

BE A BUDDY

- NOT A BULLY

*How to act when experiencing
harassment and bullying*



SEA HEALTH & WELFARE



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All people should be able to go to work without experiencing harassment or bullying. Also seafarers. Harassment and bullying in any shape should never be tolerated in any workplace.

This guide provides information and tools to seafarers, ship management and shipowners on how to eliminate harassment and bullying on board.

WHAT IS HARASSMENT AND BULLYING?

Harassment

Harassment is a form of discrimination which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Examples of harassment

- Displaying or circulating offensive or suggestive material.
- Implicative remarks, mockery, lewd or sexist/racist/homophobic jokes or remarks.
- Use of offensive language in describing or making fun of someone with a disability.
- Comments about a person's physical appearance or character which cause embarrassment or distress.

- Unwelcome attention such as spying, stalking, irritating, overly familiar behaviour or unwelcome verbal or physical attention.
- Making or sending unwanted, sexually suggestive, hostile or personally intrusive telephone calls, text messages, emails, letters or comments on social networks.
- Intrusive or persistent questioning about a person's age, marital status, personal life, sexual interests or orientation, or similar questions about a person's racial or ethnic origin, including their culture or religion.
- Unwelcome sexual advances or requests for dates.
- Staring, rude gestures, touching, grabbing, patting or other unnecessary bodily contact such as brushing up against others.
- Spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone (particularly regarding age, race, marriage status civil partnership, sex, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief).

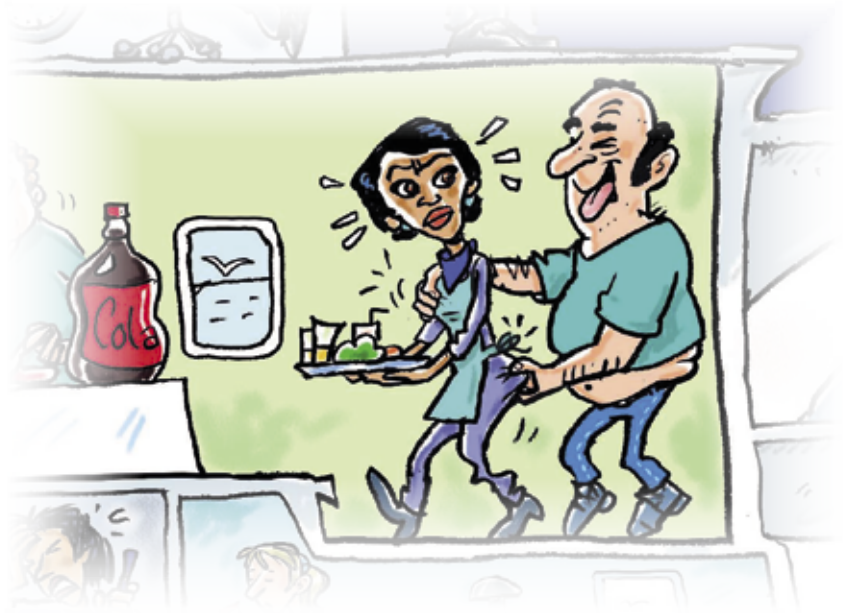
Bullying

Bullying is a form of harassment that includes hostile or vindictive behaviour, which can cause the receiver to feel threatened or intimidated. It results in a work environment in which a group of people or an individual may become threatened or intimidated because of the negative or hostile behaviour of another group of people or individual. Bullying may involve misuse of power or position and is often persistent and unpredictable. It may be vindictive, cruel or malicious.

