

# THE BACON FACTORIES UNION OF EMPLOYEES, QLD

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## B.F.U.E NOTICE

### Re: WORKPLACE BULLYING and HARRASSMENT

Members at a couple of sheds have had cause to complain about bullying and harassment. Such inappropriate conduct is totally unacceptable either by senior personnel or by fellow workers. It is also totally inappropriate to be the instigator or person committing these actions.

In response to these complaints and enquiries, printed below is some information from the W.H. & S Queensland (W.H.S.Q.) website and in particular extracts from the *Code of Practice* dealing with this matter, "Prevention of Workplace Harassment Advisory Standard 2004".

#### *What is Workplace Harassment?*

*Workplace harassment is where a person is subjected to behaviour, other than sexual harassment, that:*

- *is repeated, unwelcome and unsolicited*
- *the person considers to be offensive, humiliating or threatening*
- *A reasonable person would consider to be offensive, humiliating, intimidating or threatening*

*Workplace harassment can be committed by:*

- *an employer,*
- *worker,*
- *co-worker,*
- *group of co-workers*
- *client or customer, or*
- *a member of the public.*

*Workplace harassment covers a wide range of behaviours ranging from subtle intimidation to more obvious aggressive tactics, including:*

- *abusing a person loudly, usually when others are present*
- *repeated threats of dismissal or other severe punishment for no reason*
- *constant ridicule and being put down*
- *leaving offensive messages on email or telephone*
- *sabotaging a person's work, for example, by deliberately withholding or supplying incorrect information, hiding documents or equipment, not passing on messages and getting a person into trouble in other ways*
- *maliciously excluding and isolating a person from workplace activities*
- *persistent and unjustified criticisms, often about petty, irrelevant or insignificant matters*
- *humiliating a person through gestures, sarcasm, criticism and insults, often in front of customers, management and other workers*
- *spreading gossip or false, malicious rumours about a person with an intent to cause the person harm*

*Management action may be considered as workplace harassment where it is used:*

- *primarily to offend, intimidate, humiliate or threaten workers*
- *to create an environment where workplace harassment is more likely to occur*

### ***What is not Workplace Harassment?***

- *A single incident of harassing type behaviour*
- *Reasonable management action taken in a reasonable way*
- *Acts of unlawful discrimination, vilification or sexual harassment*

### ***Signs of Workplace Harassment***

*Apart from the direct complaints being raised, signs of workplace harassment may appear indirectly. These signs may not always be linked with workplace harassment and need to be considered within the overall workplace environment.*

*Indirect signs of workplace harassment may include:*

- *changes in human resource management trends, for example*
  - *increases in levels of absenteeism and staff turnover*
  - *increases in the use of employee counselling services*
- *workers leaving the organisation reporting dissatisfaction with working relationships*
- *negative results from organisational climate/worker opinion surveys*
- *the breakdown of relationships between workers, customers or management*
- *workers becoming withdrawn and isolated*
- *poor worker morale and erosion of loyalty and commitment*

*Measures including a workplace harassment policy, complaint handling system, open communication and training and education can be effective in preventing workplace harassment from occurring.*

Members who feel that they have been mistreated by bullying and/or harassment should bring this matter to the attention of your Union for **immediate** investigation.

W.H. & S.Q. require that when an employee wishes to make a formal complaint, then the matter must be brought to the attention of management in the first instance. Failing resolution, a formal complaint can be made to W.H. & S.Q. The person making the complaint must do this personally but your Union will assist in the process.

**W.H. & S. contact number is 1300 369 915.**

T. Schulz  
General Secretary  
10/06/2009

***Your Rights at Work – Worth Fighting For***

**Please do not remove this notice from notice boards. If you require a copy please contact your delegate or the Union office.**