

# Fair Practices

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LICENSING AND REGULATION

October 2009

## **"National Disability Employment Awareness Month"** ***Expectation + Opportunity = Full Participation***

Our Nation's annual observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month allows us to reflect upon, and consider the potential possessed by, the millions of Americans with disabilities who currently serve in our workforce, as well as those who are ready and willing to join the workforce. We recognize and salute the skills, creativity, and dedication of working people with disabilities and take appreciative note of their commitment to our Nation and its continued prosperity.

When President George H. W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, our Nation made a promise to no longer underestimate the abilities of disabled Americans. That Act, and its subsequent implementation, has liberated the energies and talents of millions of Americans with disabilities. We have seen evidence of progress in improved access to employment, public places, commercial facilities, information technology, telecommunication services, housing, schools, and polling places.

For Americans with disabilities, employment is vital to their independence, empowerment, and quality of life. During National Disability Employment Awareness Month, we recognize the many contributions citizens with disabilities make to our society, and we reaffirm our commitment to helping them achieve their full inclusion in our workforce.

The U.S. Department of Labor recently announced "Expectation + Opportunity = Full Participation" as the official theme for October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month. It is intended to urge employers, as they seek to fill positions, to embrace the richness of America's diversity by considering the talents of all workers, including workers with disabilities. This year's theme emphasizes the vision of a world in which people with disabilities have unlimited employment opportunities.



The ADA states that a *covered entity* shall not discriminate against a *qualified individual with a disability*. This applies to job application procedures, hiring, advancement and discharge of employees, workers' compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. *Covered entity* can refer to an employment agency, labor organization, or joint labor-management committee, and is generally an employer engaged in interstate commerce and having 15 or more workers. Discrimination may include, among other things, limiting or classifying a job applicant or employee in an adverse way, denying employment opportunities to people who truly qualify, or not making reasonable accommodations to the known physical or mental limitations of disabled employees, not advancing employees with disabilities in the business, and/or not providing needed accommodations in training.

The U.S. Congress, by joint resolution approved August 11, 1945, as amended (36 U.S.C. 121), has designated October of each year as "National Disability Employment Awareness Month".

By working together to open doors of opportunity for citizens with disabilities, we can help fulfill the promise of our great Nation.

## Director's Corner

### Where Have Our Manners Gone?



There have recently been several displays of incivility in the workplace worth a moment of reflection. Three incidents in particular come to mind.

First, there was the outburst by South Carolina Representative Joe Wilson during President Obama's congressional address. On Good Morning America the next day, George Stephanopoulos was asked whether he had ever witnessed similar conduct. Stephanopoulos immediately responded that no, he had not.

Then, during the women's finals at the U.S. Open, tennis great Serena Williams threw her racket and, in the same match, cursed and pointed at the line official who penalized Williams for a foot fault. Williams' opponent, Kim Clijsters, was awarded an extra point when Williams walked away only to turn around and come back at the official, finger pointing and profanities were flying. In a press conference, she was positively unapologetic, even trying to justify her behavior, responding to a reporter's inquiry by saying that everybody treats line people that way.

Then there was Kanye West's "performance" at the MTV Video Music Awards when he bombarded 19-year-old Taylor Swift, snatching the microphone out of her hand during an ill-fated acceptance speech. The look on Swift's face was heart wrenching. She looked like a child who couldn't process how terrible people could be.

Each incident occurred in the respective person's workplace. Yet, despite having some familiarity with their surroundings, each of the three conducted themselves in a manner far too horrible to be described as inconsiderate. The displays were inappropriate and downright mean. They were embarrassing, even shameful.

Civility is one of those words that is often tossed around but rarely defined. Everyone knows it means something like "be nice." This is not out of line with the [Free Dictionary Online definition of civility](#) as "polite or courteous behavior" or "the act of showing regard for others." The general definition provides some guidance for behavior.

#### Civility in the Workplace

Workplace civility is a value that all organizations should strive to achieve. A modern work place is a hive of activity with employees often working under a great deal of pressure. Therefore it's hardly surprising that tempers can often get frayed yet, whilst that might be understandable in certain instances, it should never be thought of as acceptable behavior. A busy workplace is never going to be a domain where everything is going to go smoothly all of the time and people are not going to be laughing and joking with each other constantly. Nevertheless, with a little thought and consideration by each and every one of us, it is possible to create a civil environment which, after all, most of us would prefer rather than the back-biting and moaning we're often subjected to when we go to work each day.

### Is Workplace Civility a Thing of the Past?

#### Reasons for a Lack of Civility

There can be numerous reasons connected to a lack of civility in the workplace. Long hours, unmanageable deadlines, added responsibilities placed upon us and longer and more stressful commutes to and from work are just some of the reasons we can get uptight at work. And, while there would not seem to be too many answers to these kinds of issues in the modern day working environment we find ourselves in these days, what we do have is the power to change our attitudes to the situation.

