

Developing a policy statement

Workplace bullying and harassment

All employers are required to develop and implement a written policy statement clearly declaring that workplace bullying and harassment is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Here's a suggested step-by-step approach to creating an effective workplace bullying and harassment statement:

Step 1 – Review existing policies or programs

If there is an existing policy regarding interpersonal conduct in your workplace (such as a respectful workplace or harassment policy or an occupational health and safety program), consider updating it to include bullying and harassment. For tips, see WorkSafeBC's *A handbook on preventing and addressing workplace bullying and harassment*.

Step 2 – Draft a conduct statement for your workplace

The policy statement must clearly state that bullying and harassment is not acceptable or tolerated in the workplace. Employers may also choose to include information about respectful workplace conduct.

Step 3 – Define bullying and harassment

Provide a clear definition of bullying and harassment. To avoid any confusion and to ensure everyone understands what it means, consider including specific examples of what is and is not considered bullying and harassment.

Step 4 – Apply the policy statement

Include a statement that outlines to whom and what the policy will apply. For example, it applies to permanent, temporary, and contract workers, and to interpersonal and electronic communications.

Step 5 – Inform everyone about the policy statement

Be sure to inform all workers about the policy statement and provide them with copies of it. Post the policy statement in visible places around the workplace, such as the lunch or reception areas.

Step 6 – Review the policy statement annually

Include a start date (the date the policy goes into effect), as well as a date when the policy statement will be reviewed each year. Develop and revise the organization's policy statement based on experience and best practices. For example, if a bullying and harassment incident has occurred, ask if there are lessons learned that can be incorporated into your revised policy statement.

<Organization name> workplace bullying and harassment policy statement

This is an example of a policy statement. It can be adapted to meet the needs of individual workplaces. A Microsoft® Word version and additional resources are available at www.worksafebc.com/bullying.

1. Workplace conduct

Bullying and harassment is not acceptable or tolerated in this workplace. All workers will be treated in a fair and respectful manner.

2. Bullying and harassment

- (a) includes any inappropriate conduct or comment by a person towards a worker that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that worker to be humiliated or intimidated, but
- (b) excludes any reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the place of employment.

Examples of conduct or comments that might constitute bullying and harassment include verbal aggression or insults, calling someone derogatory names, harmful hazing or initiation practices, vandalizing personal belongings, and spreading malicious rumours.

3. Workers must:

- not engage in the bullying and harassment of other workers
- report if bullying and harassment is observed or experienced
- apply and comply with the employer's policies and procedures on bullying and harassment

4. Application

This policy statement applies to all workers, including permanent, temporary, casual, contract, and student workers. It applies to interpersonal and electronic communications, such as email.

5. Annual review

This policy statement will be reviewed every year. All workers will be provided with a copy.

Date created: _____

Annual review date: _____