

Seeking help if you are being sexually harassed

1 Do what works for you

Each person's experience and situation is different. Seek support from someone you trust—at work or in your personal life—and know you are not alone. A rape crisis counselor can help you identify and consider options.

Tell the offender to stop

If you feel safe doing so, tell them face-to-face or in writing. Be specific about the behavior that is bothering you, and tell them that you don't like it and you want them to stop.

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3 Save records

Keep a journal of every incident of harassment, including what happened, where, when, and who was there. Save harassing notes, emails, or pictures. Keep notes and copies of any communication you have about the harassment. Also keep performance reviews or other records that mention the quality of your work. For privacy and safety, you may want to keep these files at home.

4 Know your rights

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibits workplace discrimination of many forms and requires employers to promptly investigate all complaints and take action to fix the situation if they find that sexual harassment has occurred. They are also required to keep sexual harassment complaints confidential, although they will likely interview the person harassing you and any witnesses. It is illegal for an employer to punish you for filing a complaint or participating in an investigation of sexual harassment.

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5 Read your company's policy on sexual harassment

Check your employee handbook or personnel policies for details on filing a sexual harassment complaint. If you are part of a union, ask your union representative about grievance procedures.

6 Report it

If you feel safe, tell your supervisor or someone else listed in your company's sexual harassment policy. It can be helpful to make this report in writing. Be specific about what happened, steps you have taken to address it, and how you want your employer to fix the problem. You can also contact local law enforcement or the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for more information about your legal rights and options. You have a right to file a complaint with these agencies if you believe you have been sexually harassed at work. In most cases, you have 180 days to file a complaint, although federal and state employees may have as little as 30 days.

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