

Jason Habinsky in The Wall Street Journal: Guess Who Is Coming to the Office Holiday Party

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PRACTICES Labor and Employment, Employment Litigation

Haynes Boone Partner [Jason Habinsky](#) talked with *The Wall Street Journal* about how companies try to protect themselves from issues that may arise from the infamous office holiday party.

Here is an excerpt:

The office holiday party, downsized after the financial crisis, has been making a comeback, but with a twist: To promote good behavior, companies are encouraging workers to bring their significant other. ...

While spouses and plus-ones may be intended to serve as guardrails keeping party behavior within bounds, they themselves could introduce chaos, and companies have limited control over their behavior, said labor and employment lawyer Jason Habinsky, partner at Haynes Boone.

“You’re adding individuals to a workplace environment that aren’t your employees,” he said.

December is the busiest time of year for Mr. Habinsky. These days he receives more calls ahead of time from companies hoping to head off holiday party disasters but he said he still hears from frantic employers the morning after.

“Inappropriate comments, inappropriate touching, fights and flings—it’s a long list of unfortunate incidents that can occur,” Mr. Habinsky said, adding that if inappropriate behavior does occur after hours and off campus it needs to be treated with the same seriousness of something that occurs at 3 p.m. in the office.

“You don’t get a pass because it’s a holiday party and you were drunk,” he said.

To read the full article, click [here](#).