



Best Practices on Sexual Harassment Prevention

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WORKPLACE CULTURE

Messaging Geared toward Leaders

- **More Power = More Expected (Not Less)**
- **What you permit, you promote**
- **What you say and how you act around gender sets the tone**
 - **Lesson from Obama staffers**
- **Retaliation of any kind will not be tolerated**

WORKPLACE CULTURE

Possible Action Steps:

- Video with top leaders/resolution
- Require/encourage leaders to actively participate in training
- Require/encourage leaders to talk openly about harassment with their work teams
 - Small discussion groups
- Leaders shut down inappropriate behavior
 - Training that addresses how to do this

POLICES AND PRACTICES

Action Steps:

- **User-friendly – one stop shop for all resources**
- **Multiple avenues for reporting**
 - **Anonymous tip line?**
- **Published in multiple venues**
 - **Orientation; handbook; electronically; posted conspicuously; distributed annually; performance evaluation; conference brochures**

POLICES AND PRACTICES

Action Steps:

- **Prompt, effective investigation**
 - **Hold HR/Managers accountable**
- **Steps that resolve/fit the problem**
 - **Early intervention from equals**
 - **Training/coaching**
 - **Disciplinary action**
 - **Follow-up check-in with complainants**

TRAINING COVERS:

- **Role of those with power**
- **Investigation process; whether outcomes are public or private**
- **Words to use and time to practice**
- **Examples of what is/isn't harassment**
 - **What's prohibited by policy; retaliation**
- **Tools for bystanders**
- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

OTHER IDEAS

- **Implicit bias training- gender focus**
- **Men & women-only discussion groups**
- **Annual survey on harassment**
 - **NWLC quarterly anti-harassment check-in**
- **Annual reporting on anti-harassment activities**

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU WILL BE SUPPORTED?

**“I saw management take immediate action
on a complaint. I saw my manager stand up
for his employees.”**

Respectful Workplace, LMC Model Resolution

League models are thoughtfully developed by our staff for a city's consideration. Models should be customized as appropriate for an individual city's circumstances in consultation with the city's attorney. Helpful background information on this model may be found in the HR Reference Manual, Chapter 7 – Section XIII – Other Policies.

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING A RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE

WHEREAS, the City of _____ is committed to promoting a positive work environment in which all employees, contractors, commissioners, appointed officials, and elected officials are treated with respect and dignity.

WHEREAS, this Council holds itself, its appointed officials, commissioners, and employees to a high standard of conduct.

WHEREAS, the City seeks to provide a professional atmosphere where personal and professional excellence is fostered.

WHEREAS, the City finds effective policy and procedures, coupled with respectful workplace training, will assist in preventing harassment and supporting individuals who are being harassed to come forward, and ensure a problem is addressed quickly and effectively.

WHEREAS, discrimination and harassing behaviors disrupt the workplace, are often unlawful, and detract from the productivity and effectiveness of city staff and officials in conducting the important work we do on behalf of our residents.

WHEREAS, it is the City's expectation if someone is being harassed, he or she will be supported and treated with respect and the inappropriate behavior will be addressed.

WHEREAS, the City will provide a reporting process and a means to address discrimination and harassment.

WHEREAS, harassing workplace behaviors will not be tolerated, nor will retaliation for reporting a complaint or for participating in an investigation.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF _____, MINNESOTA AS FOLLOWS: this Council supports a respectful workplace culture and will work to create a harassment-free environment for all employees, elected officials, appointed officials, and commissioners in the city.

Passed by the City Council of _____, Minnesota this _____ day of Month, Year.

Mayor

Attested:

City Clerk

Addressing Harassment from Non-Employees

The City of _____ seeks to provide a harassment-free workplace. This includes preventing harassment from employees as well as nonemployees. This can include customers, vendors, consultants, visitors, volunteers or members of boards and commissions and elected officials. Maintaining a respectful public service work environment is a shared responsibility by city employees, volunteers, firefighters, members of boards and commissions and City Council members.

When harassment occurs between city employees, the steps toward resolution can be clearer to navigate, but harassment involving customers or other non-employees can present some unique challenges. For example, it may not be possible to bar a harassing individual from a public building or facility.

While the city has a strong commitment to customer service, employees, volunteers, members of boards and commissions and elected officials are not expected to accept harassing comments or behaviors from the public. This tips sheet provides opportunities to explore for employees, supervisors, and bystanders when dealing with harassment from non-employees.

Employee Tips

If you are the victim of workplace harassment from an employee, follow your city's policies and, above all, report the offending behavior to a supervisor, the city administrator or HR. If you are the victim of workplace harassment from a non-employee, here are some options to address the situation temporarily, if you feel safe and comfortable doing so, until you can report it to your supervisor, the city administrator or HR:

- Avoid one-on-one situations with the harasser. If possible, find a coworker to be present with you.
- Walk away from the situation.
- Tell whomever is engaging in the disrespectful behavior how you feel about their actions. Request the person to stop the behavior because you feel intimidated, offended, or uncomfortable.
- Contact a supervisor, the city administrator or HR and ask for assistance.

If there is a concern about the possibility of violence, individuals should use their discretion to call 911, and as soon as feasible, report the situation to a supervisor, the city administrator or the City Attorney.

Supervisor Tips

Supervisors are an essential part of cultivating and maintaining a workplace free of harassment. A higher standard of conduct applies to a supervisor. Supervisors are expected to know, teach, and enforce the rules, as well as set a good example. Often courts will expect supervisors to exercise a higher standard of care than non-supervisory employees when handling complaints of harassment in the workplace.

To create a harassment-free workplace, supervisors **must**:

- Supervisors can shape the culture of a city by proactively promoting a harassment-free work environment. Always be mindful of your behavior as it serves as a model to others. And remember, what you permit, you promote.
- Be open to listening to situations from your employees; respectfully listen to the employee's situation and take the complaint seriously. Complaints are an opportunity to take action and correct a situation before it escalates. Ask the reporting employee what he or she wants to see happen next.
- Avoid promising confidentiality. When an employee comes forward with a disrespectful workplace complaint, the city cannot promise complete confidentiality, due to the need to investigate the issue properly. However, any investigation process will be handled as confidentially as practical and related information will only be shared on a need to know basis and in accordance with the Minnesota Data Practices Act.
- Supervisors are **obligated** to report illegal harassment to a higher authority promptly, and that includes incidents involving a non-employee. Thus, if you see or hear about disrespectful workplace behavior – report it promptly!

Bystander Tips

Anyone can make a choice to actively and visibly take a stand against harassment. As a bystander, you can support someone who's being harassed, emphasize that harassment is not okay, and demonstrate to people in your life they too have the power to make the community safer.

- If you are the bystander of a harassment situation, distracting the parties involved may be a straightforward way to derail a disrespectful discussion.
- If it is necessary to engage with the harasser, keep it succinct and don't engage in an argument. Reach out to a supervisor for help.
- Check in with the targeted employee. Ask them if they are okay and if there is any way you can support them. Offer to help bring the situation to a supervisor's attention and do so.