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# The line between work and play

November 15, 2011 - 2:04pm Tiffany Grant

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## Before going to the office holiday party you should remember a few guidelines



Be sure to dress and act appropriately – these are still your co-workers after all (Source: Metro Creative)

The holiday office party is one of the few times out of the year when work and play intermingles. However, it does not mean employees should totally let their guard down.

Before going to the office holiday party you should remember a few guidelines concerning what to wear, who to bring and yes, how much alcohol to consume. There is also advice for employers on how to prepare your employees for the party.

Leave the mini-skirts and ripped jeans in the closet. Claudia Habib, a program manager at Downeast Destination Management, a destination management company for events, incentives and conferences in Atlantic Canada, advised that a dressy jean and a nice top and a nice shirt for men would be the appropriate attire for an office holiday party if the dress code is casual.

### What to wear

For a formal party, men should be in suits and women in evening gowns. Habib explained that formal evening wear can vary from the cocktail dresses, which are to the knee or slightly above the knee, to full-length dresses to the ankles. She noted that outfits that are the most flattering are usually "not skin tight and showing every curve."

Employees would normally bring their partners at such an event, but for those of you living single, bringing a friend would be fine. You could also bring a sister, a cousin or anyone who wants to come to the party. Well, almost anyone, no matter how much your children convince you that they will behave, sorry, the office holiday party is not the venue for them.

Habib said, these parties are usually held in the evenings and there is usually alcohol being served which makes it inappropriate for your children. However, it is acceptable for children to attend if it is deemed a holiday family party.

### What to drink

Now to the "tricky" part of the evening, how much should you drink at an office holiday party?

You should know your limits when consuming alcoholic beverages, advised Habib. She says not get to the point where you are so intoxicated that you do not remember what is going on.

Tanya Sieliakus, vice president of consulting services with HR pros Inc that provides human resources and management services advisement, said it is the employer's job to set expectations. She advised that when issuing the invitation, the employer may want to put that there will be alcohol offered, but the expectation is that employees will drink responsibly and are responsible for their own behaviour.

Sieliakus advises that if an employer plans to pay for the alcohol that there should be a limit on the amount. It is also best practise to factor in the cost of taxis for employees, she added.

Habib offers final words of advice for employees: "Have a good time, have a few drinks , have some dancing and enjoy yourself, but just think about what you might be embarrassed about the next day and keep that in mind if you're not sure what to do or how to dress."

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