

Worksite: _____ Instructor: _____ Date/Time: _____

Topic C065: Harassment

Introduction: Many employees who have lost their job and been sued for harassment feel as if they were merely “having fun” or “playfully teasing” another employee. Therefore, it is important to discuss and educate yourself as to what harassment is, and the seriousness of harassment.

Workplace Harassment: Harassment is not limited to “Sexual Harassment”. Harassment is a form of aggression against another employee, defined as: *to torment or irritate persistently*. Webster’s defines harassment as “To trouble or worry by repeated raids, attacks, etc.”

A well-designed program to identify, report, and correct workplace harassment is important to protect worker safety and health. The following tips will allow personnel to identify and report workplace harassment:

Identification:

Specific training should be conducted to identify abusive workers and those being abused.

This identification process should include written documentation of instances where abusive behavior was observed or reported by others.

If you, as an employee, feel that you are being harassed by another employee or management it is necessary to report the situation to management as soon as possible (if management is the source of harassment, report the situation to upper management).

Never harass another employee. Teasing and “kidding-around” will put you in a situation that can be construed as harassment and is not to be tolerated at work.

Courts have ruled in workplace violence cases that an employer may be liable due to negligence for failing to intervene in situations of harassment of employees by supervisors or co-workers if the employer was aware of the harassment.

Reporting:

A system should be instituted that allows confidential reporting of abusive behavior by employees and those being abused.

All reports should be directed to management rather than to a coworker or peer.

All reports should be taken seriously by management.

All reports should be documented and kept confidential.

Employees must be notified if they have received a complaint against them in regards to harassment.

All reports should be investigated.

Never report any misleading information.

Discipline:

A specific and clear disciplinary policy must be implemented (up to and including termination). This policy must be clearly defined and made known to all employees.

Courts have ruled in workplace violence cases that an employer may be liable due to negligence for failing to intervene in situations of harassment of employees by supervisors or co-workers if the employer was aware of the harassment.

Conclusion: One incident of harassment or violence in the workplace can prove extremely expensive for a business and the harasser. Costs can include medical care, liability suits, legal fees, management costs, lost business and productivity, higher insurance rates, consultant fees, and the injury or loss of valued employees. Report all threats or acts of harassment, both direct and indirect, as soon as possible to your manager, human resources department, or security. Be specific, accurate, and honest when reporting the facts of any harassment incident.

Employee Attendance: (Names or signatures of personnel who are attending this meeting)

These guidelines do not supersede local, state, or federal regulations and must not be construed as a substitute for, or legal interpretation of, any OSHA regulations.