

The Importance of POSH Training in Creating a Safe Workplace

written by King Stubb & Kasiva | February 14, 2024



The term POSH refers to Prevention of Sexual Harassment, which has been developed from the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. The objective of the POSH Act, which is a women-specific legislation, is to provide protection to women from sexual harassment at workplace and develop a proper redressal mechanism for catering to complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace. This Act has been passed in order to develop an inclusive and harassment free workplace wherein women could participate properly without any fear of sexual harassment at workplace.

The POSH training not only enables women to be empowered and have a harassment-free environment to ensure their growth in the organization but also enables different stakeholders to understand appropriate behaviour in the organization and demarcate what constitutes sexual harassment and what does not. Therefore, this Act helps employees to draw boundaries on the behaviour and interactions between co-workers of different genders.

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The importance of workplace safety and preventing harassment and discrimination cannot be undermined. Every stakeholder of the organization

including the management, the clients, and the workers benefit from this. Major organizations and companies can reduce risks associated with lawsuits filed by women employees who may have suffered harassment. Such scenarios may risk the reputation of the company and attract penalties under the POSH Act. POSH training, therefore, helps to resolve such issues, promotes workplace safety, and secures the interest of the company, the workers, and the stakeholders as a whole and its value cannot be undermined.

What is POSH Training?

POSH training refers to a training mechanism that must be abided by the organizations. The purpose of this training is to enable the employees to understand what constitutes harassment and the way to tackle it along with laying down the norms and guidelines for a healthy workplace environment. The POSH training also enables women employees to know their rights in the organization and understand the framework in which any complaint or grievance needs to be registered along with understanding the basics of filing complaints and entitlement to a fair hearing. Moreover, through this training, the employers also get an insight into various compliances needed to be covered and fulfilled so as to reduce the risk of missing any statutory obligation in the future.

The POSH training can be divided into different subtypes which are as follows:

1. Employee Awareness Training – In this type of training, the employees in the organization are trained about the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in any organization and helps them to draw boundaries in professional communications. This training caters to the grassroot level of the organization, and the sensitization enables the workers to regulate their conduct.
2. Gender Sensitization Training – this training caters to the fundamental biological difference between men and women and helps employers cater to the specific needs of females in order to ensure their full productivity in the organization.
3. Management Training – Under this type of training, the management levels of the organization ranging from the top to bottom are guided upon various compliance mechanisms and statutory mandates that are needed to be followed in the organization. This enables the management to form redressal bodies and increase sensitivity of the organization properly.
4. Orientation programs for the members of the Internal Committee - These programs are carried out to sensitize members of the internal committee towards the grievances and complaints that are received and acquaint them with the procedures as per the POSH Policy.

There are many other organization/personnel-specific training that range from person to person in an organization.

Components Of Effective Posh Training

The POSH training in every organization is a very crucial step in the management of the company, therefore it needs to fulfil all essential components and function in a proper manner.

Initially, there must be formulation of a proper POSH policy that must cater to the demands of the female employees in the organization. Secondly, POSH training should be imparted to the workers at least twice a year which should be followed by subsequent seminars and expert talks on the topics to sensitise the employees in the organization.

Interactive exercises within the organization should also be carried out frequently to engage employees and develop a better understanding and importance of POSH Policy.

Tips For Implementing Posh Training At Workplace

Implementation of POSH training at the workplace is equally important as POSH training because lack of implementation with only theoretical training would lead to redundancy of the training.

First of all, an effective internal POSH policy should be created which should be explained and made available to every member of the organization. The POSH policy should cater to protect employees from any type of discrimination, harassment and exploitation in the organization and ensure that the dignity of the employees and the workplace is maintained.

The policy should also explicitly state the disciplinary process associated with the violation of the guidelines and should clearly distinguish acceptable behaviour from unacceptable behaviour along with the procedure for investigation and grievance redressal. Secondly, the organization should also follow routine sessions on POSH and associated guidelines in the forms of training, assessments, seminars, and webinars.

The Human Resource representatives of the organization should also be trained to adhere to the procedure of POSH policy and act in accordance with it.

Moreover, enforcement of zero-tolerance policy towards any untowardly incidents should be strictly followed which would enable reporting and follow-up of proper policy.

An internal committee (IC) should also be formulated which should consist of the following:

1. External Member – External member refers to one who is a member of any non-governmental organization or association which works towards the welfare of women. At least one external member should be present in the IC.
2. Internal Members – Any two members of the organization who have an experience in social work or legal acumen should be appointed as members of the POSH committee.
3. Presiding Officer – Any woman employee who is placed at a senior level in the organization can be the presiding officer of the committee.

The proper enquiry and redressal of complaints in the committee take place through various mechanisms wherein the first role is played by the Internal Committee from where the report reaches further to other levels. Therefore, the formulation of IC is of vital importance.

Conclusion

The importance of creating a POSH policy and its compliance in every organization cannot be undermined. The compliance and proper formulation of the policy not only enables the organization to avoid any untowardly experience with the women employees but also protects it from undue exposure in the forms of lawsuits.

The formulation of IC and forwarding of reports and other essential documents should also be followed in order to avoid any penalty which may be levied upon the company. Therefore, there should be proper POSH training at every level in the organization to develop an inclusive and safe work environment.

FAQs

What are some effective methods for delivering POSH training?

There are different mechanisms for delivering POSH training such as having a POSH policy available to every worker, regular training and seminars, gender

sensitisation, and worker interaction.

What are the consequences of not providing POSH training in the workplace?
Non-compliance with POSH Act can cost an employer a monetary penalty of INR 50,000. An employer can be subjected to a penalty of up to INR 50,000 for failure to constitute Internal Committee and adhere to certain POSH Act provisions.

What legal requirements are there for providing POSH training in the workplace?

As per POSH Act 2013, it is mandatory to provide training to all employees. It has been made mandatory to include a statement in the Director's report that the company has complied with provisions relating to the constitution of the Internal Committee (IC) under POSH laws.

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