

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT POLICY

The Manitoba government is working to strengthen its existing framework of respectful workplace and harassment policies, resources and training. Five immediate concrete actions have been identified:

1. Instituting a ‘no wrong door’ approach for political staff

Fear of reprisal has prevented employees from bringing forward complaints of inappropriate behaviour. Staff have been limited to bring forward complaints to either their direct supervisor or to the chief of staff.

Going forward, political staff will be able to report through other avenues, independent from politics including the clerk of the executive council or the Civil Service Commission. There will be no wrong door for employees to raise these issues.

2. Launching government employee consultations

Consultations will be held with government staff to seek insight into employee experiences. The intent will be to hear employee voices about the impacts of policies, practices, and other tools that address workplace sexual harassment.

The consultations will be led by the Manitoba Status of Women Secretariat and the Civil Service Commission, drawing on support and research from external experts and facilitators.

Employee input and guidance on experiences and impacts related to workplace harassment will be solicited using different formats:

- Roundtable sessions hosted in a variety of locations in the province to provide all with an opportunity to provide input and have their voices heard. Supports will be available at the sessions, as the discussion may be difficult for people who have had experiences in the past.
- Online tool for employees to provide input and feedback.
- Connect with employee unions to share policies and approaches that affect their members.
- Engage with external experts as needed to assess and create recommendations and options to ensure Manitoba has the best possible policies, procedures and tools.

3. Engagement of an external expert to review policies and processes

A notable external expert advisor will be engaged to conduct an external review of the province's policies and procedures and make recommendations. The purpose will be to ensure Manitoba is the nation's leader in policies and practices that prevent and address workplace harassment.

The review will address workplace harassment by:

- simplifying procedures, identifying gaps in current approaches and ensuring best practices;
- clarifying expectations and responsibilities of employees at all levels in promoting safety and a workplace free of harassment of any kind;
- identifying actions that prevent sexual harassment in the workplace; and
- improving response pathways to support employees.

Deliverables will include options and recommendations procedures and practices, and will identify ways to improve training and education for all staff. The review results will be shared with other public sector employers to ensure consistency in approach to preventing and addressing workplace harassment.

Combined with other reviews and employee consultations, the external expert will assess the extent of harassment in government workplaces, as well as identify factors that contribute to changing the culture from one of fear of reprisal to one of safety and security in reporting.

4. Implementing public reporting on harassment in the workplace

A public reporting process will be implemented to provide statistics related to instances of harassment that occur across government. This reporting mechanism will protect the privacy of complainants, while providing accountability to employees and the public.

It will include the number and type of allegation raised by employees, as well as:

- the number of respondents to allegations
- the number of investigations conducted
- the number of substantiated and unsubstantiated allegations
- and information related to the outcomes of investigations, including disciplinary measures.

Reports will include the kinds of allegations raised and addressed, such as harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, and other kinds of inappropriate conduct.

5. Mandating respectful workplace training for cabinet and political staff

Steps are being taken to raise awareness and educate all staff on ensuring workplaces are safe for all. Training will be mandatory for government caucus and political staff.

This proactive approach to education on sexual harassment will help to ensure the government of Manitoba becomes a safer place to work.

Diversity, inclusion, respect, and integrity are core government values and ethics. More work can still be done and everyone has a role in ensuring respectful, professional behaviour in government workplaces.