#### Why a Civil Workplace is Important

If people are not civil to each other in the workplace, over time, not only will this have a detrimental effect on performance, it will also lead to other damaging results such as increased workplace absenteeism due to illnesses such as stress, depression, anxiety and other physical ailments too. Staff retention will be harder to maintain and the whole workplace will suffer a decline in morale. All in all, the workplace will not be a happy place to go to each day which will only lead to resentment.

#### How We Can All Make a Difference

To achieve civility in the workplace, it relies upon the efforts of each and every one of us to make a difference from the boardroom all the way down to the shop floor. Here are a few tips to consider:

- Communicate in a courteous and respectful manner at all times and also respect rules, regulations, policies and other people.
- Be mindful of your manners and treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself.
- Recognize when you have been helped out by giving thanks or praise to somebody and look for ways you can help others out.
- Listen to your colleagues whatever their position in the company and that goes for the boss too. Bosses should set the example of civility and also be prepared to consider suggestions from the workforce which could make the workplace become a better environment to be in each day.

Civility is an essential foundation for the workplace. Promoting these qualities in relationships at work requires a serious commitment. It also requires diligent action. People do not become more civil simply because they intend to do so. Improving relationships requires ongoing effort.

Incivility among colleagues not only reduces productivity and chases away excellent professionals; it puts organizations into jeopardy, leading to complaints of a hostile work environment. If each of us just thought a little bit more carefully about how we might make the workplace a happier place to be, you'd be quite surprised how staff morale would soon increase dramatically as a result.

## ***DLLR Keeps its Commitment to Cultural Diversity and Inclusion***

**This month, DLLR and the Office of Fair Practices would like to recognize several important Cultural Observances that are celebrated annually in our country during the month of October.**

### **German-American Heritage Month September 15 – October 15, 2009**



German-American Heritage Month is celebrated annually in the United States during the thirty day period of September 15 through October 15. German-Americans form the largest self-reported ancestry group in the United States, outnumbering the Irish and English. They account for 50 million people, or 17% of the U.S. population. California and Texas have the largest populations of German origin, although upper Midwestern states, including North Dakota and Wisconsin, have the highest proportion of German-American population. The first Germans to arrive in the U.S. settled in the colony of Jamestown, Virginia, in 1608. It wasn't until the 1680's, however, that significant numbers arrived, settling primarily in New York and Pennsylvania. Immigration continued in substantial numbers during the nineteenth century, with some eight million immigrants coming from Germany. The largest numbers of arrivals were between 1840 and 1900. Some arrived seeking religious or political freedom, others for economic opportunities greater than those in Europe, and others simply for the chance to start fresh in the New World. German Americans have been influential in almost every field, from science to architecture, industry, sports, and entertainment. Some, like Brooklyn Bridge engineer John A. Roebling or architect Walter Gropius, left behind visible landmarks. Others, like Albert Einstein and Wernher von Braun, set intellectual landmarks. Still others, like Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Jack Nicklaus, and Leonardo DiCaprio became prominent athletes and **actors**.

### **Italian Heritage & Culture Month October 2009**



Every year the U.S. president signs an executive order designating the month of October as National Italian American Heritage Month. Coinciding with the festivities surrounding Columbus Day, the proclamation is recognition of the many achievements, contributions, and successes of Americans of Italian descent as well as Italians in America. The term "America" is derived from the Italian first name Amerigo, after the Italian cartographer and explorer Amerigo Vespucci. Vespucci is credited with proving that Columbus' islands of the New World were in fact a new continent. In 1507, Martin Waldseemüller created a map naming the new continent after Amerigo Vespucci. The Italian Giovanni da Verrazzano was the first European explorer to pass New York Harbor. The first Italian to live in what is now the United States was Pietro Cesare Alberti, a Venetian sailor, who settled in New York on June 2, 1635. Throughout the 1800s, Italians arrived in the US in small numbers. Most immigration from Italy occurred in the late 19th and 20th centuries between 1880 and 1924, but more specifically, 1900 and 1914. Most Italian Americans came from Southern Italy, many of whom were from Sicily. Most were from rural places and had little education. Smaller but significant numbers came from the northern regions of Liguria and Venet. Famous Italian-American today are, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, stand-up comedian and talk show host Jay Leno and pop singer Madonna.

