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### Is it always wrong to sleep with the boss?



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We all know that the heart wants what it wants—and the loins can have a pretty strong say in the matter—but should a subordinate always steer clear of an intimate relationship with the boss? Is it always wrong to sleep with your boss?

"People who work together sometimes fall in love. It's actually very common," said workplace communications advisor and sexual harassment expert [Kathleen Neville](#). "What I recommend to those who are developing or have developed a personal relationship is to come forward and let the company know about the relationship. It's a good test as to whether or not both people are taking their relationship seriously. Once the company knows, it will offer alternative reporting channels that will protect all parties—the company, the couple, and those who work for and around them."

In company cultures that don't have a strict ban on fraternizing with employees, the boss and subordinate that are romantically involved may be asked to sign a "love letter"—which is a document that states the employees of a company are involved in a consensual relationship. This is done in order to protect the company from a sexual harassment lawsuit if the relationship goes sour later.

Although a company may not prohibit a boss/employee sexual relationship, people should still be careful—particularly the subordinates involved. Although the boss in the relationship may walk away from the romance relatively unscathed—particularly a well-liked boss—the employee often becomes the office pariah.

"Many times, employees engaged in relationships with the boss are perceived as not deserving of the positive job actions they receive. Other employees perceive the employee to be receiving favoritism as a result of the relationship," said Heather Gatley, Executive Vice President of HR Services and General Counsel for [AlphaStaff](#). "Typically because the employee is the less valuable to the organization, it is often the employee who is going to be terminated, transferred, or removed from the organization. It is a big price to pay for a fling."

*This article originally appeared on my [Workplace Communication Examiner](#) page on October 9, 2009.*

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