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OHRC Issues Statement on Sexual Harassment

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Perhaps not surprisingly given all the media attention on the issue of sexual harassment in recent months, the Ontario Human Rights Commission recently issued a statement regarding sexual harassment and Ontario's *Human Rights Code*.

The Commission reiterates that employers have a legal duty to prevent and respond to sexual harassment in the workplace. The Commission states that employers can prevent many cases of sexual harassment by:

- Having a clear, comprehensive anti-sexual harassment policy in place;
- Ensuring all employees have the policy and are aware of both their rights and their responsibility not to engage in harassment; and
- Training individuals in positions of responsibility on the policy and their related human rights obligations.

The Commission's statement also sets out a non-exhaustive list of factors human rights tribunals will look at in cases involving allegations of sexual harassment. These include:

- The procedures in place at the time to deal with discrimination and harassment;
- How quickly the organization responded to the complaint;
- How seriously the complaint was treated;
- The resources made available to deal with the complaint;
- If the organization provided a healthy environment for the person who complained; and
- How well the person who complained was kept informed about the status of the complaint, actions taken, etc.

The full statement can be found at http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news_centre/sexual-harassment-and-ontario-human-rights-code.