



Preventing sexual and gender-based harassment

What do I do if I'm being sexually harassed?

If you think you are being sexually harassed, start keeping a written record of events. Write down:

- what happened
- when it happened
- where it happened
- what was said or done, and who said or did it
- who saw what happened, and
- what you did at that time

Include the names of anyone you spoke with, when you spoke with them, and what action if any, was taken to resolve the problem.

Where possible, you can make it clear to the person harassing you that their behaviour is unwelcome and that you want it to stop. However, a person does not have to object to the harassment at the time it happens for there to be a violation, or for the person to claim their rights under the *Code*. A person who is the target of harassment may be in a vulnerable situation and afraid to speak out. Employers must maintain workplaces that are free from discrimination and harassment, whether or not anyone objects.

Where possible, try to resolve the problem through any internal policies or resolution mechanisms that your employer may have. If you're in a union, you can contact your union for help. Using an internal mechanism does not replace your right to file a human rights claim, or to proceed in other ways.

If you make an internal complaint, it is always a good idea to do it in writing. Include all details and ask for a written response. Keep a copy of your complaint and any response you may get. It could be helpful later if you decide to take further action.

You may also have recourse under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. Contact Ontario's Ministry of Labour for more information. In some cases, sexual harassment is a criminal offence, and you can contact your local police.

You can also make a complaint (called filing an application) with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO). This must be done within one year of the last incident of sexual harassment. If you want to talk about your rights or need legal help with a human rights claim, contact the Human Rights Legal Support Centre.

If it's unwanted, it's harassment.



Ontario
Human Rights Commission
Commission ontarienne des
droits de la personne