



## **Bullying & Harassment**

Workplace bullying and harassment is a safety and health issue that can compromise the mental and physical health and safety of workers. To 'harass' means to engage in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought to reasonably be known to be unwelcome. Bullying and harassing behavior can include:

- verbal or written abuse or threats;
- personal ridicule;
- malicious or uncalled for interference with another's work;
- spreading malicious rumors; etc.

Reasonable day-to-day actions by a manager or supervisor that help manage, guide or direct workers or the workplace is not harassment. Appropriate employee performance reviews or discipline by a supervisor or manager is not harassment.

**Bullying and harassment affects people differently.** Reactions may include one or any combination of the following:

- impaired concentration or capacity to make decisions, which could lead to safety hazards (such as lack of attention when working with dangerous equipment);
- distress, anxiety, sleep loss or the potential for substance abuse;
- physical illness;
- reduced work performance; etc.

Bullying and harassment can also affect the overall workplace and may include:

- reduced efficiency and productivity, due to poor staff morale;
- increased stress and tensions between workers;
- high absenteeism rates;
- higher turnover, resulting in higher recruitment costs;
- higher levels of client dissatisfaction; etc.

Employer duties include the following:

- not engaging in bullying and harassment;
- developing a written policy and action plan to prevent harassment in the workplace;
- developing and implementing procedures for reporting incidents and complaints; and
- ensuring all workers and supervisors know and follow the harassment prevention policy at all times.



Worker duties include the following:

- acting in a reasonable manner in the workplace;
- reporting if harassment is observed or experienced; and
- complying with the employer's policies and procedures on bullying and harassment.

### **SAFETY REMINDER**

**A bullying work environment can breed not only distractions, but injuries, turnover, and potential legal issues. Stop Bullying BEFORE it becomes an issue.**