

Harassment Prevention Policy & Reporting Procedure

PURPOSE

CHOICE, Inc. strives to create and maintain an environment where all people are treated with respect. Treating others with professionalism and respect helps create a positive workplace where employees feel safe and productive. Interacting and communicating with each other in a professional and respectful manner is necessary in order to maximize the unique talents and skills of each individual at CHOICE. As we interact with others during the course of our work, we will undoubtedly work with people whose culture and beliefs may be different from our own. To prevent your behavior from being construed as discrimination or harassment you must adopt an attitude that recognizes the differences among all people and be willing to accept diversity among your coworkers. Not only is discriminatory or harassing behavior disrespectful, it is illegal. Various laws and statutes guarantee a workplace free of discrimination and harassment. All employees are covered by and expected to comply with this policy. CHOICE will not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any kind in the workplace, at company social events, on social media outlets, or between employees outside of work hours. CHOICE will seek to prevent, correct and discipline any behavior that violates this policy. Violation of this policy may result in immediate corrective action, disciplinary action and/or termination of employment.

CHOICE, Inc.

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is any unwelcome conduct from a boss, coworker, group of coworkers, vendors, employment/volunteer/community partners, or customers whose actions, communication or behavior mocks, demeans, or ridicules an employee on the basis of race, color, national origin, age 40 and over, religion, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information or marital status. Any actions from another person that adversely interferes with an employee's ability to do their work, which may be conduct not specifically noted in this policy, can be considered a form of discrimination.

HARASSMENT

Harassment or bullying is unwelcome verbal or physical conduct from a boss, coworker, group of coworkers, vendors, employment/volunteer/community partners, or customers whose actions, communication, behavior, or other conduct not specifically noted in this policy, that can be threatening, intimidating or coercive. Verbal harassment can include comments and negative stereotyping. Physical harassment can include display of written or graphic materials. Conduct that is repeated after it's been made clear is unwelcome is considered harassment. Once harassment rises to the level of creating a hostile environment, it becomes illegal. Any actions from another person that adversely interferes with an employee's ability to do their work can be considered a form of harassment.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct from a boss, coworker, group of coworkers, vendors, employment/volunteer/community partners, or customers whose actions, communication, behavior, or other conduct not specifically noted, in this policy that creates an intimidating, uncomfortable, offensive or hostile environment. Sexual harassment can include unwanted physical contact, innuendos, suggestive comments, frequent compliments on a person's appearance or dress, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, nicknames, images of an offensive nature on a computer or other electronic device, lewd remarks, leering, threats or requests. Compliments that are excessive and/or repetitive can be considered harassment. Any actions from another person that interferes with an employee's ability to do their work can be considered a form of sexual harassment.

PREVENTING HARASSMENT

- Interact, communicate and treat others with professionalism and respect at all times.
- Do not display unwelcome behavior (behavior that makes someone feel humiliated, offended, intimidated or uncomfortable) even if making them feel that way was not your intention.
- Do not continue or repeat unwelcome behavior once someone objects to this behavior. It does not make a difference what your feelings are on the matter; stop immediately.
- Recognize and understand the boundaries coworkers want respected.
- Limit physical contact in the workplace to a professional handshake.
- Avoid comments on co-workers' physical characteristics, appearance and clothing and do not offer compliments that are excessive or repetitive.
- Avoid social media connections with coworkers. Keep your work relationships professional.

CHOICE, Inc.

- Always assume that “no” means NO.
- Don’t interpret someone’s objection to your undesirable behavior to mean that you can repeat the conduct later or do again in a slightly different manner. Recognize a protest for what it is and understand the boundaries co-workers want you to respect.

