



5 Minute Safety Talk - 3

What if you experience harassment?

In today's safety talk, we will share some information about what a worker should do if they experience racist or unwelcome comments or conduct while working or while engaging with other workers in a work-related activity. Remember that in our industry, the workplace is defined quite broadly.

The first thing to do is to make sure you are safe. If you are not in a safe situation, ask for help right away from a co-worker, or call 911.

If you feel safe, talk to the person who is making the comments or acting in a disrespectful way. Do it in private if you feel comfortable in doing so. If not arrange to have a co-worker with you. Be polite and firm. Make it clear that you're uncomfortable with their actions or comments and that you want them to stop immediately. Many incidents can be resolved at this level. People in the industry are unfortunately "still learning."

Behaviour that persists after being asked to stop is **HARASSMENT**.

Make notes as soon as possible about the incidents: include dates, times and locations. Include the names of any witnesses. Your written notes will be very important if you end up proceeding to a formal complaint.

Take care of yourself first. Being harassed is upsetting, to say the least. You may need emotional support or want to talk through your options before you go to your employer. You want to be calm when you make your report. Your options include your Member Assistance Program, if your union or guild provides one. If not, you might call your local Distress Line. You may also want to talk to the representative of your union or guild.





If the unwelcome behaviour has not stopped, or if you are experiencing ongoing unwelcome comments or behaviour from someone at work, **you should report** it to a manager. Normally, you should go to your direct supervisor, but you can also report to your Department Head, Production Manager or Producer. It is your choice. Use your judgment to pick someone you feel will keep your statement confidential and take your complaint seriously. Remember everyone in the workplace **shares responsibility** to protect all workers from harassment, with the employer bearing *legal responsibility*.

When we think of reporting a fellow worker, we may be concerned that we could lose our job, or that the person who is harassing us will lose their job. Let's keep in mind that what we want is for the harassment to stop and for everyone to act respectfully in our workplace. This is everyone's right. Unfortunately bringing all workplaces in our industry to this standard may not happen overnight.

The employer's response to a harasser might be discipline, but it could also mean educating the person about what is acceptable and unacceptable in the workplace. As the person who has been attacked, you should also think of what you want to resolve the situation, and tell your manager.

You might ask not to be required to work with the person who has offended you, or you might ask for an apology. In the end the employer decides, but it is good for you to say what would make YOU feel satisfied that your complaint has been resolved.

To sum up, if someone is making harassing comments or acting in a disrespectful manner toward you, either on your own or with a friend, take them aside and tell them their behaviour is not welcome, and to stop.

If the behaviour continues, make good notes about what happened and make sure you have some support around you. Consider your options. Report the situation to a manager you trust. Tell the manager what happened and what you feel would resolve the issue. We all have to do our part to maintain a respectful workplace, and it is the employer's legal responsibility to enforce that.