

EEOC Task Force Issues Report on Harassment in the Workplace

In 2015, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) received almost 28,000 charges of discrimination alleging workplace harassment — a number that has remained relatively constant over the last five years. In response, the EEOC formed a Select Task Force — comprised of member representatives from multi-disciplinary backgrounds — who spent the past year strategizing to find innovative solutions.

The culmination of that effort — the [“Report of the Co-Chairs of the EEOC Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace”](#) — was recently released. The Report discusses how employers might reduce harassment concerns by proactively focusing on unwelcome conduct and targeting behavior that, if “left unchecked, may set the stage for unlawful harassment.”

The Report provides comprehensive recommendations that target harassment from all angles. The findings demonstrate that while training sessions are essential, they should not be focused on merely avoiding legal liability. Instead, employers should tailor programs to meet the particular needs of the company, developing a “holistic culture of non-harassment that starts at the top” and holds all levels of employees accountable for their role in prevention. “One size does not fit all” and unique programs are needed to “ensure that those who engage in harassment are held responsible in a meaningful, appropriate, and proportional manner, and that those whose job it is to prevent or respond to harassment should be rewarded for doing that job well (or penalized for failing to do so).”

The Report provides practical resources, including checklists and a “risk factor” analysis, to help employers assess their organization and respond appropriately.

Finally, the Report proposes exploring new approaches to anti-harassment trainings, including “bystander intervention trainings” — that give employees tools to intervene when they witness harassing behavior — and “civility trainings” — that foster a general culture of respect and workplace civility aimed at all employees, regardless of whether a person falls into a legally protected class.

Employers would be well-advised to review the Task Force’s Report and recommendations and determine if additional workplace training is warranted. If you determine that additional workplace training is necessary, please contact your labor and employment counsel at Bond to discuss our training capabilities.

If you have any questions about this Information Memo, please contact [John M. Bagyi](#), any of the [attorneys](#) in our [Labor and Employment Law Practice](#), or the attorney in the firm with whom you are regularly in contact.

Editor’s Note: Mara Afzali, Bond Summer Law Clerk, assisted in the preparation of this Information Memo.



Commitment • Service • Value • Our Bond



Bond, Schoeneck & King PLLC (Bond, we, or us), has prepared this communication to present only general information. This is not intended as legal advice, nor should you consider it as such. You should not act, or decline to act, based upon the contents. While we try to make sure that the information is complete and accurate, laws can change quickly. You should always formally engage a lawyer of your choosing before taking actions which have legal consequences.

For information about our firm, practice areas and attorneys, visit our website, www.bsk.com. • Attorney Advertising • © 2016 Bond, Schoeneck & King, PLLC

CONNECT WITH US ON LINKEDIN: SEARCH FOR BOND, SCHOENECK & KING, PLLC

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER: SEARCH FOR BONDLAWFIRM