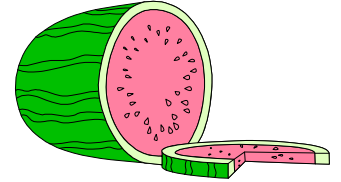




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“Tip of the Month”

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORK PLACE

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that causes a person to feel that submission to the conduct is necessary to keep a job, get a raise or be promoted. Conduct may also be deemed sexual harassment if it interferes with a person’s work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Should I be concerned about sexual harassment in my company?

The United States Supreme Court recently ruled on a variety of cases that increase an employer’s responsibility for sexual harassment and that make it more difficult for an employer to claim that they should not be held liable for the actions of their supervisors. The good news is that the recent decisions also establish means for employers to avoid liability by implementing a written anti-harassment policy, making sure that all employees are aware of it, and providing a complaint and investigation procedure for handling any harassment that occurs.

What should my anti-harassment policy include?

The most effective method of reducing your liability for sexual harassment claims is to create a policy that shows that you did everything you could do to prevent harassment from occurring. Some things to consider when designing an anti-harassment policy include:

1. Establish an effective complaint procedure that encourages employees to feel comfortable coming to you with any problems they face at work, including any harassment;
2. Quickly investigate any claims of harassment and treat every incident as if it were a court case from the moment it is reported;
3. Do whatever is necessary to stop the harassment immediately;
4. Discipline the person or persons who committed the harassment; and
5. If appropriate, take action to correct past discrimination based on the harassing conduct.

If you would like more information regarding sexual harassment, or if you need help establishing an effective anti-harassment policy, please do not hesitate to call.

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