

# WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE BEING SEXUALLY HARASSED IN THE WORKPLACE

## Types of sexual harassment illegal under federal law:

1. Quid pro quo harassment: a beneficial work outcome is contingent on some sort of sexual favor.
2. Hostile work environment harassment: unwanted behavior unreasonably interferes with your work or creates an intimidating working environment (unwanted touching, suggestive texts or emails, sharing sexually explicit images, etc.).

## DOCUMENT

- Document the details of the harassment (date, time, location, what was said, and any witnesses to the behavior).
- Print copies or take screenshots of any relevant emails, texts, photos, or social posts.
- Tell trusted friends, family members, or co-workers what happened and document the conversations. They can provide support and, if necessary, corroborating statements.
- Keep records related to your productivity and job performance and, if possible, review your performance report or personnel file so you have evidence should your performance be disputed.
- Store all documentation outside your office or on an offsite computer, and make sure it's backed up in a safe place.

## ASSESS

- What outcome would you like to achieve? What is the company policy on sexual harassment in your workplace? Did you sign a nondisclosure agreement when you were hired? Who can you trust to share your experience with?

## ACT

- Tell the harasser to stop. Record the conversation if your state permits one-party recording.
- Continue to document all events even if you decide not to report the harassment because you're concerned about retaliation.
- Connect with colleagues who may be experiencing harassment as well. Offer support and consider uniting; multiple accusations are harder to dismiss.
- Consult a lawyer. Even if you don't want to file a lawsuit, it may be useful to talk to an employment law specialist to review your options. Consultations are confidential, and many organizations offer financial aid. To find a lawyer, contact the [National Employment Lawyer's Association](#), [Legal Aid at Work](#), or the [Time's Up Legal Defense Fund](#).

## IF YOU DECIDE TO MOVE FORWARD WITH A CLAIM

- Follow company procedures. If no harassment policy exists, go to a senior leader or to human resources.
- File a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Generally, you need to file a charge of discrimination within 180 days of the harassment.

### Additional Resources:

- Better Brave: <https://www.betterbrave.org/>
- RAINN: <https://www.rainn.org/>
- New York Times: [What To Do If You're Being Sexually Harassed](#)