



LAURA RUBENSTEIN, ESQ.

lrubenstein@wcslaw.com

410-659-1347

What are Ostentatious Earrings?

By [Laura Rubenstein](#)

The other day I was speaking with an acquaintance who works as a tailor at a high-end men's clothing store. Her manager had recently counseled her about the clothing and jewelry she wore to work, basically saying: More clothing, less jewelry. She replied to her manager that the customers liked her style and complimented her on the clothes and jewelry she wore. (She has a particular interest in big dangling earrings, big bangs and banana hair clips from the 80s. Lots of Aquanet too.) The manager then showed her a copy of the company's dress code policy which stated, among other things, "No ostentatious earrings." She asked him what ostentatious meant and he admitted he didn't know the definition. She then went on to

complain that if the company wanted her to dress a certain way, then they should give her money to buy clothes. The manager left her alone and she continued to wear what she wanted to work.

So, what are some takeaways for employers? First, handbook policies should be written in simple language with the audience in mind. Words that require staff and management to use a dictionary should be avoided.

Second, if companies want staff to sell their clothing or products, they should either provide the clothing/products free or at a discount. For example, Under Armor gives employees a 50% discount on all products. Otherwise, if companies have expectations that staff wear a certain uniform, that should be specified during the interview process or at the outset of employment.

Third, make sure that dress policies serve a purpose. Employees meeting with customers should dress professionally to represent the company's image appropriately, but do back office staff need to wear a suit?

Fourth, the manager didn't resolve the issue. He exercised poor leadership. He should have told her specifically what was and was not acceptable and provided her with tips for how to dress differently to comply with written policy. The employee left that conversation disgruntled and offended and the manager failed at a chance to appropriately address a legitimate concern.

For more questions about your company's dress code, management training, or to discuss other workplace policies, contact Laura Rubenstein at 410.659.1347 or LRubenstein@wcslaw.com.

SBA Is Considering Changes to The 8(a) and HUBZone Programs

By [Michael Stover](#)

On May 30, 2018, the SBA announced in the Federal Register that it is considering making substantive changes to the regulations governing both the 8(a) and HUBZone programs. Specifically, the SBA is looking at how best to reduce unnecessary or excessive regulatory burdens in those programs and at consolidating the All Small Mentor Protégé Program and the 8(a) Mentor Protégé Program into one program and possibly eliminating the SBA's role in approving joint venture agreements for 8(a) competitive contracts. In addition, the SBA is considering revising the process for approving management changes in entity-owned 8(a) firms.

The SBA stated that its "intent is to implement changes that will make it easier for small business concerns to understand and comply with the programs' requirements and make these programs more effective and improve the delivery of them to the small business community." One proposed amendment would allow mentors participating in the SBA's mentor protégé programs to have more than three protégés at one time. However, the SBA expressed concern that "allowing a large business mentor to have additional protégé firms at one time could permit them to unduly benefit from small business contracts, through joint ventures with their protégé firms, which they would otherwise not be eligible for." Nevertheless, SBA is seeking comments on whether lifting the current regulatory limit would benefit small businesses and further the programs' purpose. If you are a small business or a large mentor business be sure to follow the SBA's proposed rules and requests for comments so that you can provide your comments on the changes being considered.



MICHAEL STOVER, ESQ.

mstover@wcslaw.com

410-659-1321

Wright, Constable & Skeen is ranked as a Tier 1 law firm by U.S. News & World Report in Baltimore in numerous practice areas. It is a full-service law firm representing businesses and individuals in national and local matters including: Commercial Litigation, Construction, Estates & Trusts, Family Law, Fidelity and Surety, Government Contracting, Health Care, Labor & Employment, Immigration, Insurance Defense, Intellectual Property, Bankruptcy & Creditors' Rights, Maritime & Transportation, Real Estate, Mediation and Arbitration.