

Non-Fraternization Policy

01/03/2017

Countryside Veterinary Hospital strongly believes that a work environment where employees maintain clear boundaries between employee personal and business interactions is most effective for conducting business and enhancing productivity. This policy does not prevent the development of friendships but does prevent the development of romantic or sexual relationships. This policy applies to the owners, managers, and all employees of Countryside. Disciplinary action will be taken if the policy is not adhered to. Disciplinary action may result in the termination of both parties involved.

Countryside Veterinary Hospital feels that this policy helps to protect itself from the following.

- **Productivity losses.** These could occur if there is too much time spent on personal pursuits rather than work. There could also be problems if the relationship becomes a distraction for other employees in any way.
- **Security issues.** This may be a concern if a personal romantic dispute becomes violent.
- **Favoritism.** This is especially a risk if one of the partners is in a supervisory position or otherwise can grant favors for the other. IN some areas, sexual favoritism is also illegal or could be deemed discriminatory.
- **Retaliatory behavior.** If the relationship goes sour, one partner (or both) may not be inclined to work cooperatively with the other. If escalated, it could even become a situation in which one former partner has the ability to demote, terminate, or give negative reviews to the other—all of which could lead to problems (including lawsuits).
- **Sexual assault or harassment charges.** If dating is allowed, it may foster an environment where more activity occurs that could give rise to a harassment claim. For example, if someone in a supervisory position requests dates as a prerequisite for positive performance reviews, that would be sexual harassment. Additionally, if a regular relationship ends, it could result in a situation where one former partner has a claim of harassment against the other. Even regular relationship activities can create an atmosphere that promotes harassment of others.
- **Turnover.** If there are relationship problems, there's an increased likelihood that one or both of the partners will opt to leave the employer to remedy the situation. This is also a concern when the relationship is going well—a partner may feel their options are limited at the company due to the relationship. Either way, higher turnover can result.
- **Reputation damage.** Even in the absence of any illegal activity, it can still turn heads if a relationship is discovered, especially between a supervisor and a subordinate. This can cause other problems, such as loss of confidence from clients.