



Real solutions for real business

Supervisor Wire

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Published by CARE's WorkLife Solutions to help supervisors in their goal of maintaining a productive workforce

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Workplace Harassment

Unlawful harassment is a form of discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other federal authority. Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct based on race, religion, sex (whether or not of a sexual nature and including same-gender harassment and gender identity harassment), national origin, age (40 and over) disability (mental or physical), sexual orientation, or retaliation (sometimes collectively referred to as "legally protested classes" constitutes harassment when:

- The conduct is sufficiently severe or pervasive enough to create a hostile work environment.
- The harassing conduct results in a tangible change in an employee's status or benefits (demotion, termination, failure to promote, etc.)

Anyone in the workplace can commit harassment.

Management, co-worker, or non-employees (ie. contractors, vendors or guests). The victim can be anyone effected by unruly conduct, not just the individual at whom the offensive conduct is directed.

A claim of harassment generally requires several elements, including:

- Typically the complaining party must be a member of a protected class.
- The complaining party was subjected to unwelcome verbal or physical conduct related to his or her membership in the protected class.
- The unwelcome conduct complained of was based on his or her membership in the protected class.
- The unwelcome conduct resulted in a change in terms or conditions of employment. This would also include any conduct that was devised to directly as well as indirectly interfere with his or her work performance and/or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

The anti-discrimination statutes do not present a code for respectful behavior. They do not prohibit teasing, inappropriate comments, or isolated incidents. The conduct must be so objectively offensive that it subsequently alters the conditions of ones employment. The conditions of employment are altered only if the harassment culminates in a tangible employment action or is sufficiently severe or pervasive enough to create a hostile work environment.

WHAT ARE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS?

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP's) are a benefit to employees and also management tools to help preserve human resources. The failure of supervisors to view EAP's as management tools rather than just counseling programs contributes to their underutilization when performance problems are still manageable.

AVOID REFERRING IN ANGER

Don't use the EAP as a "weapon". Avoid using the EAP as a "trump card" in an argument or as a retort in an angry exchange with the employee. Nothing could sabotage a referral quicker. Your employee may need to visit the EAP, but slamming your fist down and saying "That's it! I'm referring you to the EAP!" will shut the door on the idea permanently.

CARE's WORKLIFE SOLUTIONS (Formerly CARE's Employee Assistance Center) CAN HELP WITH MANY CONCERNS

Family Problems - Child Care - Personal/Job Stress
Alcohol/Drug Abuse - Marital Tension - Elder Care
Emotional Problems - Legal and Financial Stress

Services are confidential and FREE to employees, their spouses and dependents.
Toll Free 866.888.1555
www.caresworklivesolutions.com

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE TIPS

Workplace violence may be a result of many circumstances such as disgruntled customers, robbers, co-workers or the domestic violence of a co-worker that trails him or her to work. It has developed as a critical safety hazard for many businesses with the following characteristics:

- Exchange of money with the public
- Working alone or in small numbers
- Working late night or early morning
- Working in a high-crime area
- Guarding valuable property or possessions
- Working in community settings (e.g. taxi drivers, police)
- Employees in the retail industry



Some warning signs that employees may give are:

- Attendance Problems (including excessive sick leave and excessive tardiness)
- Decreased Productivity - performance decreases from good or excellent to poor
- Inconsistency - alternating periods of high and low productivity (these extremes may be linked to drug abuse)
- Poor workplace relationships - supervisors should note any belligerent behavior, overreaction to criticism, mood swings, and verbal harassment of others
- Concentration Problems - difficulty recalling job instruction details, deadlines
- Safety Issues - employee becomes more accident prone
- Poor health and hygiene - marked changes in personal grooming habits
- Unusual and changed behavior (emotional, outbursts, physical violence and/or unpredictable behavior or inappropriate remarks)
- Evidence of possible substance abuse (alcohol and some drugs can increase paranoia and aggressive behavior)
- Excessive personal phone calls
- Inability to accept responsibility

Some effective elements to prevent workplace violence are:

- Safety and violence prevention training for all employees
- Align the safety commitment of the entire organization to its mission
- Conduct an analysis of the workplace by an experienced loss prevention/safety professional
- Develop a clear policy of zero tolerance for workplace violence, verbal and nonverbal threats, and related actions
- Encourage employees to promptly report all incidents and to suggest ways to reduce or eliminate risks

CARE'S WorkLife Solutions Seminars

Improving Morale in the Workplace

December 4, 2007 3:00pm - 4:30pm
December 6, 2007 8:30am - 10:00am

Department of Transportation (DOT) Training

Drivers

December 13, 2007 8:00 am - 9:00am

Supervisors

December 13, 2007 8:00 am - 10:00am

UPCOMING TRAININGS

To register, please call 866.888.1555 x 232

****PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED****