

CHECKLIST FOR INVESTIGATING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Use this checklist to be sure you follow the proper procedures when investigating a sexual harassment complaint. Place a check next to each step after you've completed it.

- Interview the complainant.** What does he/she say happened? Who does he/she name as the harasser? Where and when did the incident take place? How did the complainant react? Were there witnesses? Was it an isolated incident or part of a series? Has he/she spoken to anyone else about the incident?

- Interview the accused harasser.** Stay objective. Assume nothing. Put every statement in writing. Remember, your notes may end up in court.

- Interview all witnesses.** Phrase the questions so you don't give any information or influence the comments. For instance, it's better to ask, "Have you heard anyone say something to Ann that made her uncomfortable?" rather than, "Did you hear Frank proposition Ann?"

- Weigh all the evidence.** Consider the credibility of each party, based on the reputations of the employee and the alleged harasser. Is there any possibility the employee is trying to make up for a poor performance review or a disciplinary action? Are there any previous complaints against the accused harasser?

- Take action.** Once you have all the facts, ask yourself if any sexual harassment did occur. If you decide the accusation is without merit, write a detailed report explaining why, and have the evidence to back it up. If harassment did occur, you should follow the disciplinary procedure specified in your company policy.

