



riskINSIGHTS

'Electronic overtime' a growing concern Smart Phones let work spill into personal time

Source: Trenton Times (NJ)

ATLANTA-Those smartphones and BlackBerrys that enable work anytime, anywhere are increasingly blurring the lines between work life and personal life - and introducing the sticky issue of when overtime is owed to workers. The always-connected worker and the pressures of the uncertain economy have led many to feel they should always be working -- because they can, thanks to the growing use of smart phones. That's allowing work to bleed into evenings, weekends and even sleep, with some people taking their phones and BlackBerrys to bed with them.

And the situation becomes tricky for hourly employees, who qualify for overtime.

"We've gotten into a place in our culture where the more you work, the better it is, and the more you should be proud of it," said attorney Amanda Farahany. "And so people don't want to assert their overtime right."

Overtime laws are abused by companies "on a daily basis," she said. But in some cases, that has led to lawsuits, seeking pay for what is sometimes called "BlackBerry overtime" or "electronic overtime."

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