

Harassment Prevention Training Scenarios & Knowledge Check

Thank you for watching the City of
Chicago Manager Harassment Prevention
Training.

Building a Safe & Respectful Workplace: Your Role as a Manager

In the following slides, you will review:

- ▶ Identify harassment, including digital & third-party.
- ▶ Review Scenarios, and what your actions as a manager would be.
- ▶ Apply bystander strategies in real situations.
- ▶ Document and escalate appropriately.
- ▶ Understand City of Chicago requirements.

Reflection question: How confident are you right now in handling a harassment complaint?

What Harassment Looks Like

- ▶ **Quid pro quo:** job benefit/threat tied to sexual conduct.
- ▶ **Hostile environment:** severe/pervasive conduct affecting work.
- ▶ **Sexual misconduct:** coercion, abuse of authority.
- ▶ **Retaliation:** any adverse action due to reporting/participation.

- ▶ **Example:** Unwanted touching from a coworker, manager, or vendor at work or a work function.

Let's Practice

Scenario 1: Subtle but Harmful Comments



An employee frequently makes offhand remarks about others' appearances:

- ▶ *"That outfit hugs you in all the right places!"*
- ▶ *"Isn't your girlfriend lucky?" (while looking a co-worker up and down)*
- ▶ *"I love how Black people have such fun hair!"*

No one has filed a formal complaint, but several employees seem uncomfortable whenever this person is around.

What We Just Saw

- ▶ Comments may seem “casual” but can create a hostile environment.
- ▶ Even without a formal complaint, managers are expected to act.
- ▶ Ignoring behavior increases risks for employees, managers, and the City.

Question for Managers:
What steps should you take in this situation?

Manager Responsibilities

- ▶ Act immediately upon notice.
- ▶ Stop ongoing behavior.
- ▶ Document facts neutrally.
- ▶ Protect against retaliation.
- ▶ Maintain confidentiality appropriately.

Self-check: What is your duty if the complainant asks you not to escalate?

- ▶ Here is a safe a legal way to respond:

"I understand your concern about keeping this private. As a manager, my responsibility is to take all workplace concerns seriously and ensure a safe and respectful environment. While I will do my best to handle this as discreetly as possible, I am required to involve HR and any other necessary parties to ensure it's addressed appropriately."

Why This Matters

Example: A Chicago manager acted quickly on a complaint, preventing further harm and boosting trust in the team.

- ▶ Harassment-free workplaces have higher engagement and retention.

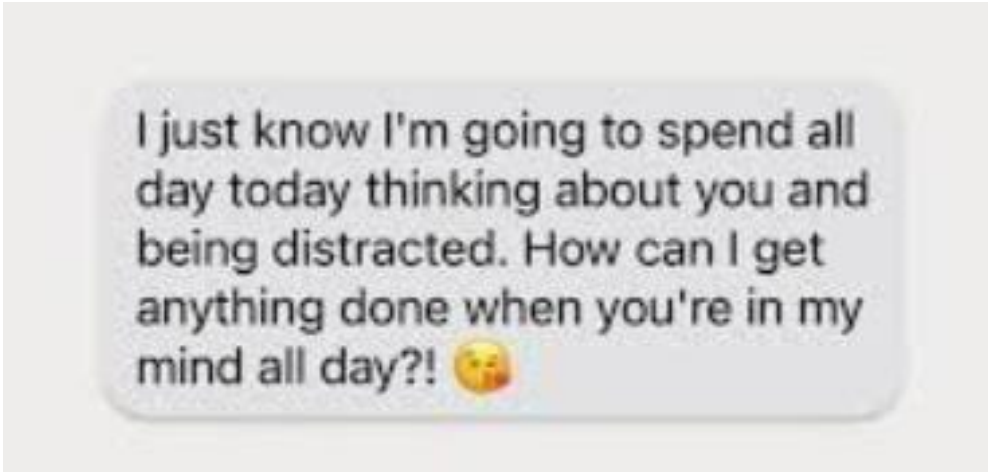
Self-check: Name two benefits of a respectful workplace culture.

Possible answers could include:

- ▶ Higher Morale
- ▶ Increased productivity
- ▶ Lower legal risks
- ▶ Stronger teamwork and collaboration
 - ▶ Improved employee retention
 - ▶ Greater trust in management
 - ▶ Reduced stress and absenteeism

Scenario 2: That's Just How He Talks

- ▶ Earlier this morning, a co-worker received a text message that made them uncomfortable. Later, a group of employees discusses the message, laughing and brushing it off. The recipient expresses that they wish this situation weren't happening.



