

Christmas Celebrations for Business – 10 tips to keep everyone safe.

The Christmas party season brings plenty of opportunity for happiness and joy but also increased risk of sorry, accidents and harassment levels are much higher over the festive period, especially when alcohol is involved. All businesses and organisations need to review their arrangements and rules for parties and social gatherings, even if no formal events are scheduled.

10 Tips to help business stay safe

1. Remember, Health, Safety and Equality laws remain in force
2. The Worker Protection Act means employers have a legal duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment, this includes work-related events. This means employers need to be proactive in promoting respectful interactions and setting clear boundaries.
3. Before the celebrations communicate your policies on conduct, harassment, and inclusivity. Let everyone know that while the goal is to have fun, professionalism is still important. The best way to prevent issues is to set expectations before the party even starts. In any pre-event communication, gently remind staff that, while the party is a chance to unwind, it's still a work-sponsored event.
4. Remember if the organisation is seen to endorse/support “non-official” events, or if unacceptable conduct during them can be attributed to the offenders more senior position; then the company could still be seen as liable.
5. With hybrid work setups, remote employees, and diverse cultural preferences, the traditional gathering may not be as practical or enjoyable for everyone. Consult and involve all staff in making arrangements. Consider alternative ideas.
6. Transforming your working space into a party floor will need extra planning. Make sure decorations don't obstruct exits, and set up food and drinks in a way that keeps walkways clear. Risk Assess.
7. If celebrating outside the office, check in with the venue on safety measures, emergency exits, and accessibility, review and verify the venues Risk Assessment.
8. The right food can make or break a party. Ensure that cultural and dietary requirements are catered for. Label foods to avoid any allergens being overlooked.
9. If the event runs late or takes place at a distant venue, be sure to think about how your colleagues will get home. Encourage staff to travel in groups to help everyone get back safely.
10. Be social media aware! A cheeky photo or a quick post can spread faster than you can say ‘*Merry Christmas!*’ Encourage people to think before they share party snaps and comments