



Mineral



Question of the Week

February 12, 2025

Question

Should we ban romantic relationships in our workplace?

ANSWER

You're certainly welcome to try, but the heart wants what it wants. Bans of this sort are difficult to enforce and can make employees feel like you're interfering in their personal lives, potentially diminishing trust and driving these relationships "underground." If you do spot a workplace romance in progress, it's often best to simply remind employees about your harassment policy and general expectations for workplace conduct. However, we do recommend prohibiting relationships between managers and their direct reports to prevent perceptions of favoritism or harassment, which could create legal and reputational risks for the organization.

If you decide to prohibit all employee dating, be careful when wording your policy. Courts have found that use of the word "fraternize" (in a non-fraternization policy) without additional explanation could potentially discourage employees from exercising their rights under the National Labor Relations Act. Also, employees may not know what that word means. To avoid both lawyers and confusion, you'll want to use language that specifically refers to employee dating or romantic relationships.

You can learn more about [harassment](#) on the platform.

This Q&A does not constitute legal advice and does not address state or local law.