

POL-22	WIDE BAY GROUP TRAINING SCHEME LTD	Issued: 24/06/08
Reviewed: 00/00/00	WORKPLACE HARASSMENT PREVENTION	Approved: 24/06/08 By: General Manager
Review Date: 06/09	Policy Area: HRM	

WHAT IS WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

A person is subjected to ‘workplace harassment’ if the person is subjected to repeated behaviour, other than behaviour amounting to sexual harassment, by a person, including the person’s employer or a co-worker or group of co-workers of the person that –

- is unwelcome and unsolicited; and
- the person considers to be offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening; and
- a reasonable person would consider to be offensive, humiliating, intimidating or threatening.

‘Workplace harassment’ does not include reasonable management action taken in a reasonable way by the person’s employer in connection with the person’s employment.

In this section— ‘sexual harassment’ see the *Anti Discrimination Act 1991*, section 119.

Detailed below are examples of behaviours that may be regarded as workplace harassment, if the behaviour is repeated or occurs as part of a pattern of behaviour. This is not an exhaustive list – however, it does outline some of the more common types of harassing behaviours.

Examples include:

- abusing a person loudly, usually when others are present;
- repeated threats of dismissal or other severe punishment for no reason;
- constant ridicule and being put down;
- leaving offensive messages on email or the telephone;
- sabotaging a person’s work, for example, by deliberately withholding or supplying incorrect information, hiding documents or equipment, not passing on messages and getting a person into trouble in other ways;
- maliciously excluding and isolating a person from workplace activities;
- persistent and unjustified criticisms, often about petty, irrelevant or insignificant matters;
- humiliating a person through gestures, sarcasm, criticism and insults, often in front of customers, management or other employees;
- spreading gossip or false, malicious rumours about a person with an intent to cause the person harm.

Actions that are not workplace harassment:

- Legitimate and reasonable management actions and business processes, such as, actions taken to transfer, demote, discipline, redeploy, retrench or dismiss an employee are not considered to be workplace harassment, provided these actions are conducted in a reasonable way.

1. PURPOSE

To ensure a healthy and safe workplace that is free from workplace harassment.

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all workers, contractors and visitors.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 Ensure all managers and workers are aware of the Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy.

3.2 Provide information to managers on the procedure which is to be followed should a harassment claim be made.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

4.1 Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all staff who report to them are aware of the Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy.

4.2 All managers, supervisors, WHSO and WHSR shall support the Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy and promote compliance with the procedure to workers.

5. PROCEDURE

5.1 The General Manager shall ensure the following actions are taken to prevent and control exposure to the risk of workplace harassment:

5.1.1 provide all employees with workplace harassment awareness training.

5.1.2 develop a code of conduct for employees to follow.

5.1.3 introduce a complaint handling system and inform all employees on how to make a complaint, the support systems available, options for resolving grievances and the appeals process.

5.1.4 regular review the workplace harassment prevention policy, complaint handling system and training.

5.2 Disciplinary action will be taken against a person who harasses an employee or who victimises a person who has made or is a witness to a complaint.

5.3 Complaints of alleged workplace harassment found to be malicious, frivolous or is based on insufficient grounds may make the complainant liable for disciplinary action.

6. DOCUMENTATION

Workplace Harassment Policy

REFERENCES

Prevention of Workplace Harassment Code of Practice 2004

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT PREVENTION

Workplace harassment has detrimental effects on people and the business. It can create an unsafe working environment, result in a loss of trained and talented employees, the breakdown of teams and individual relationships, and reduced efficiency. People who are harassed can become distressed, anxious, withdrawn, depressed, and can lose self-esteem and self-confidence.

Workplace harassment is unacceptable and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Wide Bay Group Training requires all employees to behave responsibly by complying with this policy, to not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, to maintain privacy during investigations and to immediately report incidents of workplace harassment to the Manager/WHSO or HR Manager.

Managers and supervisors must also ensure that employees are not exposed to workplace harassment.

Management are required to personally demonstrate appropriate behaviour, promote the workplace harassment prevention policy, treat complaints seriously and ensure where a person lodges or is witness to a complaint, that this person is not victimised.

Where employees can go for assistance

An employee who is being harassed can contact their Manager/WHSO or HR Manager for information and assistance in the management and resolution of a workplace harassment complaint.

Commitment to promptly investigate complaints

Wide Bay Group Training has a complaint handling system which includes procedures for reporting, investigating, resolving and appealing workplace harassment complaints. Any reports of workplace harassment will be treated seriously and investigated promptly, fairly and impartially. A person making a complaint and/or who is a witness to workplace harassment will not be victimised.

Consequences of breach of policy

Disciplinary action will be taken against a person who harasses an employee or who victimises a person who has made or is a witness to a complaint. Complaints of alleged workplace harassment found to be malicious, frivolous or is based on insufficient grounds may make the complainant liable for disciplinary action.

Review of policy

This policy and the actions outlined above will be reviewed as part of the scheduled review of the WHS Policy and Procedures Manual, unless required earlier because of changes to the risk profile of the workplace or relevant legislation. If necessary, further changes and actions may be introduced to ensure that workplace harassment is prevented and controlled.

“TERMS OF USE” AGREEMENT

I, _____, employee of the Wide Bay Group Training Scheme Ltd, have read and understand the terms and conditions outlined in the above “Workplace Harassment Prevention” policy.

Signed: _____

Date _____