Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Risk Assessment Audit

Sexual harassment and sexual assault (SHSA) are a common cause of physical and psychological harm. Organisations must treat the risk of SHSA just as they would other workplace risks by using a risk management approach to eliminate or minimise risks as far as is reasonably practicable.

The checklist below provides a series of questions regarding specific hazards that will assist with the first stage of the process; identifying workplace SHSA risks.

Completing a risk assessment audit on a regular basis is a useful way to evaluate your workplace SHSA program. It will highlight areas that require improvement and allow for the refinement of initiatives by creating a cycle of continuous improvement. A risk assessment audit can be used effectively in conjunction with the Worker SHSA Experience Survey, Workplace Audit Tool, and Focus Group Discussion Guide to guide your organisation when identifying issues, planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating programs.

To complete the risk assessment audit, you should collect data in the following ways:

- talk to your workers about their concerns;
- walk around and look at your workplace, particularly for areas where someone could hide, restrict movement, or if there is anything offensive on walls or workstations;
- review the online environment, such as the security settings, social media use and how workers interact online;
- review work systems and practices;
- observe the workplace culture, worker behaviour and how leaders interact with workers;
- consider surveying your workers (and potentially conducting interviews or focus group discussions); and
- review past formal or informal complaints, and other sources of data like absenteeism and staff turnover.

Checklist

[Note: we recommend editing the list of questions below to suit your organisation]	Yes	No	Action required
Workforce demographics and composition			
Is there a higher representation of one gender in your workplace?			
Is your workforce so small that confidentiality and confidence to raise issues may be difficult to achieve?			
Do you have vulnerable workers (age, culturally and linguistically diverse, immigrant, workers with a disability)?			
Do you have a cohort of people engaged under employment arrangements other than full time which could include casuals, contractors, short term workers, temporary workers, and freelancers?			
Do you undertake background or reference checks for all workers and other persons at your workplace (including contractors)?			
Working environment			
Does your workplace indirectly allocate specific work by gender?			
Is there a higher representation of one gender in the leadership team?			
Are your workers able to access management outside of their direct reporting line to supervisors?			
Do leaders have individual authority over recruitment practices?			
Is the balance between profit or production and workplace wellbeing appropriate?			
Are there high-pressure roles in the organisation?			
Is there an attitude that these workers need to 'let off steam' and excuse their behaviour?			
Are some workers on short-term contracts with a reliance on reputation and word-of-mouth for securing the next job?			

Checklist

[Note: we recommend editing the list of questions below to suit your organisation]	Yes	No	Action required
Physical work environment			
Are there sexualised or sexist materials on display (e.g. posters, calendars, screensavers)?			
Are any workers placed in environments outside of your core facilities (e.g. company-specific sites)?			
Do you have external workforces embedded in your business (e.g. contractors on site for extended periods of time)?			
Is there adequate privacy or security for workers using bathrooms or change rooms?			
Do you have areas that are isolated or with inadequate lighting or security?			
Do you provide hospitality for workers (catering)?			
Do you conduct business in social settings (e.g. meeting clients/customers at hospitality venues/social functions)?			
Workplace requirements			
Are there different uniform requirements for men and women, or prescriptive dress codes or expectations for either gender?			
Are workers required to travel and have overnight stays?			
Do you have workers in regional or remote locations where workers may be socially isolated?			
Do you have frequent formal or informal client functions or after-work events?			
Are workers encouraged to socialise outside of work hours?			
Travel and accommodation			
Do workers travel to a remote location?			
Do you provide accommodation facilities for workers?			
Do you provide accommodation facilities for visitors to the worksite?			

Checklist

[Note: we recommend editing the list of questions below to suit your organisation]	Yes	No	Action required
Is transportation managed by the business?			
Are there single rooms or shared facilities?			

Virtual working environment

	Yes	No	Action required
Do you have workers working remotely?			
Are work phones and emails separate to private devices and accounts?			
Do you have internal messaging services?			
Do you use web-based audio or visual calls?			
Do you have policies regarding social media platforms e.g., LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter?			

Workplace behaviours

	Yes	No	Action required
Are sexist jokes prevalent in the workplace?			
Do you have gendered and binary networking events or mentoring opportunities?			
Are there differences in the unspoken expectations of male and female workers?			
Does one gender dominate meetings or decisions?			
Do workers engage in social drinking on site?			

Workplace trends

	Yes	No	Action required
Do you have a high staff turnover, particularly of female or junior workers?			
Have you been informed that some workers are more reluctant to work with certain workers or take on certain tasks?			
Have 'high value' workers been prioritised over disrespectful behaviours?			
Is there a concentration of men in senior positions and men being promoted more often than women?			
Are there any groups or teams of workers that experience higher absences?			