

HOW TO DEVELOP BEST PRACTICES IN THE #METOO ERA

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a red marker, drawing the hashtag #METOO in red on a dark, chalkboard-like surface. The drawing is in progress, with the 'O' being completed. The background is dark and slightly out of focus.

Sexual harassment has come to the forefront of the conversation in the last year. The #MeToo era has already led to a closer look at this pervasive issue, efforts to better protect employees from sexual harassment, and more dialogue about what is and isn't harassment.

As this conversation continues, it's important to take a step back and revisit your company's policies. Here's how to develop best practices in the #MeToo era.

STEP 1

DEVELOP A CLEAR ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY



Use straight-forward language and examples that are easy to understand.



Encourage employees to report incidents of discrimination and harassment.



Ensure that all complaints are handled with confidentiality.



Guarantee that employees will not receive any kind of punishment for reporting incidents.



Make it clear that employees who harass others will be disciplined as necessary - even terminated.



STEP 2

ESTABLISH A CLEAR COMPLAINT & INVESTIGATION PROCESS

Make sure employees know who to contact and how to file the complaint.

Complaints should be in writing and include the following information:

- Name, department, and position of alleged harasser(s)
- Description of the incident(s), including date(s), location(s), and known witnesses
- How this affected his or her ability to perform job functions
- Names of other individuals who may have been harassed
- Any steps taken to stop the harassment

The employee who handles these reports must know how to address them, when to escalate them, and how to ensure the employees are taken care of.

Establish a protocol for how reports are investigated.

Talk to all involved individuals - the complainant, the harasser, and any witnesses - in person. These conversations should be done privately and on a one-on-one basis.

Treat harassment seriously and discipline the harasser accordingly. Harassment must not be tolerated.

Ensure all employees understand the action taken against harassers. There is strict accountability.

STEP 3

KEEP THE CONVERSATION OPEN & PROVIDE REGULAR TRAINING



Provide in-person training to all employees about what is acceptable workplace conduct and what your anti-harassment policy means.

Tailor the training to your specific industry.



Give easy-to-understand examples and real-life scenarios. Show what is and is not harassment and how to address it - as a victim or as a witness.



Explain how to report and what the process looks like. Also explain what repercussions and disciplinary actions will be taken.

Encourage a respectful, inclusive workplace culture.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

PETITE²
QUEEN®

<https://www.glassceilingdiscriminationlawyer.com/best-practices-preventing-workplace-sexual-harassment/>

https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/policies/pages/cms_000554.aspx

http://www.preventsexualharassment.ca/practices_prevent_sexual_harassment.html