

Identifying Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

No matter what we like to think, sexual harassment is a **problem** in Canadian workplaces.

In fact, it's such an overarching issue that **every province** now has legislation **addressing it**.

60% of Canadians have experienced some form of **workplace harassment**, excluding sexual harassment.

4/5 Canadians say they've had **unwanted experiences at work**, but **didn't report it to their employers**.

30% of Canadians have experienced **sexual harassment in the workplace**.

43% of women and 12% of men have been **sexually harassed or assaulted at work**.

3% of Canadians have experienced **sexual violence in the workplace**.

In the **majority** of cases, the **harassment or violence** experience occurred **more than once**.

Sexual harassment includes (but isn't limited to):

- **unnecessary** physical contact, including **unwanted touching**
- Invading **personal space**
- **Leering** or inappropriate staring
- Showing or sending **pornography** or other **sexual images**
- Making **sexual jokes**, including forwarding sexual jokes by **email** or **online office messaging systems**
- **Vulgar language** related to **gender**
- Spreading **sexual rumours**, including **outing** or **threatening to out** someone who is **LGBTQ+**
- Sexually **propositioning** a person or **bragging** about **sexual prowess**
- **Demanding** dates or **sexual favours**

Such as demanding hugs, stroking someone's hair, or grabbing someone's hand

Such as pinning up a picture of a naked person in a bathroom



Sexual harassment can also include:

- Using **language** that puts someone down because of their **sex, sexual orientation, gender identity**, or **gender expression**
- Using **sex-specific** derogatory names, **homophobic/transphobic** epithets, slurs, or jokes
- **Targeting someone for not following sex-role stereotypes**, such as rude comments made to a woman for being in a position of authority, or a man for being a nurse

If you identify sexual harassment in the workplace, you can:

1

Speak up, if you feel safe to do so. Confronting the alleged harasser might put an end to the behaviour.

2

Familiarize yourself with your Workplace Sexual Harassment Policy. Ensure you're knowledgeable about the policy, how to report, and how to maintain confidentiality.

3

Report it. Document the harassment and report it to your Human Resources (HR) or Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) department.

4

Turn to a Mentor. If your organization doesn't have an HR or OHS department, ask someone you trust for guidance.

5

Contact an industry council or society. If your industry has a council or society that presides over it, they may be able to assist you by providing advice, resources, or mediation services.

6

Contact Provincial OHS. If you are unable to gain support from your workplace or your industry, you may need to turn to provincial OHS. Sexual harassment is a form of workplace violence, and it is illegal. Reporting it to provincial OHS may begin necessary investigation proceedings.

Workplace sexual harassment is illegal, and you don't have to take it.

You have many avenues for support.

Sources:

<https://www.hrpa.ca/Documents/Public/Thought-Leadership/Doing-Our-Duty.PDF>

<https://lawandstyle.ca/career/career-counsel-what-should-you-do-if-you-experience-sexual-harassment-at-work/>