



## Harassment

It is a policy at League Engineering that the workplace is free from harassment and intimidation of either a physical or verbal nature, not only because such behaviour is undesirable, but also because it is against the law.

Two major harassment areas are **bullying** and **sexual harassment**.

### **Bullying**

Bullying includes a wide range of unacceptable behaviour including blaming, labelling, sarcastic comments, foul language, threats, verbal abuse, intimidations, bad mouthing, ganging up, excluding, isolating, threatening someone will be sacked or forcing someone to resign.

**Bullying may be the unintended consequence of poor communication skills, but the effect (and risk) is the same.**

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment normally falls into one of three categories of behaviour. If the behaviour occurs at work related activities, eg, at training courses, work or social functions, it will still fall under the definition of work harassment.

#### **Verbal**

Sexual harassment also covers words which fall below the line of what is acceptable including: -

- Sexual innuendo
- Suggestive comments, eg, about a person's appearance or body
- Smutty jokes
- Sexual propositions
- Continual requests for dates
- Comments or questions about a person's sexual habits

- Foul language
- Sexually explicit phone calls or other conversations
- Offensive phone calls or voicemail messages.

### **Visual**

- Sexual or nude photographs, pictures or computer graphics
- Demeaning or rude cartoons
- Offensive email messages, including lewd jokes.

### **Physical**

- Unwelcome touching, pinching, fondling or patting
- Brushing against the body
- Impeding or blocking movement
- Kissing
- Leering or staring
- Sexual assault.

### **What is NOT Sexual Harassment**

- Genuine compliments about appearance, eg, a new haircut, dress, tie, etc.
- Terms such as 'luv', 'darling', 'baby', etc, which although not sexual are often resented, as they are seen to be over familiar or being talked down to.
- Mild profanity or coarseness, which although unprofessional is not sexual behaviour.
- Invitations to work social outings where other staff will be present.

### **How to Protect Yourself from Sexual Harassment at Work**

Work is not a social situation and whilst League Engineering encourages a friendly work environment, it is important not to be unnecessarily familiar or suggestive.

If someone is suggestive or uses language you find offensive, then let them know politely but firmly that you are upset by their actions or words. Tell them what you find not acceptable.

*Note: As sexual harassment is a personal as well as a work issue, there is an emphasis on self-help as well as company help.*

### **What to do if You are Harassed**

Firstly, attempt to tell the harasser the unacceptable nature of their behaviour. If it is too difficult to tell them to cease the behaviour, then consider sending them a note or email asking them to stop.

If the behaviour persists, keep a record of when and where the incidents occurred and what exactly happened, then advise the Director. What happens next will depend on whether you require counselling on how to handle the situation, or alternatively, whether you wish to lodge a complaint and have the company conduct an investigation.

We are committed to taking immediate action to investigate a harassment complaint and will act in a way that protects the rights of both the complainant and the alleged harasser. We will also keep information gathered strictly private.

We have established procedures for conducting an investigation and if harassment is proven, as with other breaches of professional behaviour, the result will be disciplinary action through one of the following actions according to the seriousness of the behaviour.

**Minor non-compliance** will normally result in a disciplinary warning.

**Serious non-compliance** will normally result in disciplinary action. This may include suspension or dismissal. Management will consider each case individually in consultation with its professional advisers.