

Harassment

Facts

The Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) conducted a Government-wide survey, which revealed that the majority of employees perceived the following as sexual harassment:

- *Uninvited sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or question;
- *Uninvited sexually suggestive looks or gestures;
- *Uninvited pressure for dates;
- *Uninvited letters, telephone calls, or materials of a sexual nature (such as nude calendars);
- *Uninvited or deliberate touching, leaning over, cornering, or pinching; and/or;
- *Actual or attempted rape or assault;

Fact

Bystanders, overhearing a conversation of sexual nature, which is offensive to them, can perceive themselves as being sexually harassed even if they are not included in the conversation!

What is Sexual Harassment?

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- *Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment.
- *Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis of employment decisions affecting such individual.
- *Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Everyone is responsible for ensuring that the work environment is free of sexual harassment. Any infraction of this policy can result in disciplinary action, including termination from federal employment.

What Can You Do About Sexual Harassment?

Employees who wish to pursue an equal opportunity (EO) complaint based on sexual harassment must contact the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (ODEO) at 8-2079 and speak with a counselor within 45 calendar days of the alleged sexual harassment. Please note that the 45-day time lines factor does NOT include contacting a supervisor or the supervisor's internal fact finding. The 45-day window begins when the harassing behavior occurs. If the complaint is not initiated with the ODEO within 45 days, it may be dismissed as untimely. SSC's response to every allegation of sexual harassment will be a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into the alleged harassment. If it is determined that sexual harassment has occurred, immediate and appropriate corrective action will be taken.

All employees should understand the importance of informing an individual whenever their behavior is unwelcome, offensive or inappropriate. Employees are also encouraged to inform their supervisors or the Diversity and Equal Opportunity (DEO) Officer.

What is a Supervisor's Responsibility?

All managers and supervisors who observe or are told about conduct that reasonably could be interpreted as sexual harassment must immediately report the possible sexual harassment to Jo Ann Larson, DEO Officer, at 8-2079.

There are no exceptions.

Once a supervisor becomes aware of an allegation of sexual harassment, in addition to notifying the DEO Officer, he/she must:

- *Ascertain the facts surrounding the incident.
- *Be consistent with Center policy.
- *Take corrective action to eliminate the misconduct, if substantiated.
- *Document his/her fact finding process, conclusions and any action taken.
- *In no way penalize the victim.

Retaliation by anyone against an employee for reporting sexual harassment or taking any action to stop it is illegal and will not be tolerated.