

QUICK &A

Answers to not-so-common questions

Even the most experienced HR pros have questions from time to time. Our monthly Quick Q&A series provides answers to not-so-common questions and links to helpful resources.

Q. What steps should a company take when an employee reports a claim or harassment?

A. When an employee reports harassment in the workplace, it is vital employers handle the claim promptly and professionally to avoid legal issues or liability. In fact, an employer's response could make the difference between the issue being satisfactorily resolved by the complainant, or the complainant taking legal action against the employer.

Consider the following steps to proactively address and respond to harassment claims:

- Develop an anti-harassment policy as part of your employee handbook. The policy should be reviewed annually and revised as needed as legal and cultural norms change.
- Train managers how harassment complaints are addressed and what action to take. Some investigations may be conducted in-house, but for complaints against executive-level employees you might consider engaging outside counsel.
- Review a list of witnesses and determine who is relevant to interview about the situation.
- Document everything in a professional manner. Gather any emails, pictures or documentation that indicate harassment did or did not occur. Collect as many specific details as possible, including dates, times and places.
- Rather than immediate termination of an employee who is being investigated, opt for suspension pending investigation results.

All reports should be handled in a fair and thorough manner. For help addressing harassment claims in your workplace, training management level employees or preparing anti-harassment presentations, contact the experts at Bukaty Companies.

Got an HR question? Let us know how we can help at HRconsulting@bukaty.com.

Helpful Resources

- [EEOC Harassment guidance](#)