**WORKPLACE BULLYING ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

This template checklist is intended to assist member businesses develop their own workplace checklist. The following information should be used as a guide only. Any wording changes, other than those to insert a business name, may change the context, meaning or purpose of the checklist. We recommend you receive advice from the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry prior to making such changes.

## Contacting the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The Victorian Chamber’s team of experienced workplace relations advisors can assist members with a range of employment, human resources and industrial relations issues.

Our experienced workplace relations consultants can also provide assistance to both members and non-members on a range of more complex matters for a fee-for-service. The consultants can, among other things, provide training to employees, conduct investigations and provide representation at proceedings at the Fair Work Commission.

For assistance or more information, please contact the Workplace Relations Advice Line on (03) 8662 5222.

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# WORKPLACE BULLYING ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

## What steps should be taken to prevent workplace bullying?

Employers should take all reasonable steps to prevent bullying before it becomes a risk to the health and safety of its workers and others in the workplace. This is best achieved through a risk management process. This process should include:

identification of bullying risk factors;

* assessment of the likelihood of bullying occurring from the risk factors identified and their potential impact on the workers or workplace;
* eliminating the risks, as far as reasonably practicable, or controlling, or minimising, them as far as reasonably practicable; and

reviewing the effectiveness of the control methods put in place and the process generally.

## What are some of the common risk factors which may lead to bullying?

Bullying can be the result of a number of different factors in a workplace, from a company’s culture to poor management skills. Some risk factors which make bullying more likely to occur are:

Organizational change

* + i.e. significant change in the workplace that may lead to job insecurity for example, restructure and redundancy, introduction of technology, change in management.
* The company’s culture
  + the company’s values, views and beliefs can either expressly or implicitly encourage bullying behaviours, for example, when a company promotes aggressive behaviour as a means of ensuring its workers are performing their roles or adopts a culture in which it is acceptable to ignore such behaviours.
* Negative leadership styles
  + such as strict, autocratic management styles, which do not allow for flexibility or involvement by employees; or passive, ‘laissez-faire’ management styles which are characterized by a tendency to avoid decisions, inadequate supervision, and little guidance to workers.
* Inappropriate systems of work
  + this includes excessive workloads, unreasonable timeframes, uncertainty about roles and how they should be performed, and lack of employee support.
* Poor work relationships
  + can be characterized by poor communication, negative relationships with supervisors or colleagues, excessive criticism by managers and the exclusion or isolation of workers.
* Workforce characteristics
  + a company’s workforce may be made up of groups of workers who may be at a higher risk of bullying because of certain characteristics: for example, young workers, new workers, apprentices, injured workers, workers in a minority group because of their race, disability, religion, gender or sexual preference.

This checklist has been developed to assist employers in their duty to identify, assess, eliminate and/ or control bullying in the workplace, taking into account the common risk factors.

Date of issue:

Policy approved by:

