



HOW TO RESPOND TO HARASSMENT COMPLAINT

As an employer or manager, you should know the importance of dealing with complaints of harassment in a proper manner. Consider the criteria followed by human rights tribunals across Canada to assess employer's responses to such complaints.

The Criteria

1. **Promptness of Response:** Upon receipt of an official complaint, you must determine whether the alleged harassment did occur, and if so, take immediate measures to rectify the situation. Ensure that a formal complaint mechanism exists, and that all employees are aware of it.
2. **The Policy:** Ensure that you have a policy in place that clearly states that harassment is prohibited conduct which will not be tolerated, and that disciplinary measures, including dismissal, may ensue. Ensure that the policy is distributed to all employees and managers, once developed.
3. **Dealing with the Matter:** Time and resources will determine how seriously an employer deals with a harassment matter. Concentrate your efforts on the immediate investigation and resolution of a complaint.
4. **Complaint Mechanism:** The complaint mechanism should be included as part of the harassment policy itself. Always communicate the outcome of an investigation to all interested parties.
5. **Healthy Work Environment:** You must take reasonable measures to accommodate the victim of harassment to ensure that her/his work environment is healthy. If a transfer is required, transfer the perpetrator, not the victim.
6. **Communicate action to Complainant:** Ensure that the victim is advised of the result of the investigation and that she/he is satisfied with the proposed resolution.

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