

Sexual Harassment on Set

GUIDELINES FOR A SAFE WORKPLACE

Harassment can negatively impact you, your colleagues, and the entire production process. Here's what you need to know to maintain a safe and professional work environment.

Identifying Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is a specific form of discrimination that involves unwelcome behavior based upon someone's sex or gender (inclusive of identity, orientation, and relevant medical conditions like pregnancy) that is offensive or intimidating such that it creates a hostile environment at work. This type of discrimination can happen regardless of the offender's or the victim's sex or gender, and it can potentially impact others involved with the production. Examples of sexual harassment include:

- Unwanted comments or gestures (e.g., sexist remarks, inappropriate gestures during wardrobe changes, taunting someone about their appearance)
- Trading job benefits for sexual favors (e.g., "promotion in exchange for dates")

What Makes Behavior "Unwelcome"?

Behavior is unwelcome if it is offensive, uncomfortable, or intimidating to the person(s) on the receiving end. Remember that what's welcome to you may not be welcome to someone else – like giving personal gifts or making comments about someone's appearance. It is crucial to respect boundaries and preferences, and to be aware of how your actions may be perceived by others.

Keep in mind that certain behaviors may create a hostile work environment regardless of whether the receiving individual(s) appear to be okay with the behavior. For instance, paying someone less based upon gender, offering job perks in exchange for sexual acts, and retaliating against someone (e.g., assigning undesirable tasks or work schedules) for taking a lactation break or requesting a pregnancy accommodation, is considered sexual harassment regardless of apparent consent.

Harassment Can Be:

- **Verbal:** Comments, jokes, or unwelcome discussions.
- **Visual:** Displaying inappropriate images or sending suggestive content.
- **Physical:** Unwanted touching, invasion of personal space, or suggestive gestures.

Important Points to Remember:

- **Harassment can involve anyone**, regardless of their characteristics, traits, position, or role.
- **Motivation doesn't matter:** It doesn't have to be about sexual desire.
- **Unintentional actions can still be unwelcome:** Assumptions about what's acceptable can lead to harassment.
- **Harm isn't necessary:** You don't have to experience financial loss to be a victim of harassment.
- **Bystander intervention matters:** Even if not directly targeted, speak up if you witness or otherwise experience harassment. Keep in mind that you are legally protected against retaliation for doing so, and that having to witness such behavior at work could be considered a hostile environment and form of harassment in and of itself.

Preventing Harassment on Set:

- **Be mindful of your actions:** Consider how your behavior might affect others.
- **Respect boundaries:** Ask for permission before touching someone (e.g., "Can I clip this mic to your shirt?").
- **Speak up if you feel uncomfortable:** Report incidents through established channels.

Remember... fostering a safe and respectful work environment benefits everyone!

Producers Guild of America offers free harassment prevention training for independent productions:
producersguild.org/set

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