



State of Connecticut COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Promoting Equality and Justice for all People

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. §46a-60(b)(8) as any unwelcome sexual advances or request for sexual favors or any conduct of a sexual nature when:

- (A) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- (B) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or,
- (C) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment can happen to anyone, regardless of the gender of either the harasser or the person harassed. Employees, interns, temporary workers and visitors to places of public accommodations are all protected by sexual harassment laws. Anyone in a workplace could be a sexual harasser, from supervisors and coworkers to vendors and visitors.

Sexual harassment does not have to occur in the workplace for it to be illegal. For example, it can be at an off-site office holiday party or at a happy hour. It also does not have to take place face-to-face, but can occur on social media or through text messages.

What are some examples of sexual harassment?

- You are offered a job or promotion in return for sexual favors
- Your supervisor threatens to cut your hours if you won't date him or her
- You are offered a better schedule or a raise if you send your boss nude pictures
- Your boss threatens you with a poor performance review if you don't go out to dinner with him or her

These are examples of ***quid pro quo*** sexual harassment, which occurs when someone in a position of power offers a benefit in exchange for sexual attention or threatens your job if you refuse sexual attentions.

- People at work talk about sex all day
- There are posters of scantily dressed models in the workplace
- People comment about other employees' bodies
- Someone at work touches you without your consent

These are examples of a **hostile work environment**, which is when a coworker, supervisor or third party makes repeated inappropriate and unwanted sexual advances, comments or request.

What options do you have if you are being sexually harassed at work?

If you are sexually harassed at work, there are several steps you can take to stop and prevent the harassment:

- If you feel comfortable, ask the harasser to stop
- Look at your company policies to see who to report to
- Tell your supervisor, Human Resources Officer or another management employee
- If you belong to a union, tell your union representative
- File a complaint with the CHRO or with the EEOC. If the harassment occurred prior to October 1, 2019, you have 180 days to file a complaint with the CHRO. If the harassment occurred after October 1, 2019, you have 300 days to file

What remedies are available for victims of sexual harassment if they file a complaint?

Human Rights Referees are authorized to award damages necessary to eliminate the discriminatory practice and make complainants whole. These damages can include:

- Back pay
- Front pay
- Attorney's fees
- Costs
- Cease and desist orders
- Pre- and post-judgment interest
- Emotional distress
- Punitive damages (if the case is tried in court)