

## Put The Kibosh On Employee Practices Lawsuits

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What are the biggest employee-relations errors employers make these days? And how can you defuse these potential time bombs before they explode into costly disputes? Here's a quick overview of the top five employer mistakes and how to avoid them.

1. Failing to establish an effective sexual harassment policy. Recent Supreme Court decisions hold employers liable for their supervisors' actions unless complaining employees fail to take advantage of company complaint procedures. In light of these rulings, implementing policies and procedures for dealing with sexual harassment is more important than ever.
2. Failing to pay overtime to non-exempt employees. Many employers pay employees a salary regardless of the number of hours they work or whether they're subject to wage and hour laws. Unless they're exempt as administrative, executive, or professional employees, you must pay employees time-and-a-half their regular hourly pay for all overtime hours.
3. Failing to complete I-9 forms for new employees. Many employers merely photocopy employee-produced documents without filling out the parts of the forms that describe the documents. This can be a costly mistake given today's paranoias, should the Immigration and Naturalization Service audit you.
4. Failing to take and document disciplinary actions. Employees who have been discharged for poor performance often have glowing evaluations in their files. This can expose the employer to hard to defend lawsuits.
5. Failing to discharge poor performers quickly. If you've retained employees for many years despite poor attendance records, multiple infractions, and even several "final" warnings in their files, you're asking for trouble. These employees are the most likely to sue when finally discharged.

## Author

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