

BRIEFING: REQ'D HEALTH PLAN NOTICES

Federal laws like ERISA, HIPAA, and COBRA require employer-sponsored health plans to give various disclosures/notices. Many employers mistakenly assume that their insurance company is satisfying these requirements. Yet the truth is that most of these requirements are the *employer's responsibility!* Make sure your company is not falling victim to this common error. Join us at our next legal breakfast briefing: ***Does Anyone Notice? The Complete Collection of Federal Notice Requirements for Employer Health Plans.*** Popular speaker and attorney Greg Matis, Intermountain Health Care Senior Counsel, will provide a one-stop collection of all the applicable federal disclosure and notice requirements. This informative briefing will be held on Tuesday, February 26, 2008, from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. at the Red Lion Hotel. It is pre-approved by the Utah State Bar for 1.5 CLE hours. The price is \$69, which includes full breakfast and materials. To register, call our office or download the form at www.ecutah.org/lbb.pdf.

FMLA CHANGES: POSTER & SPECIAL ALERT

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was expanded for military families, effective January 28, 2008. However, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has not yet issued updated regulations or a new FMLA poster. In the meantime, the existing FMLA poster (WH Publication 1420, Revised August 2001) is the most current version. When a new version is available, we will announce it in this newsletter. We will also offer all-in-one federal-only and combined federal-and-state posters – that incorporate the new version – at discounted member prices. We encourage you to purchase your posters through us, and pledge to keep you up-to-date with required changes – without the sales gimmicks you get from vendors. In addition, we plan to present a special alert on the new FMLA provisions once the DOL issues its regulations which will provide official guidance and clarification. Until then, we feel it is premature to ask you to pay for a seminar with superficial information. Everything you need to know about the new FMLA provisions was summarized in our February 4th newsletter. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!

Our *63rd Annual Utah Compensation Survey* questionnaire has been mailed out – and we need your participation, no matter how many positions you have to report (even only one!). *Your* participation makes this wage survey so important to the Utah business community, and helps ensure that the survey remains the most dependable, timely, and comprehensive tool available to Utah employers. This year's survey includes value-added features such as job-matching, new positions, and variable pay. If you have not received your questionnaire in the mail, please contact Terri at terriw@ecutah.org or 801.364.8479 The questionnaire is also downloadable as an Excel spreadsheet at www.ecutah.org/08survey.xls. Plan time now to complete your questionnaire. Return your completed questionnaire by February 29th and be entered to win a FREE copy of the published results in May!

WHERE HAVE ALL THE EMPLOYEES GONE?

For years we have heard that employees leave their jobs for more money and/or because they have issues with their supervisor. With the tight labor market we are all experiencing, wages seem to be increasing to provide enough employees to get the job done. The problem is that new employees are getting hired at higher pay than current employees, causing morale issues in the workplace. There is also the issue of increasing wage rates to keep up with the inflated market. *So what can employers do to help ease their turnover?* A good place to start is to help your supervisors be the best that they can be. Employees are less likely to leave their job when they get along well with their co-workers and supervisors. Helping supervisors improve their people skills generally has a positive impact on employee satisfaction. Many supervisors are promoted because of their ability to do a job well, not because of their people skills. A number of supervisors end up failing because they are unable to successfully manage their subordinates. This may be due to their inability to handle conflict in the workplace, which comes from a variety of sources. Properly training your supervisors can help reduce turnover. The Council offers many supervisor and management training opportunities. For more information, see our Training Catalog or visit www.ecutah.org/training.htm.

Managing Workload Crunches

Rush orders, contract deadlines or late arriving raw materials are among the reasons that cause businesses to work employees longer than normal hours. If properly managed, these workload crunches can satisfy the customer while preserving employee morale. If poorly managed, customer relations, productivity and employee morale can suffer. Here are some ways to manage during a workload crunch to avoid losing your customers and your best employees.

