a structured orientation program are 69% more likely to remain.