

HOW TO HANDLE A COMPLAINT

IF AN EMPLOYEE (THE CLAIMANT) LODGES A COMPLAINT, YOU SHOULD:

- Demonstrate your willingness to listen.
- Remain objective. Do not side with the claimant.
- Do not say anything positive or negative about the potential harasser or the situation.
- Tell your employee that you have to document your conversation.
- Document the time and date the complaint came in, names of the accused, the claimant, any witnesses, and the claimant's version of the encounter.
- Tell the employee that confidentiality will be respected as much as possible but cannot be ensured in order to investigate fully and properly.
- If the claimant asks you not to do or say anything about the claim, explain that you are required by both law and agency policy to act on the complaint. Do not allow the complainant to dictate how you respond to a sexual harassment complaint.
- Reinforce with the employees that the only way harassment can be stopped is if the agency is aware of it and investigates.
- Explain the next steps to the claimant.
You may want to review the grievance of your agency's policy with the claimant to reinforce the process.