I just know I'm going to spend all day today thinking about you and being distracted. How can I get anything done when you're in my mind all day?! 🙄

Could This Be Considered Digital Harassment?

- ▶ **Digital harassment includes unwanted messages or communications** via text, email, or other platforms that create a hostile, intimidating, or uncomfortable environment.
- ▶ **Harassment is about the impact, not just intent.** Even if the group is laughing and “brushing it off,” the person receiving the text feels uncomfortable and wishes it weren’t happening. Their experience is valid.
- ▶ **Group reaction can amplify harm.** If coworkers are making light of it, it can make the receiver feel unsupported or targeted, which is part of a harassment pattern.

Even if others laugh or dismiss a message, the fact that the recipient feels upset or uncomfortable makes this a potential digital harassment situation. The focus is on the recipient’s experience, not the sender’s intent.

The 5 D's of Bystander Intervention

In either scenario, a bystander can step in using one of the following approaches:

This would include:

- ▶ **Direct:** Address the behavior safely.
- ▶ **Distract:** Shift focus to de-escalate.
- ▶ **Delegate:** Seek help from others or HR.
- ▶ **Document:** Record key details for follow-up.
- ▶ **Delay:** Check in later if immediate action isn't possible.

Teaching employees how to act as bystanders is essential for maintaining a safe and respectful workplace.

Scenario 3: Vendor Misconduct

- ▶ At a city event, a vendor makes repeated inappropriate comments to one of your staff members and then asks for their number. The employee brushes it off, saying, “It’s fine, I don’t want to cause trouble.”



Even if an employee downplays the situation, as a manager, it’s your responsibility to respond appropriately. Here’s how you should—and shouldn’t—handle it.

Manager Responses Matter After a Complaint

After learning about a potential harassment situation, what a manager does says is important!

✓ What to Say

- ▶ “Thank you for telling me; you did the right thing.”
- ▶ “We will protect you from retaliation.”
- ▶ “I can’t promise complete secrecy, but I will limit sharing to those who need to know.”

✗ What NOT to Say

- ▶ Dismiss comments as harmless or gossip.
- ▶ Ask leading or accusatory questions, e.g., “What did you do to make them act this way?”
- ▶ Promise confidentiality.
- ▶ Attempt to mediate sexual harassment yourself, e.g., “Let’s go talk to them right now.”

Tip: Use calm, supportive language, and involve HR or appropriate resources immediately.

Documentation Basics

In the vendor scenario we just discussed, how you document the situation is critical—both to support the employee and to ensure a proper response.

Documentation Basics

- ▶ **Be objective:** Note date, time, location, individuals involved, and exact words.
- ▶ **Separate facts from interpretations:** Stick to what you observed or what was reported.

Example: Instead of writing “He harassed her,” write “He touched her shoulder without consent.”

Clear, objective documentation not only protects the employee, but also helps HR and leadership address issues fairly.

When Managers Take Action

In each scenario, you saw how managers play a critical role by:

- ▶ Acting immediately upon notice
- ▶ Stopping ongoing behavior
- ▶ Documenting facts neutrally
- ▶ Protecting against retaliation
- ▶ Maintaining confidentiality appropriately
- ▶ Supporting a safe and healthy workplace

Let's take a look at what can happen if Managers Don't Take Action

Potential Legal Risks for Ignoring Harassment

► For Managers:

- Personal liability under certain state/local laws.
- Career consequences: discipline, demotion, termination.
- Loss of trust and credibility with staff.

► For the City/Employer:

- Fines and penalties under Chicago and Illinois law.
- Lawsuits leading to financial damages and legal fees.
- Federal investigations (EEOC).
- Reputational harm and loss of public trust.

Key Point: Ignoring harassment is not neutral—it creates legal, financial, and cultural risk.

Chicago Compliance Checklist

- ▶ Provide written policy within first week in employee's primary language.
- ▶ Post City's SH posters (English & Spanish) in common areas.
- ▶ Annual training: 1 hr SH + 1 hr bystander (all); 2 hrs SH + 1 hr bystander (managers).
- ▶ Keep training & policy records for at least 5 years.

Reminder

- ▶ If it feels wrong, say something.
- ▶ If you see something, say something.
- ▶ We all play a role in creating a safe and respectful workplace.