Actual or threatened retaliation for rejecting advances or complaining about harassment is also unlawful.

Employees or job applicants who believe that they have been sexually harassed or retaliated against may file a complaint of discrimination with DFEH within one year of the last act of harassment or retaliation. DFEH serves as a neutral fact-finder and attempts to help the parties voluntarily resolve disputes. If DFEH finds sufficient evidence to establish that discrimination occurred and settlement efforts fail, the Department may file a civil complaint in state or federal court to address the causes of the discrimination and on behalf of the complaining party. DFEH may seek court orders changing the employer’s policies and practices, punitive damages, and attorney’s fees and costs if it prevails in litigation. Employees can also pursue the matter through a private lawsuit in civil court after a complaint has been filed with DFEH and a Right-to-Sue Notice has been issued.

Unwanted sexual advances
Offering employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors
Leering; gestures; or displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons, or posters
Derogatory comments, epithets, slurs, or jokes
Graphic comments, sexually degrading words, or suggestive or obscene messages or invitations
Physical touching or assault, as well as impeding or blocking movements

If you have a disability that prevents you from submitting a written intake form on-line, by mail, or email, the DFEH can assist you by scribing your intake by phone or, for individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing or have speech disabilities, through the California Relay Service (711), or call us through your VRS at (800) 884-1684 (voice).

To schedule an appointment, contact the Communication Center at (800) 884-1684 (voice or via relay operator 711) or (800) 700-2320 (TTY) or by email at contact.center@dfeh.ca.gov.

The DFEH is committed to providing access to our materials in an alternative format as a reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities when requested.

Contact the DFEH at (800) 884-1684 (voice or via relay operator 711), TTY (800) 700-2320, or contact.center@dfeh.ca.gov to discuss your preferred format to access our materials or webpages.

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination based on sex/gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. Individuals of any gender can be the target of sexual harassment. Unlawful sexual harassment does not have to be motivated by sexual desire. Sexual harassment may involve harassment of a person of the same gender as the harasser, regardless of either person’s sexual orientation or gender identity.

1. “Quid pro quo” (Latin for “this for that”) sexual harassment is when someone conditions a job, promotion, or other work benefit on your submission to sexual advances or other conduct based on sex.

2. “Hostile work environment” sexual harassment occurs when unwelcome comments or conduct based on sex unreasonably interfere with your work performance or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. You may experience sexual harassment even if the offensive conduct was not aimed directly at you.

The harassment must be severe or pervasive to be unlawful. That means that it alters the conditions of your employment and creates an abusive work environment. A single act of harassment may be sufficiently severe to be unlawful.
ALL EMPLOYERS MUST TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS TO PREVENT HARASSMENT AND CORRECT IT WHEN IT OCCURS:

1. Distribute copies of this brochure or an alternative writing that complies with Government Code 12950. This pamphlet may be duplicated in any quantity.

2. Post a copy of the Department’s employment poster entitled “California Law Prohibits Workplace Discrimination and Harassment.”

3. Develop a harassment, discrimination, and retaliation prevention policy in accordance with 2 CCR 11023. The policy must:
   - Be in writing.
   - List all protected groups under the FEHA.
   - Indicate that the law prohibits coworkers and third parties, as well as supervisors and managers with whom the employee comes into contact, from engaging in prohibited harassment.
   - Create a complaint process that ensures confidentiality to the extent possible; a timely response; an impartial and timely investigation by qualified personnel; documentation and tracking for reasonable progress; appropriate options for remedial actions and resolutions; and timely closures.
   - Provide a complaint mechanism that does not require an employee to complain directly to their immediate supervisor. That complaint mechanism must include, but is not limited to including: provisions for direct communication, either orally or in writing, with a designated company representative; and/or a complaint hotline; and/or access to an ombuds person; and/or identification of DFEH and the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as additional avenues for employees to lodge complaints.
   - Instruct supervisors to report any complaints of misconduct to a designated company representative, such as a human resources manager, so that the company can try to resolve the claim internally. Employers with 50 or more employees are required to include this as a topic in mandated sexual harassment prevention training (see 2 CCR 11024).

4. Indicate that when the employer receives allegations of misconduct, it will conduct a fair, timely, and thorough investigation that provides all parties appropriate due process and reaches reasonable conclusions based on the evidence collected.

5. Make clear that employees shall not be retaliated against as a result of making a complaint or participating in an investigation.

6. Distribute its harassment, discrimination, and retaliation prevention policy by doing one or more of the following:
   - Printing the policy and providing a copy to employees with an acknowledgement form for employees to sign and return.
   - Sending the policy via email with an acknowledgment return form.
   - Posting the current version of the policy on a company intranet with a tracking system to ensure all employees have read and acknowledged receipt of the policy.
   - Discussing policies upon hire and/or during a new hire orientation session.
   - Using any other method that ensures employees received and understand the policy.

7. If the employer’s workforce at any facility or establishment contains ten percent or more of persons who speak a language other than English as their spoken language, that employer shall translate the harassment, discrimination, and retaliation policy into every language spoken by at least ten percent of the workforce.

8. In addition, employers who do business in California and employ 5 or more part-time or full-time employees must provide at least one hour of training regarding the prevention of sexual harassment, including harassment based on gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation, to each non-supervisory employee; and two hours of such training to each supervisory employee. Training must be provided within six months of assumption of employment. Employees must be trained during calendar year 2019, and, after January 1, 2020, training must be provided again every two years. Please see Gov. Code 12950.1 and 2 CCR 11024 for further information.