

WorkSafeBC addresses bullying and harassment as workplace hazards

What are the changes?

WorkSafeBC has introduced new policies on workplace bullying and harassment. These policies set out requirements for employers, employees and supervisors to prevent and address workplace bullying and harassment. The policies take effect on **November 1, 2013**.

The Workers' Compensation Act has also been amended to allow employees who have experienced a significant workplace stressor (including bullying and harassment) to make a claim for compensation when the workplace stressor is the main cause of a mental disorder.

How are bullying and harassment defined by WorkSafeBC?

Includes any inappropriate conduct or comment by a person towards a worker that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that worker to be humiliated or intimidated, but **excludes** any reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the place of employment.

Doesn't UVic already have a policy and procedures on discrimination and harassment?

Yes, UVic's policy is entitled the Discrimination and Harassment Policy (GV0205) and it prohibits discrimination and harassment. WorkSafeBC has implemented policies to address bullying and harassment from a workplace health and safety perspective. Changes to Policy GV0205 are being made to ensure it is consistent with WorkSafeBC legislation and policies.

What are the duties of employees, supervisors and UVic as an employer according to this new legislation?

Employees must not engage in bullying or harassment, must report any bullying or harassment they observe or experience and comply with UVic's policy and procedures on bullying and harassment.

Supervisors have the same duties and they must also apply UVic's policy in their workplace. As an employer, UVic must take steps to prevent and address bullying and harassment and provide a safe and supportive workplace for everyone.

How do you report bullying or harassment?

If you experience or you observe bullying or harassment, you should:

- tell your direct supervisor, or
- contact the Equity and Human Rights office

Other possible approaches are to speak to your union or employee representative, a Human Resources Consultant, a manager, Campus Security Services or Occupational Health, Safety and Environment.

What will happen if I report bullying or harassment?

If you have been negatively affected by bullying or harassment, you will be supported in exploring the options you have to deal with the situation. Even if you do not want to do anything about it or you witnessed harassment, UVic has a duty to look into the situation and possibly to take action.

When should I file a WorkSafeBC claim?

If you have experienced any workplace stressor (including bullying and harassment) that is the main cause of a mental disorder you can file a claim for compensation. If an investigation has not already taken place, this will trigger an investigation of your harassment complaint by UVic. UVic will not investigate your mental health status. WorkSafeBC may also commence an investigation.

For more information please visit

<http://ohs.uvic.ca/bullyingandharassment.php>

or call the Equity and Human Rights Office

at 250-721-8786.



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