MAINTAINING A HARASSMENT-FREE WORKPLACE

- Employees should stand up for themselves and coworkers by not ignoring or tolerating unwelcome behavior but by reporting it to management immediately.
- Set an example by speaking up against unwanted conduct.
- Keep in mind that the workplace should be a refuge where people go to enjoy their jobs and earn a living. The victims of harassing behavior are not limited to those people directly involved. Even if the principle parties are not offended by the behavior, the behavior may also be offensive to others and may contribute to creating a hostile workplace.
- When a workplace is disrupted by someone disrespecting one or more co-workers, anger and resentment can destroy morale. Workplace harassment can damage relationships and destroy lines of communication among employees.

HOW TO RESPOND TO UNWELCOME BEHAVIOR

- When you feel harassed or witness harassment, stand up for yourself and your co-workers. Don’t ignore it or tolerate it. Instead, tell the person exhibiting the unwelcome behavior that you are offended by their comments or actions.
- Employees cannot be punished for refusing an unwanted sexual advance by a boss, coworker, vendor, customer or employment/volunteer/community partner.
- Express your desires to work in a professional, respectful workplace. It may be hard to believe, but harassers often don’t realize their conduct is offensive until somebody spells it out for them.
- Simply asking someone to stop may not work. If the behavior happens again, you have the legal responsibility to report to management. If you are uncomfortable talking about it with your co-worker you can go directly to management.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

Employees are requested to report promptly when they become aware of, or hear of alleged actions of discrimination, bullying, harassment or sexual harassment. Employees can report this information to their supervisor, or other administrative team members, and should be prepared to provide all relevant information. Employees have the responsibility to report any type of harassment immediately, no matter if they were victim or witness. Management needs to be made aware of such behavior so the necessary steps can be taken to put a stop to it. Employees should understand that with any report made, no matter the type of alleged conduct, that management will put into action the established guidelines. Employees who make a report or participate in an investigation will be free from retaliation or adverse treatment. CHOICE has a commitment to keep information as private as possible however, CHOICE cannot guarantee confidentiality if it interferes with conducting a proper investigation. It is not only best practices and the policy at CHOICE to investigate all accusations of discrimination or harassment, it is the

CHOICE, Inc.

law. All employees are required to cooperate with investigations. False reporting or failure to cooperate with investigations may result in disciplinary action up to termination of employment.

Once a report of harassment has been received by a member of the CHOICE Administration, that person must immediately pass the information onto the Executive Director. The Executive Director will then assign a member of the administration to conduct the investigation. The investigation process shall involve interviews of the complainant, the respondent and any witnesses named by either. Within 14 working days of notice the incident an investigation will be completed with a written report of the findings will be prepared. The report shall be provided, along with any recommendations, to the Executive Director for action.

The investigator will need to know:

- Your (the complainant's) name
- The name of the respondent
- Details of what happened
- Any notes, physical evidence, electronic communication, social media, or documentation about the incident(s)
- Dates, times and frequency of incident(s)
- Where incident(s) occurred
- Names of any witnesses

Upon conclusion of the investigation it will be determined whether or not a violation of policy occurred. If a violation of policy is found to have occurred a decision of what corrective and disciplinary actions will be taken is made, up to termination of employment.

Policy reviewed and authorized by:

Lindsey Horvath, Designated Manager
Print Name & Title



Signature

Date of origination: 07/15/19

Date of last policy review: 11/12/25

CHOICE, Inc. Harassment Prevention Policy & Reporting Procedure
--

Review Quiz & Policy Signature Page

1. Harassment doesn't have to be sexual in nature to be illegal.
 - a. True
 - b. False

2. Because visitors, vendors, customers or employment/volunteer/community partners aren't company employees, their behavior cannot constitute workplace harassment.
 - a. True
 - b. False

3. Staring at another employee in a sexually-suggestive manner is not sufficient grounds for a sexual harassment complaint.
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. You cannot be punished for refusing an unwanted sexual advance.
 - a. True
 - b. False

5. You have the responsibility of reporting any type of harassment immediately, even if you were just a witness.
 - a. True
 - b. False

6. If your conduct is not intended to offend anyone, it cannot be considered harassment.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Employee Printed Name: _____

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____