

# Workplace Harassment Policy

## Policy brief & purpose

Our anti-harassment policy expresses our commitment to maintaining a workplace that's free of harassment, so our employees can feel safe and happy. We will not tolerate anyone intimidating, humiliating, or sabotaging others in our workplace. We also prohibit wilful discrimination based on *age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, religion, or disability*.

## Scope

This workplace harassment policy applies to all employees, contractors, public visitors, customers, and anyone else whom employees come into contact with at work.

## 1. Policy elements

### What is the definition of harassment in the workplace?

Harassment includes bullying, intimidation, direct insults, malicious gossip, and victimization. Here are some instances that we consider harassment:

#### i. Discriminatory

##### a. Racial Harassment

- A victim may experience racial harassment because of their race, skin color, ancestry, origin country or citizenship.
- Even perceived attributes of a certain ethnicity (curly hair, accents, customs, beliefs or clothing) may be the cause. Racial harassment often looks like:
  - Racial slurs
  - Racial insults
  - Racial jokes
  - Degrading comments
  - Disgust
  - Intolerance of differences

##### b. Gender Harassment

- A discriminatory behavior towards a person based on their gender.
- Negative gender stereotypes about how men and women should or do act are often the center of the harassment. Some examples are:
  - being held to different or higher standards, or being evaluated more harshly, because of your gender identity, or because you don't act or present yourself in a way that conforms to traditional ideas of femininity or masculinity.
  - being denied a promotion, pay raise, or training opportunity that is given to people of another gender identity or sexual orientation who are equally or less qualified or eligible as you.
  - A male colleague displays material (comics, posters) that's degrading to women.

##### c. Religious Harassment

- Religious harassment is often interconnected with racial harassment but narrows in specifically on the victim's religious beliefs.
- Some examples are:
  - Intolerance toward religious holidays
  - Intolerance toward religious traditions
  - Intolerance toward religious customs
  - Cruel religious jokes
  - Degrading stereotypical comments
  - Pressures to convert religions

##### d. Disability-based Harassment

- Disability-based harassment is a type of workplace harassment directed towards individuals who either:
  - Suffer from a disability themselves
  - Are acquainted with a disabled person or people
  - Use disability services (sick leave or workers' comp)

##### e. Age-based Harassment

- A person facing age-based harassment might be:
  - Teased and insulted,
  - Left out of activities or meetings, or
  - Unfairly criticized

f. **Personal Harassment**

- Personal harassment is bullying in its most basic form like:
  - Inappropriate comments
  - Offensive jokes
  - Personal humiliation
  - Critical remarks
  - Ostracizing behaviors
  - Intimidation tactics
  
- g. Or any other behavior that creates an intimidating and offensive work environment for the victim.

**ii. Physical Harassment**

- a. Involves physical attacks or threats. In extreme cases, physical harassment may be classified as assault.
  
- b. Physical gestures such as playful shoving can blur the line between appropriate or not since it's the person on the receiving end who decides whether the behavior makes them uncomfortable.
  
- c. In order to more clearly define that line, physical harassment should be taken very seriously in the workplace and explained thoroughly in codes of conduct and policies.
  
- d. Common behaviors include:
  - Direct threats of intent to inflict harm.
  - Physical attacks (hitting, shoving, kicking).
  - Threatening behavior (shaking fists angrily).
  - Destroying property to intimidate.

**iii. Power Harassment**

- a. Power harassment isn't limited to a certain type of behavior. It can be verbal in the form of intimidation or it can be physical in the form of acts of violence.
  
- b. More often than not it's psychological. The harasser subjects the victim to:
  - Excessive demands that are impossible to meet.
  - Demeaning demands far below the employee's capability.
  - Intrusion into the employee's personal life.

**iii. Psychological Harassment**

- a. Psychological harassment has a negative impact on a person's psychological well-being.
  
- b. Victims of psychological harassment often feel put down and belittled on a personal level, a professional level or both.
  
- c. The damage to a victim's psychological well-being often creates a domino effect, impacting their physical health, social life and work life.
  
