



## HARASSMENT: AN OVERVIEW

The Agriculture Union and the PSAC firmly believe that every individual has the right to live and work without having to experience harassment in any way, shape or form.

The definition of harassment includes any improper behaviour by a person that is directed towards another individual who finds the behaviour offensive and which the person knew, or should have known, was inappropriate and unwelcome.

The concept of harassment is also governed by the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, wherein it is prohibited to discriminate on the basis of an individual's race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted.

It is the employer's responsibility to ensure that employees can fulfill their tasks in a workplace free of harassment. On June 1, 2001, Treasury Board issued a new policy entitled 'Policy on the Prevention and Resolution of Harassment in the Workplace'. Its objective was to foster a respectful workplace through the prevention and prompt resolution of harassment. This policy can be consulted and downloaded from the TB website at:

[www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs\\_pol/hrpubs/hw-hmt/siglist\\_e.html](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/hrpubs/hw-hmt/siglist_e.html)

Many Departments and Agencies have also developed Harassment Policies. These can be accessed through the employer's own web site.

The Agriculture Union has a firm position of its own on the issue of harassment. While it is the employer's responsibility to ensure a harassment-free work environment, we know from experience that the union has a role to play. This is particularly true where harassment involves a member-versus-member situation. It is essential that this situation be addressed as quickly as possible by either meeting with the members, or requesting that management deal informally with the situation. If this is not successful, the PSAC Policy Paper 23A should be consulted and the guidelines followed.

The Agriculture Union will continue to:

- Pressure the employer to provide proactive and preventative training;
- Offer early mediation to the individual parties in a harassment dispute;
- Ensure that our members are provided with due process and fairness;
- See to it that proceedings are conducted in a timely manner.

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