



Sexual Harassment

Definition: Sexual Harassment is unwanted or unwelcome sexual attention or sexual expression from a co-worker, supervisor, client, vendor or subcontractor, which makes the person who experiences it uncomfortable or is perceived as being offensive. Sexual harassment is serious even if it is not repeated. Behavior that can be considered sexual harassment may be verbal or physical, and may occur once or often.

There are two legal terms used to describe different types of sexual harassment: The first is referred to as hostile work environment and may be defined as a pervasive and regular harassment which unreasonably interferes with an individual's ability to perform his or her job duties, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive workplace environment. This may include exposure to pornographic or nude pictures, drawings or cartoons, sexual jokes, innuendo or comments, physical touching, propositions, requests for dates, leering, teasing or graphic gestures.

The second term is quid pro quo, which literally means "this for that," a specific demand for sexual favors in exchange for job security or job benefits. This type of sexual harassment involves a supervisory or managerial employee.

There are many myths surrounding sexual harassment:

Myth: *Sexual harassment only happens to women.*

Fact: *Sexual harassment can happen to anyone, regardless of gender or sexual preference.*

Myth: *Sexual harassment is harmless fun. People who object to it have no sense of humor.*

Fact: *Harassment is degrading and humiliating. It can hurt performance and professional careers. No one should have to endure harassment.*

Myth: *All the victim had to say was "no," and the harasser would have stopped immediately.*

Fact: *Many harassers will not stop because they think "no" really means "yes".*

Myth: *Women who are provocatively dressed are asking for sexual harassment.*

Fact: *No matter how anyone dresses, they should not endure sexual harassment.*

Problems of harassment whether real or perceived, may seriously interfere with the tasks employees are assigned. Employees do not work well when they feel intimidated or threatened by unwelcome sexual attention.

If you think sexual harassment can't happen at work, you may be subscribing to two false assumptions: (1) "If it happened here, I'd know about it." (2) "Our employees are nice people who won't do that sort of thing."

Victims of sexual harassment are often very reluctant to come forward, if at all. Even nice people can intimidate others due to misunderstandings or different perspectives. It's also important to recognize that some people may be capable of behaving one way in public and another when they are alone with a potential victim.

- Harassment is not defined by the harasser, but by the perception of the recipient. If someone thinks they are being harassed, then they are, no matter how innocent it may have seemed.



- Phrases such as “You look nice today” could be considered harassment depending on how it’s said, where it’s said or how often it’s said.
- A supervisor dating a subordinate might not be sexual harassment if both consent. However, the subordinate could claim sexual harassment if the supervisor broke it off and the subordinate still wanted the relationship.
- An employee could claim hostile work environment if activities between other employees cause the employee to be uncomfortable. In other words, if an employee observes a co-worker harassing another employee over a period of time, a claim of hostile work environment may be made as the observer feels uncomfortable.

What to do if you have been sexually harassed:

- Don’t blame yourself.
- Act immediately or the situation may continue. Your harasser may view your silence as encouragement.
- Say “no” and tell the harasser to stop.
- Document each incident of harassment. Keep notes about the time, date, location and the events that led up to the incident. Consider writing a letter to the harasser identifying how the incident made you feel and what you would like to happen next. Keep a copy of the letter for your records.
- Tell someone. Your supervisor or Employment Resources will treat your complaint seriously and sensitively.

Alberici has no tolerance for any kind of harassment or discrimination in the workplace. We have a clearly worded sexual harassment policy, which is posted and which was a part of your employment package. Our responsibility as your employer is to:

- Communicate the policy to all employees and effectively implement the policy.
- Affirmatively raise the subject of harassment with all supervisory and non-supervisory employees, express strong disapproval and explain the consequences as outlined in the policy.
- Have a harassment complaint procedure which ensures confidentiality and provides effective remedies, including protection of victims, witnesses and alleged accused against retaliation.
- Investigate EVERY charge of harassment promptly and thoroughly.
- Take immediate and appropriate corrective action to end the harassment, address the victim’s concerns and prevent the misconduct from recurring.

In conclusion, we must treat one another with respect and act reasonably. All employees are expected to behave professionally and politely without offending people.