

As published by the U.S. EEOC Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when submission to or rejection of this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects and individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

What is Sexual Harrassment?

Any sexual activity that is against another person's will.



Information to Consider

Some, but not all, circumstances in which sexual harassment can occur include:

The victim as well as the harasser may be a woman or a man. The victim does not have to be of the opposite sex.

The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, an agent of the employer, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or a non-employee.

The victim does not have to be the person harassed but could be anyone affected by the offensive conduct.

Unlawful sexual harassment may occur without economic injury to or discharge of the victim.

The harasser's conduct must be unwelcome.

In the Workplace

There are two types of sexual harassment that occur in the workplace.

1. Quid pro quo: When a perpetrator makes conditions of employment contingent on the victim providing

sexual favors. (e.g. "Have sex with me or you are fired," "If you want that promotion, you'll have to sleep with me.")

2. Hostile environment: When unwelcome, severe and persistent sexual conduct on the part of a perpetrator creates an uncomfortable and hostile environment (e.g., jokes, lewd postures, leering, inappropriate touching, rape, etc)

Popular culture (television, movies, media) often portrays #1 Quid pro quo sexual harassment. In reality, 95% of sexual harassment cases are type #2 Hostile environment.

Emotional & Physical Consequences

- Poor Concentration at work
- Staff turnover
- Stress on their personal relationships
- Increased absenteeism
- Fear or anxiety
- Tarnished company reputation
- Debilitating depression
- Increased payouts for sick leave

Sleep or weight problems

Low staff morale
Alcohol or drug abuse
Legal and consultant costs

What should I do if I believe I am being sexually harassed at work?

You should inform the harasser that you want the unwelcome behavior to stop, unless you fear it will jeopardize your physical safety or your job. Direct communication with the harasser is often more effective than

"Nearly two-thirds of college students experience sexual harassment while at college"

merely ignoring the behavior. Make it clear what behavior you object to and ask that it stop. If verbal requests are not effective, write the harasser a memo asking him to stop. You can also tell someone else in a position of authority whom you trust.

You should also use your employer's internal complaint or sexual harassment procedures and promptly report any incidents of harassment. If you are part of a union, you can contact

your union representative and ask about grievance procedures under your contract. Going through these internal procedures may not be enough to stop the harassment, but if you unreasonably fail to take advantage of any preventive or corrective opportunities provided by your employer, your employer may be able to avoid legal liability for the harassment, depending on the circumstances. Employers should also treat the complaint process as confidential, though the harasser and potential witnesses will have to be contacted in an investigation.

It is also a good idea to document the harassment and your work performance.

Keep a journal of the harassment. Keep a written record describing each incident of harassment, including what happened, where, on what date, and who else was present. Do this as soon as possible after the incident, and note the date and time you are writing it down. Keep updating the journal as new incidents occur. In some cases employers have destroyed journals left at work, so keep it at home. This written record can be important evidence in later internal investigations or legal actions.

Keep copies of any offensive notes or pictures and any notes or documents that relate to the harassment.

Keep copies of your work records, including copies of your performance evaluations and any memoranda or letters documenting the quality of your work. A harasser may try to defend himself by attacking your job performance.

Network with others. If you can, talk to others at work about the harassment. You may find witnesses, allies, or others that have been harassed by the same person or are concerned and would be willing to help.

Tell supportive friends, family members, and colleagues about the abuse. Telling others about the harassment not only can give you much needed support, but it can also be important evidence later.

If these steps do not end the harassment, you may want to consider taking legal action.

The Sexual Harassment Support publishes a sample log for documenting instances of sexual harassment at website://www.sexualharassmentsupport.org/Logbook.html.

On Campus & In School

The American Association of University Women Educational Foundation reports that nearly two-thirds of college students experience sexual harassment while at college. The full report, entitled Drawing the Line: Sexual Harassment on Campus, can be found

at the AAUW website.

Drawing the Line: Sexual Harassment on Campus unveils a number of figures including:

62% of female college students and 61% of male college students report having been sexually harassed at their university

66% of college students know someone who was harassed

10% or less of student sexual harassment victims attempt to report their experiences to a university employee

35% or more of college students who experience sexual harassment do not tell anyone about their experiences

80% or more of college students who experience sexual harassment report being harassed by another student or former student

39% of students who experienced sexual harassment say the incident or incidents occurred in the dorm

51% of male college students admit to sexually harassing someone in college, with 22% admitting to harassing someone often or occasionally

31% of female college students admit to harassing someone in college

Below are links to sexual harassment policies of

some Georgia colleges & universities:

The University of Georgia – make this a link to <http://www.uga.edu/legal/pdfs/DescrimandHarass.pdf>

Georgia Southern University <http://jobs.georgiasouthern.edu/forms/pdf/hre007d.pdf>

Georgia College & State University <http://www.gcsu.edu/womenscenter/projectcare/policy.htm>

Georgia State University http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwdos/coeofconduct_adminpol_b.html

Piedmont Community College <http://www.piedmontcc.edu/Publications/catalogs/2008-2010/7-Policies%20and%20Procedures.pdf>

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