

# Sexual Harassment – Landscaping Meeting Kit

## WHAT'S AT STAKE

Sexual harassment is a serious issue that can occur in any workplace, including the landscaping industry. It affects the safety, well-being, and dignity of workers, creating a hostile work environment.

## WHAT'S THE DANGER

Sexual harassment in the workplace can take many forms, all of which are damaging.

### 1. Types of Sexual Harassment:

- **Quid Pro Quo Harassment:** This occurs when a person in a position of authority demands sexual favors in exchange for job benefits, such as promotions, raises, or continued employment.
- **Hostile Work Environment:** This form of harassment involves unwelcome sexual behavior or comments that create an intimidating, offensive, or hostile work environment.

### 1. Behavior That Constitutes Harassment:

- **Unwanted Advances:** Unwelcome sexual advances, such as asking for dates repeatedly after being refused, suggestive comments, or inappropriate touching, are forms of harassment.
- **Verbal Harassment:** This includes making sexual comments, jokes, or remarks about someone's appearance, body, or sexual orientation.
- **Non-Verbal Harassment:** Non-verbal actions, such as leering, making obscene gestures, or displaying sexually suggestive materials, also constitute harassment.

## 1. Impact on Victims and the Workplace:

- **Emotional and Psychological Impact:** Victims of sexual harassment often experience stress, anxiety, depression, and a loss of self-esteem.
- **Workplace Culture:** A workplace that tolerates sexual harassment can become toxic, leading to low morale, decreased productivity, and high employee turnover.

# HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

How to protect yourself and others in the landscaping workplace.

## Establish Clear Policies:

### 1. Zero Tolerance Policy:

- **Develop a Policy:** Employers should establish a clear, written zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment. This policy should define what constitutes harassment and provide examples.
- **Communicate the Policy:** Ensure that all employees are aware of the policy and understand their rights.

### 1. Reporting Procedures:

- **Create a Safe Reporting System:** Establish a confidential process for reporting incidents of harassment.
- **Protection from Retaliation:** Ensure that the policy includes protections against retaliation for those who report harassment or participate in an investigation. Retaliation is illegal.

## Training and Education:

### 1. Regular Training:

- **Comprehensive Training:** Provide regular training sessions for all employees on sexual harassment, including what it is, how to recognize it, and how to report it.
- **Tailored to the Workplace:** Ensure that training is relevant to the landscaping industry.

## **1. Promote a Culture of Respect:**

- **Lead by Example:** Supervisors and managers should model respectful behavior and hold themselves and others accountable.
- **Encourage Open Communication:** Foster an environment where employees feel comfortable discussing issues related to harassment.

## **Responding to Harassment:**

### **1. Take Immediate Action:**

- **Address Complaints Promptly:** When a complaint is made, take immediate action to investigate.
- **Ensure Fair Investigations:** Conduct thorough and impartial investigations into all reports of harassment.

### **1. Support for Victims:**

- **Provide Resources:** Offer victims of harassment, counseling, legal assistance, and other support.
- **Respect Privacy:** Maintain confidentiality throughout the investigation process.

## **Creating a Positive Work Environment:**

### **1. Encourage Respectful Behavior:**

- **Promote Inclusivity:** Encourage a workplace culture that values diversity and inclusivity.
- **Address Issues Early:** Address any behavior that could lead to harassment before it escalates.

### **1. Continuous Improvement:**

- **Regular Review of Policies:** Regularly update harassment policies and training programs.
- **Gather Feedback:** Solicit feedback from employees on the effectiveness of harassment prevention measures and make adjustments as needed.

# FINAL WORD

By understanding what constitutes harassment, establishing clear policies, providing regular training, and fostering a culture of respect, we can create a safe and inclusive environment for everyone.