1. **Longer days, not longer work weeks.** Employees, for the most part, prefer to work longer days as opposed to more days. For example, if you need ten extra hours a week, it is better to extend each work day by an extra two hours than to work a whole extra day. Employees value their time off. Taking away a full day from employees normally counted on for family and recreation can damage morale.
2. **Law of diminishing returns.** Employees recognize that some extra hours may be necessary from time to time. However, tests have shown that productivity drops if there is too high a workload over an extended period of time. Under these conditions, the company is not receiving good value for its payroll dollar. In addition, if overtime pay becomes a regular occurrence, employees may become locked into a higher standard of living. When overtime is reduced, employees become resentful and are hurt financially.
3. **When, why, where and for how long.** Explain the need for and expected duration of the increased workload. Be candid, give as much advance notice as possible and acknowledge the inconvenience. Knowing how long the crunch will last allows employees to plan their personal lives and make needed adjustments. Often employees are willing to put in extra hours if they understand why it is happening.
4. **Be part of the solution, not the problem.** Make sure employees have the resources they need to get the job done. Ask what you can do to help them survive the rush. Are there equipment needs? Could hiring temps help? Employees who know you are truly interested in helping them get through a work onslaught will not entertain thoughts of leaving the company the first chance they get.
5. **Relieve the pressure.** Drop low priority projects. Are there projects that could be put on hold or farmed out to another firm? Cut as much work as possible allowing employees to focus on high-priority jobs only.
6. **Show your appreciation.** When the crunch is over, show your appreciation to your employees for the extra hard work. Sometimes a sincere "thank you" is enough. Other ways of showing your appreciation may include bringing in lunch or dinner during the crunch time or treating them to some much deserved time-off once the work load lifts up.

KEY UTAH EMPLOYMENT RULES: WHAT EMPLOYERS NEED TO KNOW

SEMINAR ANNOUNCEMENT

Utah is generally perceived to be an employer-friendly state. Thus, many businesses wrongly assume that there are no state-specific laws governing their employment practices. Do not fall victim to that incorrect assumption! Join the Council's legal staff as they address key Utah rules that every employer needs to know and comply with, including:

- ▶ Rules to focus on at the beginning of the employment relationship, such as **Utah's Employee Reference Immunity Law, Poster Requirements, and Child Labor Rules**
- ▶ Rules to focus on throughout the employment relationship, such as **Utah's Payment of Wage Act, Drug & Alcohol Testing Law, Uniform Rules, and Voting Leave Statute**
- ▶ Rules to focus on near the end of the employment relationship, such as **Utah's At-will Employment Rules and Final Paycheck Law**
- ▶ Rules to care about all the time, such as **Utah's Antidiscrimination Act and Right to Work Law**



Who should attend: Any company representative who oversees employees, including human resource professionals, company executives, managers, and supervisors.

Certification: This program is approved for 3.5 general recertification hours toward PHR, SPHR, and GPHR recertification through the Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI).

<p>Where: Red Lion Hotel 161 West 600 South Salt Lake City, Utah</p>	<p>When: Thursday, March 20, 2008 Seminar: 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon Registration & breakfast buffet - 7:15 - 8:00 a.m.</p>
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Send Registration to:
The Employers Council
175 West 200 South, Suite 2005
Salt Lake City, Utah 84101

Register by Fax: 801.364.8915
Email registration information to: info@ecutah.org

Please register the following for **Key Utah Employment Rules: What Employers Need to Know** at \$99 per Council member (\$169 per non-member). Registration includes materials and full breakfast buffet. Enrollment is limited to available space. Refunds will be given if cancellation is received at least one week prior to seminar.

Name _____ Company _____
Name _____ Address _____
Name _____ City/State/Zip _____
Name _____ Phone _____ Fax _____

Email address(es) of the person(s) to receive reminder: _____

Check enclosed ___ Bill Me ___ Charge credit card Visa ___ Master Card ___ American Express ___
Credit card number _____ Expiration Date ___ Total \$ _____
Name as shown on card _____ Signature _____