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From the Desk of Marcia Cerrone:

Handling Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

All employees have the right to expect that manager and peer conduct is appropriate. All employers should clearly communicate that the company is committed to a harassment free environment.

According to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual advances, and requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when submission to or rejection of this conduct... affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. This behavior can negatively affect job performance and job satisfaction.



The most important thing is to take action. You can't pretend it is not happening. It won't go away and it only gets worse.

Experts recommend that you have a clear sexual harassment policy which includes how to report incidents of sexual harassment. In CT if your company has more than 50 employees, your supervisors are required to have sexual harassment training. In response to a complaint of sexual harassment, you need to respond quickly and do all you can to maintain confidentiality. If your policy requires termination it is recommended that you fully document all the evidence. Consultation with your attorney is also wise. If termination is not required and/or you believe you can resolve the situation for all involved, speak to the offensive person and reiterate your policy regarding sexual harassment. Put your conversations in writing for reinforcement. Document the harassed employee's report. If other people have been harassed, or are witnesses, encourage them to write of their experience and be sure this information is placed in the file. Ask for assurance from the offensive employee that this problem will be fully resolved immediately. Make it clear that continuation of this behavior will lead to discharge. Be sure the offensive employee receives a written summary of your conversation and your sexual harassment policy.

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