

## BigLaw Firms Reinstate Office Mandates—and Attorneys Who Resist Face Consequences



**August 18, 2025** — Despite earlier flexibility ushered in by the pandemic, many leading law firms continue to enforce strict in-office attendance policies. Attorneys who fail to comply are increasingly facing punitive actions. ([Above the Law, August 2025](#)) (Note: attribution style implied for internal reference).

### Attendance Policies Harden Across BigLaw

A notable **17% of law firms** now impose consequences on lawyers who don't meet in-office attendance expectations—a significant shift from the earlier emphasis on autonomy. These consequences may include warnings, unfavorable performance evaluations, and in some cases, reductions in bonuses. ([Above the Law](#)).

### Four-Day Office Weeks Become Standard

Major firms like **Paul Weiss, WilmerHale, Davis Polk, Skadden, Ropes & Gray**, and **Weil Gotshal & Manges** have transitioned to requiring **four days per week in the office**, up from the previous three-day standard. These shifts often designate Fridays as optional work-from-home days. ([Reuters, March 2025](#)).

### Bonuses Now Linked to Physical Presence

This tightening regime isn't limited to American firms. Overseas, “Magic Circle” powerhouse **A&O Shearman** has warned junior lawyers their **bonuses could be reduced if they fail to meet a minimum 60% office attendance threshold**, underscoring a global shift in law firm expectations. ([The Times, March 2025](#)).

### What’s Driving This Return to the Office?

- **Client demand:** Corporations are pushing for more on-site collaboration.
- **Mentorship concerns:** Firms cite the loss of organic learning from senior attorneys not being present.
- **Talent development:** Executives argue in-person presence is essential for developing junior staff.

Still, some firms maintain flexible or hybrid models as a strategic advantage to attract top talent. A recruitment specialist noted that firms advocating flexibility are more appealing to candidates seeking work-life balance.

Looking for a law firm that truly fits your career goals? Don't get stuck in a rigid office mandate—discover opportunities where your skills are valued and your future is prioritized. Explore thousands of legal jobs today on [LawCrossing](#) and take control of your career path.