

# SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION: RISK ASSESSMENT



**Here is an example of a risk assessment to be completed by organisations as they assess the potential for incidents of sexual harassment and what they propose to do to prevent it.**

The purpose of this risk assessment is to identify, assess, and mitigate potential risks of sexual harassment in the workplace. It is designed to ensure that all employees, contractors, and third parties operate in a safe and respectful environment, free from harassment.

The risk assessment should form 3 stages, identification, risk level and preventative measures. Examples of these are listed overleaf.



# STAGE 1

## IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL SCENARIOS (WHERE SEXUAL HARASSMENT COULD OCCUR)

Hazard	Description	Potential Risk	Affected Groups
<b>Power imbalances</b>	Hierarchical relationships (e.g., between managers and subordinates).	Risk of abuse of power leading to harassment.	Employees, interns, contractors.
<b>Isolated working conditions</b>	Employees working alone or in small groups, especially in off-site locations or at night.	Increased vulnerability to harassment.	Employees, contractors.
<b>Client/customer facing roles</b>	Employees interacting with clients, customers, or third parties.	Exposure to harassment from non-employees.	Frontline workers, reception staff, service staff.
<b>Workplace culture</b>	Lack of diversity, weak policies, or normalizing of inappropriate behaviour.	Risk of perpetuating a culture where harassment is tolerated.	All employees.
<b>Socialising after work</b>	Company-organised or informal after-work events.	Potential for blurred boundaries, especially in social settings with alcohol.	All employees.
<b>Inadequate reporting systems</b>	No clear or anonymous ways to report incidents.	Barriers to reporting, leading to unaddressed issues.	All employees.

### Key:

- Likelihood (L): 1 = Rare, 2 = Unlikely, 3 = Possible, 4 = Likely, 5 = Almost certain.
- Impact (I): 1 = Insignificant, 2 = Minor, 3 = Moderate, 4 = Major, 5 = Catastrophic.
- Risk rating: L x I = Overall risk score, used to prioritize actions.

# STAGE 2

## SCENARIO RISK LEVEL ASSESSMENT

Risk	Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Risk Rating (L x I)	Control Measures	Residual Risk Rating
<b>Power imbalances</b>	3	4	12 (Medium)	Provide clear guidance on power dynamics; introduce mentoring/ support programs; strong enforcement of anti-harassment policy.	6 (Low)
<b>Isolated working conditions</b>	4	4	16 (High)	Limit isolated working, especially at night; implement regular check-ins and security measures.	8 (Medium)
<b>Client/ customer facing roles</b>	3	5	15 (High)	Train employees on managing third-party harassment; establish reporting channels; ensure management support.	7 (Medium)
<b>Workplace culture</b>	3	5	15 (High)	Promote inclusivity; conduct awareness and bystander intervention training; reinforce zero-tolerance policy.	7 (Medium)
<b>Socialising after work</b>	3	4	12 (Medium)	Create guidelines for company events; discourage excessive alcohol; provide event supervision if necessary.	6 (Low)
<b>Inadequate reporting systems</b>	4	5	20 (High)	Implement anonymous reporting systems; ensure transparency and accountability in the investigation process.	7 (Medium)

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# STAGE 3

## PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Risk Area	Control Measures
<b>Power imbalances</b>	Clear anti-harassment policies in place.
	Regular manager training on ethical leadership and harassment prevention.
<b>Isolated working conditions</b>	Anonymous reporting mechanisms for power abuse.
	Ensure no one works alone in high-risk areas without appropriate safety protocols.
	Install security cameras in isolated spaces.
<b>Client/customer facing roles</b>	Regular check-ins for remote workers.
	Provide training on dealing with inappropriate behaviour from clients or customers.
<b>Client/customer facing roles</b>	Ensure managers respond swiftly to any third-party complaints.
	Display zero-tolerance policies publicly.
<b>Workplace culture</b>	Conduct regular culture audits and employee surveys.
	Create and enforce a strong anti-harassment policy.
	Ensure leadership models inclusive behaviour.
<b>Socialising after work</b>	Set clear expectations for behaviour at company events.
	Limit alcohol at events.
	Designate a staff member to monitor behaviour at larger social gatherings.
<b>Inadequate reporting systems</b>	Ensure employees have access to anonymous reporting channels.
	Train HR and leadership on how to manage harassment complaints.
	Investigate all complaints promptly and fairly.

# ACTION PLAN

As a conclusion to the risk assessment you should outline an action plan, as per the example below, with clear responsibilities, deadlines and updates on status.

Action	Responsible Person(s)	Deadline	Status
<b>Review and update the anti-harassment policy</b>	[HR Manager]	[Date]	[Complete/Ongoing]
<b>Schedule mandatory training sessions</b>	[Training Coordinator]	[Date]	[Complete/Ongoing]
<b>Conduct staff surveys on harassment risks</b>	[HR Team]	[Date]	[Complete/Ongoing]
<b>Implement an anonymous reporting system</b>	[IT/HR]	[Date]	[Complete/Ongoing]
<b>Introduce risk assessment checks for high-risk roles</b>	[Health & Safety Officer]	[Date]	[Complete/Ongoing]

The assessment should be regularly reviewed and signed off by a member of Leadership who will sponsor the action plan and ensure all measures are put in place.

It is recommended that the risk assessment is reviewed yearly to identify any changes and highlight additional scenarios that need to be assessed.

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