

## Definitions

### **Sexism/Racism: An Attitude**

A person of one sex/race thinks he or she is superior to/better than a person of another sex/race. Sexism and racism are attitudes and there are no laws or employer policies that regulate what people think.

### **Illegal Discrimination**

Employment decisions that are based on a person's race, religion, national origin, color, sex or other protected characteristic/class instead of on her/his work experiences and qualifications.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is a type of sex discrimination. It is unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission identifies these two types of sexual harassment:

- **Quid Pro Quo (A Latin term, 'this for that')**  
An employee must accept unwelcome sexual behavior as a condition of employment or employment decisions.
- **Hostile Work Environment**  
Unwelcome sexual behavior that creates a hostile, offensive, or intimidating work environment that unreasonably interferes with an employee's work performance.

### **Harassment Based On Sex/Race**

Behavior that ridicules, denigrates, and/or harasses an employee because of her/his sex/race.

### **Third Party Sexual/Racial Harassment**

Sexual behavior, racial comments, etc. that are welcome between the persons directly involved but are unwelcome to one or more who witness their behavior.

### **Subtle Sexual Harassment**

This is not a legal term, but a practical term. It identifies unwelcome subtle sexual behavior, i.e., comments about looks, touching, etc. If that behavior continues, it could create a hostile work environment.

### **Protected Characteristics**

These are characteristics/classes of people protected from discrimination by Title VII, American Disabilities Act and the Age Discrimination Employment Act. Principles of harassment recognized by the Supreme Court apply equally to harassment based on "protected attributes" other than sex.

## **Title VII Reprisals**

Title VII prohibits retaliation/reprisals against employees who participated in their employer's discrimination/(sexual) harassment complaint procedure, and/or who opposes discrimination and/or harassment against protected class employees or applicants.

It is also unlawful to retaliate against an individual for opposing employment practices that discriminate based on religion or for filing a discrimination charge, testifying, or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding, or litigation under Title VII.

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