

Good practice, good business



Australian
Human Rights
Commission

everyone, everywhere, everyday

Eliminating discrimination and harassment from your workplace

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES AND COMPLAINT HANDLING FOR VERY SMALL BUSINESS

Policies

In very small businesses where the owner/employer has direct contact with all employees and is responsible for overseeing all aspects of daily operations, a written policy may be unnecessary provided that the employer:

- orally informs all employees that discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances and that disciplinary action will be taken against an employee who harasses a co-worker, client, customer, contractor, etc
- provides all staff with brochures containing information on harassment. These can be obtained from the Australian Human Rights Commission (the Commission), state/territory anti-discrimination agencies and employer organisations
- informs new staff that it is a condition of their employment that they do not harass a co-worker, client, customer, contractor, etc. This information can be readily conveyed to new employees when the employer informs them of their duties, responsibilities and expected standards of conduct
- keeps a diary note of when staff are informed of the employer's policy on discrimination and harassment. This can be used as evidence to show that the employer took steps to prevent discrimination and harassment if a complaint is later made to an external agency.

Complaints

Employees in very small business should be advised to make a complaint to the owner/employer if they are subjected to discrimination

and harassment. The general principles that apply to informal and formal complaint procedures should be observed.

Employees should be advised that they also have the right to approach the Commission or their state/territory anti-discrimination agency.

Assistance with harassment issues

If the owner/employer requires assistance to deal with a complaint, they should contact employer organisations, small business associations, industry associations, the Commission or state/territory anti-discrimination agencies for advice.

Owner/employers in very small business are encouraged to attend any relevant seminars or training sessions run by employer organisations, small business associations, industry associations or state/territory anti-discrimination agencies.

They are also encouraged to obtain any available resources on discrimination, harassment and their legal responsibilities from employer organisations, small business associations, industry associations, the Commission or state/territory anti-discrimination agencies.

This fact sheet is part of *good practice, good business* – information and resources for employers to address discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

Available online at www.humanrights.gov.au/employers/

© Australian Human Rights Commission.