

WORKPLACE BULLYING & HARASSMENT REPORT: A Supervisor's Response Checklist

A supervisor is a person who instructs, directs, and controls workers in performing their duties, and they don't need to have the term "supervisor" in their title. Supervisors in the B.C. arts and entertainment industry could hold the title of Production Manager, Technical Director, and Crew Chief. Supervisors have an important role in workplace health and safety and a significant level of influence in preventing bullying and harassment (B&H) and responding to concerns if they occur.

As a supervisor, if a worker reports a workplace B&H concern, you are responsible for addressing the concern in accordance with existing B&H policies and procedures that are required to be in your organization's Occupational Health & Safety Program. Due to the potentially sensitive nature of this type of incident, you also should respond emotionally intelligently to ensure the individual feels heard, acknowledged, respected, and reassured about the next steps.

Below are some best practices to consider when responding to incidents or reports of workplace B&H:

Know

- Review and understand your organization's existing policies and procedures related to B&H. Be aware of the WorkSafeBC requirements that apply to B&H and ensure those requirements are met.*

Respond with emotional intelligence:

- Be fully present
 - Hold space for them & provide them with an opportunity to share their experience
 - Actively listen with the goal of understanding
 - Express empathy & validate their feelings
 - Refrain from casting judgement
 - Thank them for sharing their experience

Act promptly

- If you suspect or become aware of B&H, understand that as a supervisor, your responsibilities include appropriate resolution (informally or formally) in accordance with existing policy and procedures.

Document

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint (if in writing -which is preferred-read it, if not, write it down). Treat each instance individually and take notes of the steps you take as they happen. Keep a factual journal or diary (supervisor logbook) to support the process and any other practitioners who may need to get involved in the process (e.g. human resources, officers, etc.).

Inform

- Ensure workers under your supervision are aware of all known hazards, including what does and does not constitute bullying and harassment behaviour. Remind or review with them the organization's B&H policy and procedures.

Support

- Follow your organization's procedures for responding to reports or incidents of bullying or harassment. This may include reminding them of the appropriate person assigned to handle complaints (if not you). If you are the designated person, reassure them of your commitment to responding to the incident/report and your aim to fully address the incident.

Maintain confidentiality

- Recognize that seeking assistance related to bullying and harassment issues is often part of the correct course of action – while maintaining confidentiality where appropriate.

Pay attention

- Pay closer attention to worker interactions such as gossip, discord, or avoidance of interactions. Are there other workers demonstrating stress or discomfort who may be at risk of bullying or harassment?

Communicate

- If the complaint was made publicly, inform necessary Senior Managers and other necessary persons of the complaint – while respecting the confidential nature of the information as much as possible.

Be a respectful workplace champion

- Ensure your attitude and behaviour, including words and actions, reflect the company's values and demonstrate the healthy and safe behaviour you want to see of your team members. Do not engage in B&H behaviour; instead, showcase what respectful behaviour looks and feels like. A supervisor's attitude speaks volumes and influences how workers approach and practice safety on the job.

*Your organizational procedures may influence the remainder of this checklist.

REFERENCES:

[Actsafes Anti-Bullying and Harassment Course](#)

[WorkSafeBC Small Business Guide to Bullying and Harassment](#)

[CCOHS Bullying in the Workplace](#)