

Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Policy

The Policy Statement

SSEVS is committed to providing a safe environment for all its staff free from discrimination on any ground and from harassment at work including sexual harassment. SSEVS will operate a zero-tolerance policy for any form of sexual harassment in the workplace, treat all incidents seriously and promptly investigate all allegations of sexual harassment. Any person found to have sexually harassed another will face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment.

All complaints of sexual harassment will be taken seriously and treated with respect and in confidence. No one will be victimized for making such a complaint.

Definition of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated. It includes situations where a person is asked to engage in sexual activity as a condition of that person's employment, as well as situations which create an environment which is hostile, intimidating or humiliating for the recipient.

Sexual harassment can involve one or more incidents and actions constituting harassment may be physical, verbal and non-verbal. Examples of conduct or behaviour which constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

Physical conduct

Unwelcome physical contact including patting, pinching, stroking, kissing, hugging, fondling, or inappropriate touching

Physical violence, including sexual assault

Physical contact, e.g. touching, pinching

The use of job-related threats or rewards to solicit sexual favours

Verbal conduct

Comments on a worker's appearance, age, private life, etc.

Sexual comments, stories and jokes

Sexual advances

Repeated and unwanted social invitations for dates or physical intimacy

Insults based on the sex of the worker

Condescending or paternalistic remarks

Sending sexually explicit messages (by phone or by email)

Non-verbal conduct

Display of sexually explicit or suggestive material

Sexually-suggestive gestures

Whistling

Leering

Anyone can be a victim of sexual harassment, regardless of their sex and of the sex of the harasser. SSEVS recognizes that sexual harassment may also occur between people of the same sex. What matters is that the sexual conduct is unwanted and unwelcome by the person against whom the conduct is directed.



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SSEVS recognizes that sexual harassment is a manifestation of power relationships and often occurs within unequal relationships in the workplace, for example between manager or any other staff.

Anyone, including staff of SSEVS, stakeholders, consultant, interns, contractors, donors/representatives or visitors who sexually harasses another will be reprimanded in accordance with this internal policy.

All sexual harassment is prohibited whether it takes place within SSEVS premises or outside, including at social events, training, exposures, field visits or any other events organized by SSEVS.

Complaints procedures

Anyone who is subject to sexual harassment should, if possible, inform the alleged harasser that the conduct is unwanted and unwelcome. SSEVS recognizes that sexual harassment may occur in unequal relationships (i.e. between a team leader and his/her staff) and that it may not be possible for the victim to inform the alleged harasser.

If a victim cannot directly approach an alleged harasser, he/she can approach one of the designated staff members responsible for receiving complaints of sexual harassment. This person could be a member of the committee etc.

When a designated person receives a complaint of sexual harassment, he/she will:

- immediately record the dates, times and facts of the incident(s)
- ascertain the views of the victim as to what outcome he/she wants
- ensure that the victim understands the SSEVS' procedures for dealing with the complaint
- discuss and agree the next steps: either informal or formal complaint, on the understanding that choosing to resolve the matter informally does not preclude the victim from pursuing a formal complaint if he/she is not satisfied with the outcome
- keep a confidential record of all discussions
- respect the choice of the victim
- ensure that the victim knows that they can lodge the complaint outside of SSEVS through the relevant legal framework

Throughout the complaint's procedure, a victim is entitled to be helped by a counsellor within the organization. SSEVS will nominate a number of counsellor (s) and provide them with special training to enable them to assist victims of sexual harassment. SSEVS recognizes that because sexual harassment often occurs in unequal relationships within the workplace, victims often feel that they cannot come forward. SSEVS understands the need to support victims in making complaints.

Informal complaints mechanism

- If the victim wishes to deal with the matter informally, the designated person will:
 - give an opportunity to the alleged harasser to respond to the complaint
 - ensure that the alleged harasser understands the complaints mechanism
 - facilitate discussion between both parties to achieve an informal resolution which is acceptable to the complainant, or refer the matter to a designated mediator within SSEVS to resolve the matter



- ensure that a confidential record is kept of what happens
- follow up after the outcome of the complaints mechanism to ensure that the behaviour has stopped
- ensure that the above is done speedily and within 15 days of the complaint being made

Formal complaints mechanism

If the victim wants to make a formal complaint or if the informal complaint mechanism has not led to a satisfactory outcome for the victim, the formal complaint mechanism should be used to resolve the matter.

The designated person who initially received the complaint will refer the matter to a senior management authority to instigate a formal investigation. The senior management authority may deal with the matter him/herself, refer the matter to an internal or external investigator or refer it to a committee of three others in accordance with this policy

The person carrying out the investigation will:

- interview the victim and the alleged harasser separately
- interview other relevant third parties separately
- decide whether or not the incident(s) of sexual harassment took place
- produce a report detailing the investigations, findings and any recommendations
- if the harassment took place, decide what the appropriate remedy for the victim is, in consultation with the victim (i.e.- an apology, a change to working arrangements, a promotion if the victim was demoted as a result of the harassment, training for the harasser, discipline, suspension, dismissal)
- follow up to ensure that the recommendations are implemented, that the behaviour has stopped and that the victim is satisfied with the outcome
- if it cannot determine that the harassment took place, he/she may still make recommendations to ensure proper functioning of the workplace
- keep a record of all actions taken
- ensure that the all records concerning the matter are kept confidential
- ensure that the process is done as quickly as possible and in any event within 30 days of the complaint being made

Outside complaints mechanisms

A person who has been subject to sexual harassment can also make a complaint outside of the SSEVS. They can do so through legal framework

Sanctions and disciplinary measures

Anyone who has been found to have sexually harassed another person under the terms of this policy is liable to any of the following sanctions:

- verbal or written warning
- adverse performance evaluation
- reduction in salary
- transfer
- demotion
- suspension
- dismissal



The nature of the sanctions will depend on the gravity and extent of the harassment. Suitable deterrent sanctions will be applied to ensure that incidents of sexual harassment are not treated as trivial. Certain serious cases, including physical violence, will result in the immediate dismissal of the harasser.

Implementation of this policy

SSEVS will ensure that this policy is widely disseminated to all relevant persons. It will be included in the staff handbook. All new employees must be trained on the content of this policy as part of their induction into the organization.

Every year, SSEVS will require all staff to attend a refresher training course on the content of this policy.

It is the responsibility of every team leader/project coordinator to ensure that all his/her staff members are aware of the policy.

Monitoring and evaluation

SSEVS recognizes the importance of monitoring this sexual harassment policy and will ensure that it anonymously collects statistics and data as to how it is used and whether or not it is effective.

Concerned committee and those responsible for dealing with sexual harassment cases will report on compliance with this policy, including the number of incidents, how they were dealt with, and any recommendations made. This will be done on a quarterly basis. As a result of this report, SSEVS will evaluate the effectiveness of this policy and make any changes needed.



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