

# Did you know?

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## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

**Sexual harassment is a form of gender discrimination. It is unwelcome offensive sexual conduct.**

### What are the five common types of sexual harassment?

1. **Threatening:** A person is offered rewards if they engage in or tolerate sexual conduct or threatened with negative consequences if they reject or speak out against the unwelcome behaviour.
2. **Physical harassment:** Unwanted touching may include brushing up against someone, standing too close to someone, touching a person's clothing, hair, or body, hugging, kissing, patting or stroking, massaging or other acts.
3. **Verbal harassment:** Repeatedly asking someone for dates and refusing to accept no for an answer, making inappropriate or unwanted comments about a person's appearance, whistling at someone, using sexual slang to refer to a person, asking personal questions of a sexual nature, moving work discussion to sexual topics.
4. **Non-verbal harassment** (body language): behaviours may include staring, winking, making sexual gestures or suggestive looks, or giving unwanted gifts.
5. **Environmental harassment:** displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures in the workplace in an offensive way.

Employers are responsible for maintaining a healthy work environment and consequently can be held liable if they are not providing a harassment-free workplace.

### How can a person respond to sexual harassment?

In some cases, the behaviours related to sexual harassment are not obvious, and victims may feel that they do not have enough proof to make a complaint. The following is a list of possible courses of action to consider and investigate if you feel you are a victim of sexual harassment.

1. Keep a detailed journal of events;
2. Approach the individual or employer with your concerns;
3. Seek resolution through mediation with the parties involved;
4. If the situation is eliciting fear, contact the police;
5. Approach community support groups;
6. File a formal complaint with the BC Human Rights Tribunal.

### For More Information

**BC Human Rights Tribunal:**  
**Lower Mainland: 604-775-2000**  
**Elsewhere in BC: 1-888-440-8844**  
[www.bchrt.bc.ca](http://www.bchrt.bc.ca)

**BC Human Rights Coalition**  
[www.bchrcoalition.org](http://www.bchrcoalition.org)

**The Lawyer Referral Service:**  
**Lower Mainland: 604-687-3221**  
**Elsewhere in BC: 1-800-663-1919**