



BULLYING AND HARASSMENT: SAMPLE EMPLOYEE MANUAL SECTION

Bullying and harassment: Introduction

Taking a strong stand against bullying and harassment in the workplace is important because even in an industry culture that rewards stoicism and powering through, the wrong words can cause pain, and the effects of that pain can multiply over time. Systemic bullying and harassment can lead to lowered productivity and increased anxiety and depression among affected workers. In addition, reports of bullying and harassment can endanger organizations whose reputation depends on unwavering integrity. In both instances, bullying and harassment can have a negative impact on a company's current balance sheet and future operations.

Bullying and harassment: Definitions

Per WorkSafeBC guidelines, "[a] worker is bullied and harassed when someone takes an action that he or she knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that worker to be humiliated or intimidated."

Bullying and harassment can include but are not limited to:

- Insults or other forms of verbal aggression
- Vandalizing of a co-worker's belongings
- Harmful hazing practices
- Spreading malicious rumors

Actions taken to manage or direct workers are not considered bullying or harassment. Supervisors are expected to know the difference between professionally worded comments offered in a performance review and language or actions that might be interpreted as humiliation or intimidation.

Bullying and harassment: How employees should respond

Per WorkSafeBC guidelines, workers who have witnessed or experienced bullying or harassment in the office or on a job site must report the incident to the employer. Phone the [Prevention Information Line](#) to speak with an officer if action is not taken within a reasonable period. If the incident remains unresolved in due course, employees may submit a [Bullying and Harassment Questionnaire](#). Workers must cooperate fully with investigators if an incident has been reported.

Bullying and harassment: How employers should respond

Per WorkSafeBC guidelines, employers must develop procedures for responding to incidents or reports of bullying or harassment. Those procedures must specify:

- The manner and timeframe in which investigations will be conducted
- The scope of the investigation (what incidents will be examined)
- The roles and responsibilities of employers, supervisors, workers, and others (such as investigators, witnesses, or union representatives)
- Follow-up items, including a description of corrective actions and the timeframe during which those actions will be completed
- Appropriate records to be kept as part of the investigation
- Internal controls assuring that investigative procedures are followed correctly and consistently

Source: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/hazards-exposures/bullying-harassment>