

Nine Tips for Office Celebrations

1. **Be honest with employees.** Make sure your employees know your workplace substance abuse policy and that the policy addresses the use of alcoholic beverages in any work-related situation and office social function.
2. **Post the policy.** Use every communication vehicle to make sure your employees know the policy. Prior to an office party, use break room bulletin boards, office e-mail and paycheck envelopes to communicate your policy and concerns.
3. **Reinvent the office party concept.** Why have the typical office party? Try something new like an indoor carnival, group outing to an amusement park or volunteer activity with a local charity.
4. **Make sure employees know when to say when.** If you do serve alcohol at an office event, make sure all employees know that they are welcome to attend and have a good time, but that they are expected to act responsibly.
5. **Make it the office party of choice.** Make sure there are plenty of non-alcoholic beverages available.
6. **Eat...and be merry!** Avoid serving lots of salty, greasy or sweet foods which tend to make people thirsty. Serve foods rich in starch and protein which stay in the stomach longer and slow the absorption of alcohol in the bloodstream.
7. **Designate party managers.** Remind managers that even at the office party, they may need to implement the company's alcohol and substance abuse policy.
8. **Arrange alternative transportation.** Anticipate the need for alternative transportation for all party goers and make special transportation arrangements in advance of the party. Encourage all employees to make use of the alternative transportation if they consume any alcohol.
9. **Serve none for the road.** Stop serving alcohol before the party officially ends.

If alcoholic beverages are provided at office social functions, state laws regarding their use and resulting legal responsibilities should be consulted and addressed. This information provided by the U.S. Department of Labor is not intended to be a substitute for legal advice and should not be relied upon to determine what steps employers can or should take to address potential legal liability.