- d. Examples are:
  - Isolating or denying the victim's presence.
  - Belittling or trivializing the victim's thoughts.
  - Discrediting or spreading rumours about the victim.
  - Opposing or challenging everything the victim says.

**v. Online Harassment**

- a. Or can be called as Cyberbullying.
  
- b. Examples are:
  - Share humiliating things about someone by mass email or mass chat.
  - Spread lies or gossip about the an employee on social media.
  - Send harassing instant messages or text messages directly to the employee.

#### vi. Retaliation Harassment

- a. Retaliation harassment occurs when a person harasses someone else to get revenge and to prevent the victim from behaving in such a way again.
- b. This type of harassment typically has three parts:
  - Employee A files a complaint about Employee B.
  - Employee B finds out about the complaint and who made it.
  - Employee B harasses Employee A to get revenge and deter them from filing further complaints.
  - Employee B, in this case, would be harassing Employee A as retaliation.

#### vii. Sexual Harassment

- a. Sexual harassment has many forms of variable seriousness. A person sexually harasses someone when they:
  - Insinuate, propose or demand sexual favors of any kind.
  - Invade another person's personal space (e.g. inappropriate touching.)
  - Stalk, intimidate, coerce or threaten another person to get them to engage in sexual acts.
  - Send or display sexually explicit objects or messages.
  - Comment on someone's looks, dress, sexuality, or gender in a derogatory or objectifying manner or a manner that makes them uncomfortable.
  - Make obscene comments, jokes, or gestures that humiliate or offend someone.
  - Pursue or flirt with another person persistently without the other person's willing participation. Also, flirting with someone at an inappropriate time (e.g. in a team meeting) is considered sexual harassment, even when these advances would have been welcome in a different setting. This is because such actions can harm a person's professional reputation and expose them to further harassment.
- b. The most extreme form of sexual harassment is sexual assault. This is a serious crime and our company will support employees who want to press charges against offenders.

#### viii. Quid Pro Quo Harassment

- a. Translated to "this for that", is a type of exchange-based sexual harassment.
- b. The harasser may offer something of value for a sexual favor. It can also be a form of blackmail.
- c. In exchange for romantic or sexual services, the victim may:
  - Receive a job offer
  - Receive a promotion
  - Receive a raise
  - Receive opportunities
  - Avoid a demotion
  - Avoid termination

#### iv. Third Party Harassment

- a. Third-party harassment is a type of workplace harassment that's perpetrated by a "third party" – someone from outside of the organization.

## 2. How to address harassment

- i. If you're being harassed, whether by a manager, colleague, customer, or vendor, you can choose to talk to any of these people:
- ii. **Offenders.** If you suspect that an offender doesn't realize they are guilty of harassment, you could talk to them directly to resolve the issue. This tactic is appropriate for cases of minor harassment (e.g. inappropriate jokes between colleagues.) Avoid using this approach with customers or stakeholders.
- iii. **Your manager.** If customers, stakeholders, or team members are involved in your claim, you may reach out to your manager. Your manager will assess your situation and may contact HR if appropriate.
- iv. **HR.** Feel free to reach out to HR in any case of harassment no matter how minor it may seem. For your safety, contact HR as soon as possible in cases of serious harassment (e.g. sexual advances) or if your manager is involved in your claim. Anything you disclose will remain confidential.

### **3. Disciplinary Consequences**

- i. Punishment for harassment depends on the severity of the offence and may include counselling, reprimands, suspensions, or termination.

### **4. Employee Support**

- i. Apart from investigating claims and punishing perpetrators, we want to support the victims of harassment. If you experience trauma, stress, or other symptoms because of harassment, consider:
  - Taking a few days of sick leave to restore your mental health.
  - Speaking to our designated counsellors.
  - Your job and benefits will not be jeopardized or altered if you choose any of those options or other means of recovery.
- ii. Speak up, we listen
  - Harassment can exhaust those who endure it. Speaking up about this issue is often tough for fear of not being heard, upsetting managers, and challenging corporate culture.
  - Please don't let these fears deter you. Our company will do everything possible to stop any kind of harassment from happening while supporting harassed employees. We need to know what's going on so we can act on it. And by raising your voice on this issue, you help our company create a happy workplace and thrive.