

Nine Ways Managers Can Eliminate Harassment



Management's role in eliminating workplace harassment should include the following nine steps:

- 1. Know and support the organization's harassment prevention policy and all other related policies.** Regardless of personal views surrounding the issue of harassment in the workplace, as agents of the organization, supervisors and managers must support and enforce the organization's employment practices and procedures, including all federal and state mandated laws.
- 2. Be alert to potential problems and respond appropriately.** Supervisors and managers must be alert and responsive to harassment in their departments or business units. Maintain an open-door policy that encourages employees to talk to supervisors and managers. Confront employees that use inappropriate language, sexual innuendo or engage in unprofessional behaviors to let them know that is not acceptable.
- 3. Promptly respond to a problem or concern.** Make the complaint a priority; do not put it on the back burner. The only way to eliminate harassment is to promptly address it when it occurs. When complaints are filed, a thorough and objective investigation should occur right away.
- 4. Partner with human resources to resolve harassment concerns.** Inform the organization's human resources department immediately of a harassment concern, whether sexual or otherwise. Individuals in human resources have knowledge of the law and the potential liability or risks to the organization. Human resources may also have knowledge of prior events that could impact the outcome of the current investigation.
- 5. Take each problem or concern seriously—do not prejudge.** Until all the facts have been gathered during the investigation process, supervisors and managers should not jump to conclusions. The facts will reveal whether the behavior violated the organization's policy.
- 6. Document discussions and corrective actions.** A separate investigation file should be kept for all materials relevant to the investigation (such as the initial complaint and follow-up interview notes), along with a summary report wrapping up the investigation. If it is determined



Nearly one-third of the 90,000 charges of discrimination received by the EEOC in the last fiscal year included workplace harassment. That's a daunting number, and organizations have a responsibility to create a culture where harassment behavior—of any kind—simply isn't tolerated.

that coaching, disciplinary action, or other employment actions are appropriate as a result of the investigation, these should be documented in the personnel file for the impacted employee(s).

- 7. Maintain confidentiality to the extent possible.** The very nature of harassment, especially sexual harassment, makes it difficult to talk about. Therefore, at all times during the investigation process, the individuals involved should be treated with dignity and respect. Complaints should be treated with sensitivity and confidentiality should be maintained within the scope of the investigation.
- 8. Upon resolution of an investigation, continue to monitor the situation to ensure no further incidents occur.** Supervisors and managers of the organization have the responsibility to maintain a harassment-free environment to ensure that inappropriate behavior does not reoccur.
- 9. Periodically review and reinforce the organization's harassment prevention policy and all other related policies with employees.** Establish commonsense guidelines for employees and explain the organization's expectations surrounding appropriate conduct versus inappropriate conduct in the workplace. This type of communication will alert employees that management takes the issue seriously.


This sample document is only an example and is based on the laws in effect at the time it was written. MRA-The Management Association, Inc. does not make any representations or warranties regarding the appropriateness or prudence of using this information for any particular individual or situation. Your company should add, delete, or modify the content of this document as needed to suit your purposes. This material is for your information only and should not be construed as legal advice. In some circumstances it may be advisable to have legal counsel review final documents prior to implementation.

© MRA – The Management Association, Inc.



Need help with third-party investigations or onsite training programs? Our [Investigations](#) team and [Harassment Prevention](#) programs can help!

MRA's HR Hotline can help you!

 866-HR-Hotline | 866.474.6854

 InfoNow@mrnet.org

 mrnet.org/24-7/hr-hotline

As one of the largest nonprofit employer associations in the nation, MRA:

Serves 4,000 employers

covering one million employees worldwide.

Holds more than
2,000 Training
events annually.

200 HR experts

with more than 2,000 years of collective knowledge, experience and expertise.

Offers more than
1,000 HR Guides
templates, toolkits, and more.

HR SERVICES



LEARNING & ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT



TALENT MANAGEMENT



TOTAL REWARDS



MRA is Your TotalHR® Resource.

MRA helps you create powerful teams and a safe, successful workplace with talent, tools, and training.



Wisconsin

Minnesota

Illinois

Iowa

www.mranet.org 800.488.4845