

Key Facts about Workplace Bullying and Harassment



This page is used in the Workplace Bullying & Harassment Lesson Module, a law-related ESL lesson for newcomers to Canada.

How common is it?

The Canada Safety Council reports:

- One in six employees has been bullied.
- One in five employees has seen a coworker bullied.
- Workplace bullying is four times more common than workplace discrimination.

It is very likely that workplace bullying and harassment is under-reported. It may be hard for people who are being bullied and harassed to identify what is going on. They may fear that the bullying and harassment will get worse if they report it.

Who might be a bully?

Anyone can be a bully. Some bullies are easy to identify, while others can operate more deceptively. The bully can be an employer, supervisor or co-worker. It can also be anyone the worker comes into contact with at the workplace, such as a client or a member of the public.

Bullies are equally likely to be men or women. There are many reasons why someone acts as a bully. For example, it may be that the bully:

- wants to have power over someone,
- wants to stop someone from getting ahead in their workplace,
- is unable to get along well with others,
- has low self-esteem, or
- was not trained in how to manage.

Who might be a target of bullying and harassment?

A workplace bully is most likely to choose someone they see as a threat. The target is typically someone who is capable and well-liked at the workplace.

Sometimes people think that a bullied person would be someone who is weak, and who is less capable than the bully. This is not true. The bully will most often target someone who knows how to get along well with others.

What impact does workplace bullying and harassment have?

Workplace bullying and harassment has a negative impact on workers and workplaces.

How individuals are affected

People who are the targets of bullying and harassment react in a range of ways which can include:

- shock,
- fear,
- anger,
- frustration,
- loss of self-confidence,
- loss of self-esteem,
- work-related panic or anxiety,
- family tension,
- low morale and productivity,
- injury on the job, and
- leaving the workplace.

How workplaces are affected

The health and safety of witnesses, coworkers and clients are also affected. Bullying and harassment can lead to:

- workplace stress,
- poor morale,
- more people taking time off work,
- a less productive workplace,
- injuries on the job, and
- workers leaving the job.

Bullies poison the workplace environment. Their comments and actions are bad for people and bad for business. They damage the trust and respect that people have for each other at the workplace.

This information applies to British Columbia, Canada. Last reviewed for legal accuracy by People's Law School, 2014.

 *Workplace Bullying and Harassment* © People's Law School is, except for the images, licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Licence.

Article Sources and Contributors

Key Facts about Workplace Bullying and Harassment *Source:* <https://wiki.clicklaw.bc.ca/index.php?oldid=26349> *Contributors:* Drew, Drew Jackson, Marisa Chandler

Image Sources, Licenses and Contributors

File:LearnTeachBadge.png *Source:* <https://wiki.clicklaw.bc.ca/index.php?title=File:LearnTeachBadge.png> *License:* unknown *Contributors:* Nate Russell

File:Creativecommonsmall.png *Source:* <https://wiki.clicklaw.bc.ca/index.php?title=File:Creativecommonsmall.png> *License:* unknown *Contributors:* Drew Jackson