Contact person:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Bullying Risk Factors | YES | NO |  |
| Organisational Change | | | |
| Has there been recent significant organisational change or is change pending? | ❒ | ❒ | If **YES** to any, implement risk control measures, such as:   * consult with workers and health and safety representatives about proposed changes and provide them with an opportunity to influence proposals; * provide workers and health and safety representatives with information to help them understand the proposed or actual changes, and the impact of the changes; * consult with workers and health and safety representatives about any support or re-training needed as a result of the changes; * seek and act on feedback during change process; * review and evaluate the change processes, if appropriate. |
| Has a takeover occurred or is it pending? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Has there been a major internal restructure or is it pending? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Has technological change occurred or is it pending? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Has there been a change in management or is it pending? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Are there any other changes that might lead to high job instability and uncertainty about ongoing employment? | ❒ | ❒ |
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| Has a takeover occurred or is it pending? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Are there any other changes that might lead to high job instability and uncertainty about ongoing employment? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Leadership Styles in the Company | | | |
| Does the workplace have authoritarian or autocratic management styles? (this includes a strict ‘command and control’ style of management where workers may have little control or flexibility over their work and are not involved in decision making) | ❒ | ❒ | If **YES** to any, implement risk control measures such as:   * provide managers and supervisors with leadership training; * provide managers and supervisors with training on: * communicating effectively and engaging workers in decision making, if appropriate, * providing constructive feedback, * effectively managing workloads, * bullying prevention; * use mentoring and coaching to improve managers/supervisors interpersonal skills; * mentor and support new managers; * provide regular feedback on management performance; * implement and review performance improvement plans; * train managers and supervisors to adopt inclusive management styles as part of a culture that emphasises open communication, support and mutual respect; * include questions regarding conduct and performance of manager/supervisors in exit interviews and worker opinion surveys. |
| Does the workplace have laissez-faire, or relaxed management styles? (this may be adopted by a manager, or leader, who tends to avoid decisions, does not delegate tasks appropriately, provides little supervision and feedback or guidance to workers) | ❒ | ❒ |
| Do managers and supervisors lack appropriate leadership training? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Do managers and supervisors have poor interpersonal skills? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Work systems | | | |
| Are there staff shortages? | ❒ | ❒ | If **YES** to any, implement risk control measures, such as:   * review and monitor workloads and staffing levels * consult workers on possible job redesign; * consult workers about improving work patterns, including increasing their control over the pace of work, rest breaks, etc; * improve the availability of flexible working arrangements; * assess whether demands on workers are achievable within the agreed hours of work; * provide clear job descriptions that outline roles and responsibilities; * develop and implement standard operating procedures, where appropriate; * seek regular feedback from staff regarding concerns about their roles or responsibilities (eg in staff surveys, performance reviews) |
| Is there a heavy workload? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Is there uncertainty about job requirements and role definition? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Is there uncertainty about the way that work should be done? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Are there unreasonable performance measures or timeframes? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Workplace relationships | | | |
| Are workplace relationships poor? | ❒ | ❒ | If **YES** to any, implement risk control measures, such as:   * provide training in communication and conflict resolution skills; * treat all workers with fairness and consistency; * communicate openly at all levels and involve workers in decision-making processes that affect their work, where practicable; * provide appropriate rewards and recognition; * use performance indicators that measure positive people management and relationship skills, not just financial goals; * develop and/or implement the Company’s policy and procedure regarding bullying and dispute resolution, * train supervisors/managers to act promptly on inappropriate behaviour. |
| Is there inadequate or no consultation? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Is communication poor? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Is the work environment competitive? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Are workers withdrawn/isolated/excluded from others? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Is there deterioration in relationships between work colleagues, customers or management? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Workforce characteristics | | | |
| Are there any workers with different religious or political views, or from different racial backgrounds, compared to the majority of the workforce? | ❒ | ❒ | If **YES** to any, implement risk control measures, such as:   * at induction, provide information to all workers, including casual and labour hire workers, about workplace policies and procedures on bullying prevention; * promote the principles of dignity and respect, and take action to prevent discrimination; * introduce a buddy system for young and new workers; * train managers to support workers at higher risk * provide cultural awareness training. * provide access to a contact officer who can support and give appropriate advice, or alternatively, provide access to external employee support. The Company’s contact officer is **[ADD NAME].** |
| Are there workers in uncertain employment, such as casuals, contractors and labour hire workers? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Are there reports of damage to belongings or equipment? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Are there young workers, such as apprentices and trainees? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Signs of Bullying | | | |
| Are workers leaving the organisation reporting dissatisfaction with working relationships (eg at exit interviews)? | ❒ | ❒ | If **YES** to any, take action to promote and implement the Company’s bullying prevention policy and complaints procedure, or if the Company does not have these policies then consult with workers and health and safety representatives to develop them. |
| Are workers becoming withdrawn and/or isolated? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Is there deterioration in relationships between work colleagues, customers or management? | ❒ | ❒ |
| There is regularly damaged personal belongings or work tools? | ❒ | ❒ |
| Does a particular worker experience a number of minor workplace injuries? | ❒ | ❒ |