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COLUMNIST

DEAR CHIEF: Here we go again. That time of year when everyone fills out their NCAA college hoops brackets and then no work gets done because everyone's either watching the games or following the results on the Internet. Even my boss does it. It isn't fair to someone like me who does not play those pools because I'm working hard while everyone else seems to be taking a break. Aren't these office pools illegal?

MARCH MAD PERSON



DEAR MARCH MAD PERSON: In some states, office pools are illegal and in others, they're legal under certain conditions. But hey, it's estimated that almost half of the American workforce plays in a March Madness tournament pool so it could become a pretty big

March Madness: enjoy it or ignore it

burden for the government to try and investigate every place of business and prosecute every single person who gambles with a bracket. Even if you reported your co-workers to law enforcement authorities (which I don't recommend), I highly doubt they would respond with any sense of urgency, if even at all.

The word on the street is: if you are involved in a March Madness office pool, don't be the business owner or office manager hosting it, don't be the organizer of the pool, and don't participate in the activity on line. Rather, just be a participant as long as bets are relatively small.

Some managers don't mind when their employees are playing a March Madness bracket or are involved in a Fantasy Football league because they notice improvement in morale and inter-office communications as a result of the

enthusiasm associated with these types of activities. In fact some managers view office pools as a team-building opportunity.

Now I understand office pools aren't for everyone but I recommend you don't let this situation stress you out. When your workmates are busy chatting about their NCAA brackets, take a break and go for a small walk. Or go get some fresh coffee, tea, or water and relax. Or fill out a bracket and get in on the fun! It's all up to you but I don't need to look into a crystal ball to know that office pools are not going away anytime soon.



For an opportunity to have your question, issue or concern addressed in the Dear Chief column, go to www.DearChiefAdvice.com and submit your comments or email them to Jeff@DearChiefAdvice.com.