

Respectful Workplace Policy Template

healthy
minds

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Aside from adopting this policy, companies are encouraged to provide education and training for their employees and contractors, whenever applicable, on the following key topics: human rights in the workplace; managing diversity; and the company's respectful workplace policy and procedures.

Policy Overview

([Company name](#)) is committed to creating an inclusive and healthy workplace where employees are valued and treated with dignity and respect. It is intended that this policy will prevent discrimination and harassment of any type and provides guidelines on addressing workplace discrimination/harassment as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Coverage

This policy applies to all employees and independent contractors of ([company name](#)) while engaged in any activity related to their employment or contract with ([company name](#)), whether on company property or elsewhere (e.g. business trip, conferences, social gatherings, etc.).

Definition of Terms

Discrimination is any act or omission that results in unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people. Differences may be based on race, marital status, religious beliefs, family status, colour, age, gender, ancestry, physical disability, place of origin, mental disability, source of income, sexual orientation, or any other ground covered by **British Columbia's Human Rights Code**.

Workplace Discrimination, as defined by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, means putting an employee at a disadvantage based on prohibited grounds. Discrimination may happen intentionally or inadvertently and results in barriers to workplace equity because it blocks access to equal opportunities.

Harassment is a form of discrimination and means any unwanted physical or verbal conduct directed to one or more individuals and causes offence or humiliation. As a guideline, an example of a discriminatory or harassing behaviour is making derogatory remarks or compromising invitations that result in a negative or hostile work environment.

Sexual Harassment means any offensive or humiliating behaviour on the grounds of gender. This includes demands for sexual favors in exchange for rewards or favorable consequences. Generally, sexual harassment is deliberate, unsolicited, and one sided. Anyone can be a victim or a perpetrator of sexual harassment.

Responsibilities

In general, individuals covered in this policy have a responsibility to ensure that the working environment is free from harassment. Key responsibilities include refraining from actions and behaviours that might constitute discrimination/harassment as well as any other reasonable involvement to achieve the objectives of this policy (e.g. reporting incidents).

Employers, managers, and supervisors are responsible to immediately act upon any situation involving discrimination/harassment. They should also ensure that employees are oriented on human rights in the workplace as well as this policy.

Confidentiality

To protect the interest of all individuals involved in any process involving reported incidents or formal written complaints of discrimination/harassment, confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process to the extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances, and as permitted by law.

Reporting Discrimination/Harassment

Any individual covered by this policy who has experienced discrimination/harassment at ([company name](#)) or at any work-related event outside the company should be proactive and encouraged to act before the behavior becomes repetitive by informing the harasser his/her behaviour is inappropriate and ask him/her to stop. If the harassment continues or if the petitioner does not wish to bring the matter directly to the alleged harasser, the person should report the problem to one of the following individuals:

(List the positions/titles who the individual can report to. Examples include his/her Manager, Vice President and/or the CEO). These individuals have been appointed by the company as "Advisors" under this policy.

Note: During the orientation process, individuals should be advised to take notes, as much as possible, about incident(s) constituting discrimination/harassment. Records of events are not necessary to file a complaint. However, records provide specific details and strengthen any case. Ideally, records should describe the incident and include the dates, times, locations, possible witnesses, and the individual's response.

The Advisor shall inform the petitioner of his/her right to keep the matter at the report stage or make a formal written complaint under this policy as well as other rights including:

- Any counseling or other support services provided within and outside of the organization; and

- Other avenues of recourse such as filing a discrimination/harassment complaint with the BC Human Rights Tribunal. Complaints must be filed within 6 months after the alleged incident.

Resolution

At the Meeting Stage

After discussing the matter the petitioner and the Advisor agree that no discrimination/harassment occurred at the incident(s) in question, the Advisor will take no further action and will make no record in any file.

If it was determined that discrimination/harassment has occurred, but the petitioner does not wish to make a formal written complaint, the Advisor should still engage in proactive measures to resolve the incident (e.g. informal discussions with the harasser). No formal investigation will be undertaken nor will written records be kept.

The Advisor may still make a written complaint if there have been previous complaints against the alleged harasser. Written complaints by an Advisor should be signed and provided to the petitioner, alleged harasser and management.

If the petitioner decides to make a formal written complaint, the Advisor should assist the petitioner in drafting a complaint and provide copies to the petitioner, alleged harasser and management.

Investigating the Complaint

Upon review of the formal written complaint, an investigation should be conducted immediately. Possible investigators include another designated individual within the company, or an outside investigator, for as long as the appointed person can conduct a thorough and unbiased investigation.

At a minimum, an investigation should include individual interviews with the petitioner, the alleged harasser(s) and witnesses to the incident, if any. The alleged harasser(s) should be given enough information about the allegations against them to allow them to respond appropriately.

On completion of the investigation, the investigator will inform the petitioner, alleged harasser, and management, as to his/her findings and recommendations.

Disciplinary Action and Closure

If the investigation substantiates the complaint of discrimination/harassment, the harasser will be disciplined appropriately. Depending on the nature and severity of the harassment, disciplinary actions may include: a verbal and/or written apology; letter of reprimand from the organization; referral to counseling; removal of certain employment privileges; temporary suspension with or without pay; and/or termination of employment or contract. No documentation will be placed on the petitioner's file where the complaint is filed in good faith, whether the complaint is upheld or not.

If the investigation fails to find evidence to support the complaint, no documentation will be placed on the alleged harasser(s)' file(s).

Important note: Regardless of the outcome of a harassment complaint made in good faith, petitioners, advisors, as well as anyone who supported or was involved in the petition and/or investigation will be protected from any form of retaliation by the rest of the employees of ([company name](#)).

*For policies and procedures related to bullying and harassment in the workplace, please see [WorkSafeBC's toolkit](#).

