

HARASSMENT-FREE WORKPLACE



What is sexual harassment?

Harassment is any interfering or abusive conduct that someone finds disagreeable. The abuser may be a man or a woman, a supervisor or a subordinate, a colleague or a customer. Examples of harassment include:

- remarks that degrade or demean another gender
- groping and other touching
- sexual suggestions or demands, sometimes including dating invitations
- intrusive gestures and expressions
- obscene language and innuendoes, comments on someone's private life, clothing or figure
- pinups and bawdy calendars
- sexually evocative letters, messages and e-mails.

Are you an abuser?

If anyone finds your behaviour disturbing or abusive, then you should take the complaint seriously.

- People and workplaces vary, and it is not up to you to decide what behaviour others may experience as bullying. Some people are bothered by conduct that others find inoffensive.
- The Act on Equality between Women and Men requires employers to investigate allegations and to intervene in cases of sexual harassment. The employer may issue a warning or reprimand, or even dismiss an employee in cases of harassment.

Is your workmate harassing someone?

- Harassment at work is always a problem for everyone. Workmates should actively indicate and state that harassment is unacceptable behaviour.
- Talk to the person concerned, or report your observations to a supervisor, shop steward or workplace safety representative.
- Everyone has rights, and someone accused of harassment should not be condemned before the case has been investigated.

Are you a victim of harassment?

- Tell the abuser clearly that you find the conduct unacceptable. This may also be done in writing. Keep a copy of the message. Contact a supervisor if discussion is not effective.
- You may also share these concerns with your occupational health service, a shop steward, a workplace safety representative, a trade union or the Ombudsman for Equality, who will take up the case on request.
- Record all incidents, including details of the place and of any other people who are present at the time.

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