### **Polish-American Heritage Month October 2009**



Since 1608, when the first Polish settlers arrived at Jamestown, VA, Polish-Americans have been an important part of America's history and culture. In 2009, Polish-Americans will mark the 28th Anniversary of the founding of Polish American Heritage Month, an event which began in Philadelphia, PA, and became a national celebration of Polish history, culture and pride. There are an estimated 10 million such Polish Americans, representing about 3% of the population of the United States. Polish American Heritage Month was first celebrated in 1981 in Pennsylvania. Originally, August was the month selected to focus in on the contributions of great Americans of Polish descent that were often not recognized. Michael Blichasz of Philadelphia, a fourth generation Polish American, started in an effort to bring to the forefront the strong pride he believed all Americans of Polish heritage should have in the successes that Polish Americans have made in America. Polish American Heritage Month became a great success in Pennsylvania and in 1986, it was made a national campaign and the date moved into the month of October. Polish Americans and Poles in America now had a way to express their spirit in a truly American way. The contributions made to America, from the first Polish settlers in Jamestown, Virginia as craftsmen and artisans, and leaders in the fight for representation, to astronaut Dr. James Pawelczyk, third generation Polish American and mission specialist for the latest missions of the space shuttle, are very immense.

## October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month



Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women in the United States, aside from skin cancer. According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), an estimated 192,370 new cases of invasive breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed among women in the United States this year. An estimated 40,170 women are expected to die from the disease in 2009 alone. Today, there are about 2.5 million breast cancer survivors living in the United States.

Breast cancer is a malignant tumor that grows in one or both of the breasts. Breast cancer usually develops in the ducts or lobules, also known as the milk-producing areas of the breast.

According to the American Cancer Society, any of the following unusual changes in the breast can be a symptom of breast cancer:

- swelling of all or part of the breast
- skin irritation or dimpling
- breast pain
- nipple pain or the nipple turning inward
- redness, scaliness, or thickening of the nipple or breast skin
- a nipple discharge other than breast milk
- a lump in the underarm area

These changes also can be signs of less serious conditions that are not cancerous, such as an infection or a cyst. It's important to get any breast changes checked out promptly by a doctor.

So many women you know may have or have had breast cancer, such as relatives, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. That's why it is extremely important to do self examinations as well as getting a yearly mammogram in order to detect any signs of breast cancer as soon as possible. With early detection and proper treatment, you can be a SURVIVOR! To learn more about the symptoms and treatment of breast cancer or to get information for a friend or relative, please visit [www.breastcancer.org](http://www.breastcancer.org).



Domestic violence, also known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, child abuse or intimate partner violence (IPV), can be broadly defined as a pattern of abusive behaviors by one or both partners in an intimate relationship such as marriage, dating, family, friends or cohabitation. Domestic violence has many forms including physical aggression (hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, throwing objects), or threats thereof sexual abuse, emotional abuse, controlling or domineering, intimidation, stalking, passive/covert abuse (e.g., neglect) and economic deprivation.

Teenagers often experience violence in dating relationships as well. Statistics show that one in three teenagers has experienced violence in a dating relationship. In dating violence, one partner tries to maintain power and control over the other through abuse. Dating violence crosses all racial, economic and social lines. Most victims are young women, who are also at greater risk for serious injury. Young women need a dating safety plan and parents can assist with creating this plan. Most parents do not recognize teen dating violence as a significant issue.

While the most common type of domestic violence is male against female, there is also a great number of men who experience domestic violence at the hands of their female spouse or partner. According to the Centers for Disease Control, domestic violence affects more than 32 million American men and women (10% of the U.S. population).

Getting out of an abusive or violent relationship isn't always easy. Maybe you're still hoping that things will change. Maybe you're afraid of what your partner will do if he discovers you're trying to leave. Whatever your reasons, you probably feel trapped and helpless. You don't have to be a victim of domestic abuse, if you are physically assaulted by your spouse or partner, seek immediate intervention by calling 911. For more information and to seek help or counseling, please contact the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence by calling 1-800-799-SAFE or on the web at [www.NDVH.org](http://www.NDVH.org).



Department of  
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## Happy Halloween!

### Halloween Safety Tips

#### Trick-or-Treaters

- Carry a flashlight
- Walk, don't run
- Stay on Sidewalks
- Obey traffic signals
- Stay in familiar neighborhoods

#### Parents

- Make sure your child eats dinner before setting out.
- Someone in the group should carry a cell phone to call home or 911.
- You should know where they are going.
- Purchase flame retardant costumes.
- Young children of any age should be accompanied by an adult.



#### Homeowners

- Make sure your yard is clear of such things as ladders, hoses, dog leashes and flower pots that can trip youngsters.
- Pets get frightened on Halloween. Bring them inside to protect them from cars or inadvertently biting a trick-or-treater.
- Battery powered jack o'lantern candles are preferable to a real flame.
- Make sure paper or cloth yard decorations won't be blown into a flaming candle.
- Healthy food alternatives for trick-or-treaters include packages of low-fat crackers, packaged fruit rolls, and single-serve packets of low-fat popcorn that can be microwaved later.

For the complete list of Halloween safety tips go to [www.Childrensafetyzone.com](http://www.Childrensafetyzone.com).  
PDF Link: [http://www.childrensafetyzone.com/safety/pdf/Halloween\\_Safety\\_Tips.pdf](http://www.childrensafetyzone.com/safety/pdf/Halloween_Safety_Tips.pdf)