

Steps Women Can Take if they Have Experienced Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Even though it's illegal to harass or discriminate against women in the workplace it still happens far too often. According to a 2019 survey from [Stop Street Harassment](#), 81% of women reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment in their lifetime. You don't have to accept it. You can fight back by filing both state and Federal complaints against your employer if you have experienced sexual harassment or discrimination at work.

You are protected by the [Federal Civil Rights Act](#), which makes it illegal for employers to discriminate against employees based on race, gender, religion, or country of origin. Harassment is a form of discrimination, and you don't have to put up with it in order to keep your job.

What You Can Do if You Have Experienced Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

If you are experiencing sexual harassment at work, you can file a complaint no matter what your legal status is. Don't be afraid to come forward because you're worried that you might lose your job or face other retaliation. It's illegal for your employer to retaliate against you or fire you for filing a complaint.

First you will need to have a written copy of your [company's sexual harassment policy](#). That policy is something that every employee should have access to. You may have a copy that you were told to sign when you were hired, or you may need to ask HR for a copy, but you should have a written copy of the official company policy.

Then, when you have read the policy and are sure you understand it, you should create an incident log of all the incidents of sexual harassment that you have endured. Write down the date and time of the event, who was involved, and what happened. If you [have evidence](#) like emails, photos, or screen shots you can gather those up too because you will need to submit those with your incident log to the Federal authorities.

Once you have your incident log complete you should save a couple of copies of that document and email it to yourself also to a private email that isn't on your employer's server so you will have access to it if you need it. Then you will need to send copies of that document to HR and to your boss. If you send the document via email, then use read receipts to prove that you sent it and that they received it. If you're sending a hard copy of the document, use registered mail so that you have proof it was delivered.

Don't wait too long to send the document. Depending on your employer you will have only 180 days or 300 days to file an official complaint. If you don't file in a timely way you could lose your right to file a complaint against your employer.

Filing A Claim For Sexual Harassment

Once your boss and your HR department have been sent the log it's time to take it to the next level and file your complaint. You can do so two ways. In Missouri, you can file a claim with the [Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations](#). You can also file a claim on the federal level with your local [EEOC office](#). Both offices have a dual-file process, meaning if you file a claim on the state level, it will also be filed federally and vice versa. That way you don't have to send out two applications on both the state and federal level.

It can be scary to file complaints and hold your employer accountable, but you don't deserve harassment or discrimination and you should stand up for your right to work in a place where you feel safe and valued.

Resources Found Via:

- <https://stopstreetharassment.org/our-work/nationalstudy/2019study/>
- <https://www.eeoc.gov/statutes/title-vii-civil-rights-act-1964>
- <https://www.employmentlawhelp.org/sexual-harassment/sexual-harassment-policy>
- <https://employmentlawhelp.org/sexual-harassment/document>
- <https://labor.mo.gov/mohumanrights/Discrimination/sex>
- <https://www.eeoc.gov/field-office>