Australian Government

Comcare

BULLYING RISK FACTOR CHECKLIST

This checklist is designed to assist employers conduct regular checks to identify signs of bullying in their workplace. You should take steps to manage problem areas in consultation with a range of stakeholders, including health and safety representatives, employee representatives and harassment contact officers. To use this checklist tick the risk factors that apply to your organisation. By identifying risks you will highlight potential areas for improvement.[1]

This checklist and suggested control measures are not exhaustive. You may need to consider other factors unique to your workplace and consider a broader variety of approaches and risk controls.

Risk factor	Identified		Risk assessment		Suggested risk control measures
	Yes	No	Indicators of lower risk	Indicators of higher risk	
Organisational change > change in supervisor or manager > significant technological change > restructuring > downsizing > change in work procedures > outsourcing employment opportunities or workloads.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	> long-term stability > predictability > continuity > certainty.	> high levels of unplanned and reactive change > confusion > ambiguity > uncertainty.	> plan all organisational change ensuring you maintain effective communication throughout > consult with affected employees as early as possible > ensure employees are aware of the impacts to their job and the timeline for the changes being made > request and act on feedback throughout the organisational change > ensure employees have access to relevant support including employee representatives > review and evaluate change management processes.

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1   This checklist is based on information sourced from WorkSafe Victoria (www.worksafe.vic.gov.au) and WorkCover NSW(www.workcover.nsw.gov.au).

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Risk factor	Identified		Risk assessment		Suggested risk control measures
	Yes	No	Indicators of lower risk	Indicators of higher risk	
Negative leadership styles > autocratic, authoritarian management style—strict and directive, no flexibility, no involvement of employees in decision making > over-relaxed, lax management styles—inadequate or absent supervision, little or no guidance provided to employees, responsibilities inappropriately and informally delegated to subordinates > lack of appropriate leadership training > poor interpersonal skills among management.	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐	> collaborative > consultative > fair > personal interactions > supportive > positive > accessible > effective communication.	Autocratic > task emphasis > no involvement of employees in decision making > strict > directive > lack of trust > poor delegation > tight controls > poor interpersonal skills. Over-relaxed > lacking direction > lack of supervision > absence of role clarity > lack of responsibility > lack of support > lack of clear systems, procedures and processes.	> accountability to encourage positive leadership > management supervision, support and training as part of a culture that emphasises open communication, support, mutual respect and participative management styles > leadership coaching, including providing constructive feedback, communication skills, democratic or participative leadership > mentor and support new and poor performing managers > regular feedback and leadership skills refresher training > implement and review performance improvement or development plans > include leadership questions in exit interviews and employee opinion surveys.
Lack of appropriate work systems > lack of resources > staff shortages > lack of experience > lack of defined job role, policies and procedures > uncertainty about job requirements and the way in which work should be done > poorly designed employee rosters > intense work rate > unclear or unreasonable performance measures > unreasonable timeframes or targets > lack of support systems.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	> clearly defined job roles and responsibilities > clear work requirements > clear lines of authority > well organised and realistic workloads and job demands.	> high levels of uncertainty around roles and responsibilities > lack of clarity around expectations > poor communication channels > excessive and unrealistic work demands > poorly trained staff.	> consult with your employees on possible job redesign > develop and implement policies and standard operating procedures > review and monitor both work loads and staffing levels > review available resources > improve the availability of flexible working arrangements and reduce excessive working hours > provide clear job descriptions that outline roles and responsibilities > ensure employees receive regular constructive feedback > request regular feedback from all staff over concerns about roles and responsibilities.

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Risk factor	Identified		Risk assessment		Suggested risk control measures
	Yes	No	Indicators of lower risk	Indicators of higher risk	
Poor workplace culture and relationships > critical and negative interactions > poor communication > inadequate or no consultation > negatively competitive work environment > interpersonal conflict > exclusion or isolation of employees from others.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	> open communication > clarity regarding standards of behaviour > inclusion management > resolution process for managing interpersonal conflicts.	> poorly managed and unresolved conflicts and disputes > high levels of interpersonal conflict > exclusion and isolation tolerated.	> develop, implement and promote a conflict management process > provide training—for example, diversity and tolerance, addressing conflict in the workplace, interpersonal communication and interaction > ensure policies and systems are in place encouraging managers and employees to report and deal with unacceptable behaviour > provide appropriate rewards and recognition > treat all employees with fairness and consistency > communicate openly at all levels and involve employees in decision-making processes that affect their work > use performance indicators measuring positive people management skills.
Workforce characteristics > new or inexperienced employees, trainees or apprentices > injured employees and employees on return to work plans > employees who are in a cultural, ethnic, religious, political, sexual preference, disability or gender minority.	☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐	> systems to support and monitor the integration of employees > accepting differences and diversity > appropriate supervision.	> inappropriate behaviour towards vulnerable staff tolerated and ignored > lack of appropriate communication processes to report discrimination, abuse and improper conduct > lack of trust in management's willingness to resolve issues.	> develop and implement systems to support and protect minority staff > train employees—for example, valuing workplace diversity and tolerance > train line managers to deal with employees at higher risk > implement a contact officer system to provide support and advice > implement a 'buddy' system for new workers > monitor workplace relationships > provide all employees with information at induction on workplace policies and procedures relating to bullying prevention > promote principles of dignity and respect.