

QUICK Q&A

Answers to not-so-common questions

Even the most experienced HR pros have questions from time to time. Our monthly Quick Q&A series provides answers to not-so-common questions and links to helpful resources.

Q: Our company has seen some office romances gone wrong recently. Should we have policies in our handbook addressing this topic?

A. While outright banning all romantic relationships amongst coworkers is not a realistic option, employers should have handbook policies addressing interpersonal relationships. Tactfully designed policies protect the employees and organization, establish clear guardrails and prevent potential fallout.

One relationship dynamic that should be prohibited is between subordinates and supervisors. A disproportionate power dynamic runs a major risk for sexual harassment claims, sharing of confidential business matters or claims of favoritism from other employees.

Other policies involving workplace relationships could include

- barring public displays of affection around the office,
- requiring any relationships be disclosed to HR, or
- instructing parties involved in a workplace relationship to sign additional documents, such as an acknowledgement of sexual harassment policies or consensual relationship agreement.

Businesses can avoid being caught in the crossfires of a relationship gone awry by implementing the proper policies. If your handbook policies could benefit from a refresh, Bukaty Companies' HR Consulting team can help. Connect with a consultant today to learn more about our capabilities.

Got an HR question? Let us know how we can help at HRconsulting@bukaty.com.