



Additional Help



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Managing Workplace Excitement During March Madness

With March madness ramping up, employers may wonder if they can (or should) monitor their employees' sports-related activity. While there are business priorities that rank higher than breaking up the office pool, companies should take an interest in what employees are doing.

During March, sports fanatics and those who are not sports fanatics gather to watch, discuss, and bet on the games that comprise the NCAA basketball tournament. While sports betting is generally illegal, many employers look the other way during March Madness, mostly because the stakes are generally low and it can create a fun

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atmosphere. For companies where gambling has become a major workplace distraction, MRA has a [sample](#) policy that can be used to clarify expectations.

Perhaps a bigger concern for employers is the loss of productivity that may result when employees research their teams, fill out their brackets, bet in office pools, chat about and watch games during work hours.

How can companies keep their productivity levels up during March Madness without appearing to be a killjoy?

Embrace the Fun

- Provide a television in the break room so employees can watch the games and socialize with others, rather than watching at their desk.

- Allow employees to root for their favorite team by wearing team gear on a designated day or one day a week throughout the tournament. If temporary dress code modifications are not permitted in your workplace, encourage employees to display team paraphernalia in their workspaces.
- If possible, allow employees to work a flexible schedule. They may be able to put in a full day of work and still get home to see their alma mater's game.
- Organize a company-run pool that does not involve the exchange of money and is completely voluntary. Entry into the pool is free and prizes may include parking privileges, a complimentary dinner, movie tickets, or a small gift basket.

How employers handle March Madness will depend on their company's culture. While it can be somewhat disruptive to the normal workday, if managed properly it can be an opportunity to boost morale with camaraderie, team building and fun.

Have questions about employee conduct in the workplace? MRA's [HR Advisors](#) can help!

About MRA

We help businesses thrive by creating powerful teams and safe, successful workplaces.

Founded in 1901, MRA is one of the largest employer associations and serves 3,000 employers. Our members range in size from small entrepreneurs to Fortune 50 companies and reflect the diversity of industries in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Member organizations have access to expert guidance, best practices, essential tools, and dozens of services in human resources, learning and development, and productivity improvement. Member services include a 24/7 Hotline, HR resource center, affirmative action, recruiting, employee retention, reference and background investigations, organization development, roundtables, business skills, and management and leadership training.

Learn how MRA can help you develop and retain a powerful workforce. Call 800.488.4845 or visit mranet.org.

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