

11 Employer FAQs: (No. 4): Should I offer harassment training to rank-and-file employees? Isn't that just asking for trouble?

By Robin E. Shea on August 30, 2011

Over the next 8 business days, I'll have a series of short posts addressing common questions that employers have about the law. If there is an "FAQ" that you would like for me to address, please let me know in the comments box.

I may also have more in-depth postings as circumstances warrant.

Employer FAQ No. 4: Should I offer harassment training to rank-and-file employees? Isn't that just asking for trouble?

The answers are Yes, please!, and No, you are not asking for trouble. Many employers do not require their non-management employees to undergo harassment training. Sometimes the expense is a deterrent. Sometimes employers are afraid that harassment training will just give non-management employees "ideas." But it's a good idea to offer it so that



***You can be sure your employees will know how to behave at work.**

***You can be sure your employees will know what to do if they feel that they, or someone they work with, are being victimized.**

***Inappropriate behavior will be reported (and, it is hoped, remedied) before the situation is too far gone.**

***You will look good to the EEOC, the plaintiff's bar, and the courts for having been such a conscientious employer. Te-he.**

Harassment training for regular employees need not be extensive, and the less "legalese," the better. An appropriate length of time is about 45 minutes, which should give you plenty of time to cover what your employees need to know:

***Which types of behavior can get them into trouble.**

***What to do if they feel that they are being harassed.**

***What to do if they believe that another employee is being harassed.**

***That they cannot be retaliated against for making a good-faith report of harassment.**

(Management training should cover all of these topics but also the manager's legal and policy obligations when he or she becomes aware of alleged harassment, or should have known about it. This added component normally means that management training takes more time.)

[FAQ No. 1: What exactly is this "interactive process" we hear so much about?](#)

[FAQ No. 2: "What does 'right to work' mean?"](#)

[FAQ No. 3: When do I have to start saving electronic evidence?](#)

Don't forget to send me your own employer FAQs! And don't forget, [if you vote for Pedro Employment & Labor Insights, all of your wildest dreams will come true.](#)

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