

Workplace Bullying Prevention and Response Policy



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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline WorkSafe New Zealand's (NZ) approach to workplace bullying and its commitment to provide all employees with a safe work environment.

Scope

This policy applies to all workers, including permanent, fixed term, temporary, casual and contract staff. It applies to all physical, interpersonal and electronic interactions. WorkSafe NZ emphasises that it will not tolerate any form of bullying.

WorkSafe New Zealand

- Recognises that:
 - workplace bullying is prevalent in New Zealand workplaces and is a significant workplace hazard
 - it affects employee health and business productivity
 - employers have a duty to control all workplace hazards, including those where a person's behaviour may be an actual or potential source or cause of harm to another person
- Promotes a culture where workplace bullying is not tolerated in any shape or form.
- Endeavours to build a supportive organisational culture whereby workplace bullying is minimised, and when it does occur is managed promptly, professionally and with integrity.

WorkSafe New Zealand will:

- Actively promote a positive work environment for all employees.
- Provide support through our management team, HR team, union delegates and EAP services for those who are negatively affected by workplace bullying.
- Act in good faith to both parties (complainant and respondent) during any stage of a bullying complaint.
- Impartially report, investigate and action any bullying incidents and follow-up accordingly using the principles of natural justice.
- Ensure that communication about workplace bullying is aligned with all WorkSafe NZ policies, procedures and practices.
- Annually review policies and associated procedures, ensuring that all parties are aware of their obligations and responsibilities.

Definition of terms

What is bullying?

Workplace bullying is *repeated* and *unreasonable* behaviour directed towards a worker or a group of workers that creates a health and safety risk.

- *Repeated* behaviour is persistent and can involve a range of actions over time.
- *Unreasonable* behaviour means actions that a reasonable person in the same circumstances would see as unreasonable. It includes victimising, humiliating, intimidating, or threatening a person.

A single incident of unreasonable behaviour is not considered workplace bullying, but it could escalate and should not be ignored. For example, a single incident may be a serious breach of expected workplace behaviour standards.

Why is bullying a workplace hazard?

The Health and Safety in Employment Amendment Act 2002 further extended the term 'hazard' to include "a situation where a person's behaviour may be an actual or potential cause or source of harm to another person". Bullying can result in increased stress levels, decreased emotional wellbeing, reduced coping strategies and lower work performance.

Related Procedures

- Workplace Bullying Prevention and Response Procedure

Relevant Legislation

Employers who do not deal with bullying risk breaching the:

- Employment Relations Act 2000
- Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992
- The Human Rights Act 1993

Other related documents

- Preventing and Responding to Workplace Bullying – Best Practice Guidelines
- WorkSafe NZ Code of Conduct
- Employment Relationship Problems Policy and Procedure
- Health & Safety Management Policy
- Workplace Bullying Prevention and Response Procedure

Responsibilities

Who:	Responsibilities:
WorkSafe NZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be mindful of our duties under the HSE Act, HRA and the ERA legislation.• Develop a culture where bullying cannot evolve, including bullying from clients or customers.• Create, reinforce, monitor and review policies and processes against bullying.• Create complaint-handling processes.• Take complaints seriously and listen

	<p>without judgement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all employees, especially managers, are knowledgeable about bullying policies and processes. • Ensure an effective and timely response to allegations.
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have regular conversations with your teams about appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. • Monitor employee behaviour, and where necessary, remind workers about the expectations for workplace behaviour. • Record and investigate complaints fairly and in line with WorkSafe NZ policies and processes. • Look for informal solutions before escalating an issue to higher levels, e.g. mediation or investigation. • Support positive culture-change programmes. • Lead by example. • Seek help if you don't know what to do.
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to a positive workplace by demonstrating positive behaviours. • Understand and follow the policies and processes that aim to limit bullying. • Report incidents of bullying and undesirable behaviours and keep a record of behaviours. • Support fellow workers who are experiencing bullying. • Where possible, speak up about instances of bullying or inappropriate behaviour you may witness. • Look for informal ways to resolve incidents.
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use recruitment practices to hire the right people and minimise the risk of hiring anyone with a history of undesirable behaviour. • Thoroughly check references. • Use pre-employment tools, including appropriate psychometric tests. • Raise awareness of bullying behaviours by ensuring employees are knowledgeable about them. • Keep lines of communication open. • Maintain and update bullying prevention and response policies and processes and ensure employees are made aware of any

	<p>changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure performance management processes measure behaviour against the code of conduct.• Ensure managers and supervisors are properly trained in people management, and keep training records.• Have both informal resolution and formal investigation processes.• Follow up on complaints and be proactive with solutions.• Analyse workplace information (e.g. absenteeism records, exit interviews) for bullying indicators.
<p>Other (such as unions, health and safety reps etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand bullying issues and where to get information and support.• Help WorkSafe NZ to develop policies and processes that aim to limit bullying.• Support people who report bullying.• Advise managers about any factors that could lead to bullying.• Promote a positive work culture and help with initiatives to improve it.