



SAFETY ALERT & BULLETIN OF THE MONTH

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Workplace Harassment

AOM: 2024-08-09

Workplace harassment is a serious issue and can occur anywhere, at any time, in any workplace. In some cases, employers may not have the necessary policies and supports in place to adequately respond to workplace harassment complaints. Small companies often don't have the capacity or human resources expertise to investigate and take action to resolve the problem. The following safety alert will help employers by outlining some of their responsibilities. It will also cover what workers should do if they experience workplace harassment.

While WorkSafeBC's policies address a broad spectrum of harassment issues, the B.C. Human Rights Code specifically targets harassment that violates an individual's human rights, including:

- Age
- Ancestry
- Colour
- Criminal conviction
- Family status
- Gender expression
- Gender identity
- Indigenous identity
- Marital status
- Mental disability
- Physical disability
- Place of origin
- Political belief
- Race
- Religion
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Source of income

Employer Responsibilities

1. Policy Implementation – Develop a policy with the input of supervisors and workers that defines what harassment is and what it is not and provide examples.
2. Reporting Procedures – The policy should outline how harassment can be reported. These procedures should ensure employees feel safe to report incidents without fear or retaliation. Be sure to include privacy and documentation requirements.
3. Investigations – Take all claims seriously. Every complaint must be thoroughly investigated by the employer. This involves gathering information through methods such as interviews and documentation checks. Consider hiring a third party to do the investigation, especially if there is perceived bias or you don't have experience with this type of investigation. Investigations must include conclusions and actions to be taken.





SAFETY ALERT & BULLETIN OF THE MONTH

4. Protection from Retaliation - Employers must protect complainants and witnesses from retaliation. Any form of retaliation is prohibited by the Human Rights Code and should be considered a violation of the workplace harassment policy.
5. Train Employees - One of the best ways to avoid workplace harassment is to train all employees on what it is, what is acceptable and not acceptable behaviour at work and what the employer will do when there is a harassment complaint.

If You Experience Workplace Harassment

1. Document What Happened – Write down what you experienced. Include dates, times and anyone who might have witnessed the situation.
2. Report it to Employer – The policy should be clear about who receives reports about a workplace harassment incident. Supervisors, worker safety reps or health and safety committees are typically delegated as the people you can report to. Reports can be made in various ways such as verbal or email. This information should always be thoroughly documented regardless of how it is reported.
3. Other Options – Sometimes an employee may not feel comfortable bringing the harassment report forward. For example, it may be the employer or owner of the company who is involved. In these cases, the incident can still be reported to WorkSafeBC, the BC Human Rights Tribunal or the worker can seek help and advice from a lawyer. These options may also be effective if the harassment has been reported to the employer but there has been no investigation or other action taken.

Considerations

1. Support Workers - Employers should provide support for employees who have experienced harassment. This can include providing access to medical and counselling services.
2. Promote Respectful Behaviour – Orientations, meetings, and training sessions are all opportunities to discuss how to create a workplace where employees are treated with respect and dignity.
3. If You See Something, Say Something – Everyone has the right to work in a safe environment, free from harassment. Your voice can make a difference in building a culture of respect and safety in your workplace.

Additional Resources:

[WorkSafeBC's Bullying and Harassment Webpage](#)

[BC Human Rights Tribunal](#)

[Workplace Harassment in BC: Employee Rights](#)

[Camp Assault Mitigation Project](#)

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SAFETY ALERT & BULLETIN OF THE MONTH

BCFSC Latest News & Resources

[Load Securement Safety Byte - Tools and Methods to Reduce the Risk of Injury](#)

The third video of the BCFSC Safety Byte series introduces the set of Toolbox videos developed to assist contractors in reducing the risk of shoulder and MSI injuries in log load securement.

[Online Training for Forest Supervisors](#) – We offer six FREE online Forest Supervisor training courses.

[FIRS App](#) - The full version of the BCFSC FIRS App is now available to download from your App store. Use the FIRS App manage forms and documents for safety-related paperwork related to SAFE Companies and COR audit forms management.

BCFSC Training:

Scheduled classroom training returns in the Fall:

October 9 | [Basic Incident Investigation – Kamloops](#)

This course provides a basic understanding of the methods, tools, and processes needed to conduct an incident investigation.

October 10-11 | [Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors – Kamloops](#)

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

October 16 | [Basic Incident Investigation – Cranbrook](#)

This course provides a basic understanding of the methods, tools, and processes needed to conduct an incident investigation.

October 17-18 | [Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors – Cranbrook](#)

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

October 17-18 | [Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors – Prince George](#)

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

October 22-25 | [Falling Supervisor – Nelson](#)

Participants will learn the roles and responsibilities of a falling supervisor and will become familiar with processes used by a falling supervisor to support their due diligence.

October 31 - November 1 | [Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors – Campbell River](#)

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

November 7-8 | [Leadership and Communication for Forest Supervisors – Kamloops](#)

This two-day classroom workshop provides participants with insights into their strengths and weaknesses, and how their personal style influences the workers they oversee.

November 12-15 | [Falling Supervisor – Campbell River](#)

Participants will learn the roles and responsibilities of a falling supervisor and will become familiar with processes used by a falling supervisor to support their due diligence.

November 14-15 | [Leadership and Communication for Forest Supervisors – Prince George](#)

This two-day classroom workshop provides participants with insights into their strengths and weaknesses, and how their personal style influences the workers they oversee.



SAFETY ALERT & BULLETIN OF THE MONTH

November 27-28 | [Leadership and Communication for Forest Supervisors – Campbell River](#)

This two-day classroom workshop provides participants with insights into their strengths and weaknesses, and how their personal style influences the workers they oversee.

November 29 | [Basic Incident Investigation – Campbell River](#)

This course provides a basic understanding of the methods, tools, and processes needed to conduct an incident investigation.

December 6 | [Basic Incident Investigation – Prince George](#)

This course provides a basic understanding of the methods, tools, and processes needed to conduct an incident investigation.

Refer to the [Training section of our website](#) for more information on upcoming classroom training and costs.