



**U.S. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION**  
**Washington, D.C. 20507**

**CHART OF RISK FACTORS FOR HARASSMENT AND RESPONSIVE STRATEGIES**

<b>Risk Factor</b>	<b>Risk Factor Indicia</b>	<b>Why This is a Risk Factor for Harassment</b>	<b>Risk Factor-Specific Strategies to Reduce Harassment*</b>
<b>Homogenous workforce</b>	Historic lack of diversity in the workplace Currently only one minority in a work group ( <i>e.g.</i> , team, department, location)	Employees in the minority can feel isolated and may actually be, or at least appear to be, vulnerable to pressure from others. Employees in the majority might feel threatened by those they perceive as "different" or "other," or might simply be uncomfortable around others who are not like them.	Increase diversity at all levels of the workforce, with particular attention to work groups with low diversity. Pay attention to relations among and within work groups.
<b>Workplaces where some employees do not conform to workplace norms</b>	"Rough and tumble" or single-sex-dominated workplace cultures Remarks, jokes, or banter that are crude, "raunchy," or demeaning	Employees may be viewed as weak or susceptible to abuse. Abusive remarks or humor may promote workplace norms that devalue certain types of individuals.	Proactively and intentionally create a culture of civility and respect with the involvement of the highest levels of leadership. Pay attention to relations among and within work groups.
<b>Cultural and language differences in the workplace</b>	Arrival of new employees with different cultures or nationalities Segregation of employees with different cultures or nationalities	Different cultural backgrounds may make employees less aware of laws and workplace norms. Employees who do not speak English may not know their rights and may be more subject to exploitation.	Ensure that culturally diverse employees understand laws, workplace norms, and policies. Increase diversity in culturally segregated workforces. Pay attention to relations

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		Language and linguistic characteristics can play a role in harassment.	among and within work groups.
<b>Coarsened Social Discourse Outside the Workplace</b>	Increasingly heated discussion of current events occurring outside the workplace	Coarsened social discourse that is happening outside a workplace may make harassment inside the workplace more likely or perceived as more acceptable.	Proactively identify current events-national and local-that are likely to be discussed in the workplace. Remind the workforce of the types of conduct that are unacceptable in the workplace.
<b>Young workforces</b>	Significant number of teenage and young adult employees	Employees in their first or second jobs may be less aware of laws and workplace norms. Young employees may lack the self-confidence to resist unwelcome overtures or challenge conduct that makes them uncomfortable. Young employees may be more susceptible to being taken advantage of by coworkers or superiors, particularly those who may be older and more established in their positions. Young employees may be more likely to engage in harassment because they lack the maturity to understand or care about consequences.	Provide targeted outreach about harassment in high schools and colleges. Provide orientation to all new employees with emphasis on the employer's desire to hear about all complaints of unwelcome conduct. Provide training on how to be a good supervisor when youth are promoted to supervisory positions.
<b>Workplaces with</b>	Executives or senior managers	Management is often reluctant to	Apply workplace rules

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<b>"high value" employees</b>	Employees with high value (actual or perceived) to the employer, <i>e.g.</i> , the "rainmaking" partner or the prized, grant-winning researcher	jeopardize high value employee's economic value to the employer. High value employees may perceive themselves as exempt from workplace rules or immune from consequences of their misconduct.	uniformly, regardless of rank or value to the employer. If a high-value employee is discharged for misconduct, consider publicizing that fact (unless there is a good reason not to).
<b>Workplaces with significant power disparities</b>	Low-ranking employees in organizational hierarchy Employees holding positions usually subject to the direction of others, <i>e.g.</i> , administrative support staff, nurses, janitors, etc. Gendered power disparities ( <i>e.g.</i> , most of the low-ranking employees are female)	Supervisors feel emboldened to exploit low-ranking employees. Low-ranking employees are less likely to understand complaint channels (language or education/training insufficiencies). Undocumented workers may be especially vulnerable to exploitation or the fear of retaliation.	Apply workplace rules uniformly, regardless of rank or value to the employer. Pay attention to relations among and within work groups with significant power disparities.
<b>Workplaces that rely on customer service or client satisfaction</b>	Compensation directly tied to customer satisfaction or client service	Fear of losing a sale or tip may compel employees to tolerate inappropriate or harassing behavior.	Be wary of a "customer is always right" mentality in terms of application to unwelcome conduct.
<b>Workplaces where work is monotonous or tasks are low-intensity</b>	Employees are not actively engaged or "have time on their hands" Repetitive work	Harassing behavior may become a way to vent frustration or avoid boredom.	Consider varying or restructuring job duties or workload to reduce monotony or boredom. Pay attention to relations

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			among and within work groups with monotonous or low-intensity tasks.
<b>Isolated workplaces</b>	Physically isolated workplaces Employees work alone or have few opportunities to interact with others	Harassers have easy access to their targets. There are no witnesses.	Consider restructuring work environments and schedules to eliminate isolated conditions. Ensure that workers in isolated work environments understand complaint procedures. Create opportunities for isolated workers to connect with each other ( <i>e.g.</i> , in person, on line) to share concerns.
<b>Workplaces that tolerate or encourage alcohol consumption</b>	Alcohol consumption during and around work hours.	Alcohol reduces social inhibitions and impairs judgment.	Train co-workers to intervene appropriately if they observe alcohol-induced misconduct. Remind managers about their responsibility if they see harassment, including at events where alcohol is consumed. Intervene promptly when customers or clients who have consumed too much alcohol act inappropriately.
<b>Decentralized workplaces</b>	Corporate offices far removed physically and/or	Managers may feel (or may actually be) unaccountable for their behavior	Ensure that compliance training reaches all levels of the

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	organizationally from front-line employees or first-line supervisors	and may act outside the bounds of workplace rules. Managers may be unaware of how to address harassment issues and may be reluctant to call headquarters for direction.	organization, regardless of how geographically dispersed workplaces may be. Ensure that compliance training for area managers includes their responsibility for sites under their jurisdiction Develop systems for employees in geographically diverse locations to connect and communicate.