

Sexual Harassment - Your Rights

What Is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment is when someone, or a group of people, behave sexually towards you when you don't want them to. Sexual harassment is a type of sex discrimination.

Depending on the circumstances, each of the following actions can be sexual harassment:

- suggestive behavior
- sexual staring or leering
- sexual or smutty jokes
- sexual propositions, such as continually asking you out, phoning you, or asking for sexual favors
- sexual or physical contact, such as touching, slapping, kissing or pinching
- sexual comments, insults or teasing
- sexually offensive gestures
- intrusive questions about sexual activity
- sexually explicit or offensive material that is displayed in a public place or put in your work area or belongings.

In some cases, just one of these actions may be enough to amount to sexual harassment.

Remember that women can sexually harass men, men can sexually harass women, men can sexually harass other men, and women can sexually harass other women.

Is Sexual Harassment Against the Law?

Yes. Sexual harassment, from a man or woman, is against the law. The following are examples of the places or circumstances where sexual harassment can occur:

- in employment - when you apply for a job, or at any time during your employment, when you get or try to get most types of goods or services - for example, from shops, restaurants and entertainment places, banks, lawyers, doctors, hospitals, etc.

- when you rent or try to rent, buy or try to buy real estate - for example, an apartment, house, commercial premises, or land
- when you apply to get into or are studying in any educational institution open to the general public
- when you try to enter or join an organization that solicits members from the general public

What are my rights at work?

The law says that your employer must not sexually harass you or any of their employees at work. It also says that they must take steps to make sure that there is no sexual harassment in the workplace. This means that they must take steps to make sure that your supervisor doesn't sexually harass you, that your co-workers don't sexually harass you, and that customers, clients and any other people you have to deal with at work don't sexually harass you. They must do this whether you are a permanent, full-time, part-time or casual employee.

What can I do if I'm sexually harassed?

If you are sexually harassed, you have the legal right to speak out to try to stop it from happening. For example, if it happens at work, you can tell the person that you find their behavior offensive and that it's against the law. Insist that they stop doing it. If they don't stop, tell your supervisor, senior manager, or a human resources representative. If you are in a union, you could ask them to help too.

Remember that the law says that employers and managers must take steps to make sure that you aren't harassed at work. They can't do this if they don't know it's happening. Your supervisor, manager must take your complaint seriously and must act quickly and effectively to investigate and stop the harassment. They must not hassle or "victimize" you just because you've complained to them.

The Department of Law & Public Safety, through its Division on Civil Rights, is responsible for enforcing the law. For more information or to file a complaint, contact the office nearest your work or home. See the other side of this fact sheet for contact information.



Division on

CIVIL RIGHTS

For More Information

The Department of Law & Public Safety, through its Division on Civil Rights, is responsible for enforcing the law. To file a complaint, contact or visit the office nearest you:

Atlantic City Satellite Office:

26 Pennsylvania Avenue, Atlantic City, NJ 08401

Phone: (609) 441-3100

Fax: (609) 441-3578

Camden Regional Office:

One Port Center, 4th Floor, Suite 402

2 Riverside Drive, Camden, NJ 08103

Phone: (856) 614-2550

Fax: (856) 614-2568

TDD# (609) 757-2958

Newark Regional Office:

31 Clinton Street, Newark, NJ 07102

Phone: (973) 648-2700

Fax: (973) 648-4405 / (973) 648-7582

TDD# (973) 648-4678

Paterson Regional Office:

100 Hamilton Plaza, Paterson, NJ 07501

Phone: (973) 977-4500

Fax: (973) 977-4511

TDD# (973) 977-1955

Trenton Regional Office:

140 East Front Street / P.O. Box 090

Trenton, NJ 08625-0090

Phone: (609) 292-4605

Fax: (609) 984-3812

TDD# (609) 292-1785

Visit our web site at www.NJCivilRights.org