

## Is an Off-Duty Lap Dance Request Cause for Alarm?



Crystal works as an engineer at ABC Processing Plant. Unbeknownst to her employer, on the weekends, she also has a second job as an exotic dancer at the Boom-Boom Room (a “gentleman’s club” in a nearby town). Crystal has been working both jobs for over a year and Crystal doesn’t mention her weekend gig to her coworkers at the plant. In fact, until last Saturday night, no one from the plant even knew Crystal had an “alternative” side-profession.

Last Saturday night, the Plant Controller, Doug, came into the Boom-Boom Room while Crystal was working. While at the club, Doug ordered a lap dance from Crystal after she had performed on the stage. Crystal was a little surprised that one of her superiors was at the club and requested a lap dance, but she wasn’t really uncomfortable by the exchange.

On Monday morning, Crystal went to the HR Manager, Stella, and informed her what had happened on Saturday night. Crystal emphasized to Stella that she was not ashamed of her other job nor was she bothered by the fact that Doug had requested the lap dance. Crystal simply wanted Stella to speak to Doug and ask him not to “share” his discovery with the other employees because she didn’t want to be the center of the employee rumor mill. Stella thanked Crystal for bringing the matter to her attention and promised Crystal that she would speak with Doug.

After speaking to Crystal, Stella was shocked that Doug, a member of Senior Management at the Plant, had requested a lap dance from a subordinate – even if he was off-duty and it was a part of her second job. Stella felt that she should do more than just “talk to Doug,” but she wasn’t sure how to respond, so she called an HR Professional for guidance on how to handle the situation.

The HR Professional agreed that Doug had exercised poor judgement when he requested a lap dance from Crystal. However, disciplining Doug for this off-duty conduct would be inappropriate under the circumstances – especially since Doug had not done anything different from any other patron at the Club.

Instead, the HR Professional advised Stella to speak with Doug and remind him of his responsibilities as a manager to uphold company policies. It was also recommended that Stella specifically remind Doug about the company’s Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy and further remind Doug that he cannot use his newly-discovered information about Crystal to create a hostile work environment for her with other employees.

Stella agreed with the HR Professional's advice and felt that talking with Doug would put him on notice that the company was aware of the situation and would prompt Doug to think more critically about his off-duty actions. When Stella spoke to Doug, he was instantly apologetic about his off-duty conduct. Doug admitted that it wasn't the best idea to continue with the lap dance once he actually recognized Crystal and he promised he would not discuss this off-duty incident with people at the plant.

Employers generally have little control over an employee's off-duty conduct – unless there is some relationship between the conduct and the employee's job. Depending on the nature of the employment, certain off-duty related actions could have adverse consequences that could affect the workplace. Workplace rules and regulations should address these issues upfront so employees know where the line is and what actions can clearly cross it.