

A Guide to Understanding Sexual Harassment

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of an individual's employment either explicitly or implicitly; or
- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis of employment decisions affecting an individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

The first line of preventing harassment is to avoid doing or saying anything that might offend someone.

Keep in mind that harassment can occur in either a male to female, female to male, male to male or female to female situations.

IMPORTANT TERMS

Quid Pro Quo

Where an employer requires sexual considerations from an employee as a condition for tangible job benefits. Literally translated, quid pro quo means, "this for that." For example, a supervisor tells an employee, "Do this sexual favor for me and you'll get a promotion. If not, you may have a hard time moving up in the company."

Hostile Working Environment

The atmosphere in the workplace is made very uncomfortable by sexual or gender-based conduct. The harassment must be sufficiently severe or pervasive "to alter the conditions of [the victim's] employment and create an abusive working environment.

Sex Role Stereotyping

The perception that job duties or opportunities are defined by the gender of the employee. This can be verbal, visual or physical.

Gender Abuse

Ridicule, denigration or abuse directed at or at the expense of an entire gender. It can be verbal, visual or physical.

Individually Targeted Abuse

Unwelcome or abusive behavior directed at a specific individual. It can be verbal, visual or physical.

Criminal Touching

Unwanted touching of the breast, buttocks or genitals of another person. Criminal harassment can also include other forms of criminal assault, criminal mischief and trespass.

TYPES OF HARASSMENT

Verbal

- Referring to another as "girl, doll, babe, hunk, stud or honey"
- Whistling or making "cat-calls"
- Making comments about a person's body, clothes, looks, anatomy or manner of walking
- Turning work discussion into sexual topics
- Telling sexual jokes or stories

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- Discussing one's sex life
- Asking about sexual fantasies, preferences or history
- Repeatedly asking a person for a date who is clearly not interested
- Making kissing sounds, howling or smacking lips towards another
- Telling lies or spreading rumors about a person's life or lifestyle
- Asking a person to bend down and pick something up that was intentionally dropped.

(The above is not to be considered a complete list as verbal harassment can be displayed in many other ways)

Non-Verbal

- Referring to another as "girl, doll, babe, hunk, stud or honey"
- Staring at someone
- Blocking a person's path
- Making sexual gestures with one's tongue or hands, or with another body movement
- Following a person around
- Giving unwanted personal gifts
- Displaying sexually-suggestive material (calendars, pictures, comics, screen savers, etc.)
- Sending inappropriate emails, pictures, videos or jokes via computer or interoffice mail
- Making facial expressions such as winking, throwing kisses, or licking lips
- Requiring an employee to wear provocative clothing

(The above is not to be considered a complete list as verbal harassment can be displayed in many other ways)

Physical

- Giving a neck or shoulder or other massage
- Touching a person's body, hair or clothing
- Hugging, kissing or patting
- Standing close to, or brushing up against a person
- Touching or rubbing oneself in a private area or with sexual overtones near another person
- Touching, leaning over, cornering or pinching someone
- Snapping a woman's bra strap or man's under clothing

(The above is not to be considered a complete list as verbal harassment can be displayed in many other ways)

EMPLOYEE COMPLAINT PROCESS

Are you experiencing verbal or physical conduct in your work of a sexual nature?

YES – Is the behavior unwelcome to you or is it affecting your work performance or well-being?

NO – It is unlikely that you are a victim of sexual harassment in your workplace.

YES – Do you feel the unwelcome behavior would end if you told the offending person that it is unwelcome?

YES – Do you think telling that offending person may hurt your employment?

NO – Consider telling the offending person that the conduct is unwelcome.

YES – Do you feel the problem could be resolved if your supervisor were contacted?

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YES – Do you think your employment would be injured if your supervisor were contacted?

NO – Consider contacting your supervisor to discuss the problem.

YES – The company has appointed the Human Resources Department to assist with employees who feel they have been sexually harassed. Do you think that HR can help stop the unwelcome behavior?

YES – Consider contacting HR to discuss the situation.

NO – Consider contacting Executive Management.

Has the situation been resolved?

YES – Great! Thank you for letting us assist you.

NO – If no action has been taken or the situation is not resolved, as a last resort you should refer to the State Department where the work location is located.

AS AN EMPLOYER, WE HAVE A ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY FOR ANY TYPE OF
HARASSMENT OR ABUSE