

# It's OK to discipline employees for public displays of affection

If employees' on-site amorous actions are making you or their co-workers uncomfortable, don't be afraid to tell the lovebirds to withhold their romance for more private, off-premise moments. Courts will likely uphold your request and any subsequent discipline if the employees don't comply.

**Recent case:** An automotive worker started a personal relationship with a married co-worker whose husband also worked at the plant. The company felt their displays of affection at work were inappropriate after employees complained about being offended by some passionate kissing in the plant lobby.

Management asked them to stop, but when the lip-locking continued, the male worker was disciplined. He sued for sex discrimination, claiming the discipline constituted an "overshow of supervision" that created a hostile work environment. And he claimed that female employees weren't punished for similar behavior. The Ohio Court of Appeals rejected the suit and allowed the discipline to stand. (Schwab v. Delphi Packard Elec. Sys., No. 2002-T-0081, Ohio App., Sept. 12, 2003)