Examples of bullying

- Verbal or physical threats or abuse, such as shouting or swearing at colleagues, either in public or in private, including derogatory or stereotyped statements or remarks.
- Personal insults as in belittling or ridiculing a person or his/her abilities, either in private or in front of others.
- Sudden rages or displays of temper against an individual or group, often for trivial reasons.
- Subjecting someone to unnecessary excessive or oppressive supervision, monitoring everything they do or being excessively critical of minor things.
- Making unreasonable demands of colleagues.
- Ignoring or excluding an individual from social events, team meetings, discussions and collective decisions or planning.
- Making threats or inappropriate comments about career prospects, job security or performance appraisal reports.
- When excuses are made to define or refer to behaviour or situations between people at work, which may involve 'hidden' bullying, e.g. someone being described as 'overly sensitive' or 'unable to take a joke'.

It is important to highlight that the harasser or bully may be unaware of the effects that their behaviour is having on other persons, and that they may not have any intention to harass or bully.





IF YOU ARE HARASSED OR BULLIED

What can you do yourself?

If you experience harassment or bullying on board – whether it is on or off duty – there are options, you may consider. It is a good idea to try and act as soon as possible to prevent the unwanted behavior. It can be difficult to stand up against a bully so in some cases it may be a good idea to seek help from others to solve the problem.

Here are some options, you may consider when confronting a bullying person.

Confronting the harasser or bully directly.

If the situation can be resolved informally with a few words, so much the better. This is not easy, particularly if the harasser or bully is senior to you. Try to present yourself in a confident manner. If a bully senses your strength, he or she is likely to decrease the intensity of his or her actions. Here is some general guidance on how to act

assertively, which means being very direct and keeping control of yourself.

Positive thinking. The right mental posture is very important. Curiosity helps. Think to yourself 'What is this behaviour all about?' It helps to distance yourself from what is happening.

Body language. Take a deep breath and let it out. This relaxes the muscles we tense when we are becoming confrontational. Keep an open, unthreatening posture.

Mature responses. Say that you find their behaviour unacceptable. Harassers and bullies often back down from people who stand up to them. Show that you are listening and responding like an adult by saying things like 'I can see that you are angry' or 'I understand that you don't like what I have done, but please don't swear at me.'

Tone of voice. Use a serious, even tone of voice. Keep calm, do not shout.

Use the term 'bully'. Giving the correct name to this behaviour will bring the matter sharply into focus and will require the offender to justify their actions or examine their behaviour.

Repeat what you say. Harassers or bullies may not always listen. You may need to repeat your message so that they know you are serious.


Avoid reacting passively (by giving in) or aggressively (by beginning to shout).

'Jokes'. Do not laugh or smile. Respond to 'Can't you take a joke?' with 'It's only a joke if I think it's funny. I don't. It's offensive.'

Explain how you feel. Say something like 'When you shout at me, I start to get angry, and that doesn't help either of us.'

A word of warning. Sometimes you may realise that verbal abuse is about to turn into physical violence. That is the point to abandon attempts at assertive behaviour. If you have to, shout for help and if there is any risk of violence leave the situation as fast as possible.





Seeking help and support. One of the many unpleasant effects of harassment and bullying is a feeling of isolation. Share the problem with someone on board who you trust. In many cases, you will discover that you are not the only one being subjected to the harasser or bully's behaviour, and that can be an enormous relief. In addition, if you are nervous about or reluctant to report the matter formally, you may be able to ask a friend to help you do so.

Reporting harassment or bullying. It is likely that there will be a responsible person either on board or ashore, who has been given the specific responsibility of handling complaints about harassment and bullying.

Keep a record. Harassment and bullying are persistent patterns of behaviour. When you first realise you are being systematically picked on, begin to keep a notebook of where and when it occurs, what happens, what was said by both parties, and how you felt. Note the names of any witnesses. Also make sure you keep a record of any offensive emails, texts or social

networking messages. If you decide to make a formal report of someone's behaviour these records will make what you have to say much easier to prove.

When you are making a formal complaint.

Prepare. Read your company's harassment and bullying procedure if there is one, or general grievance procedure if the company does not have a procedure. Make sure you have identified the correct person to approach. Gather your facts in place and observations and write them down. Remind yourself that you are not the one to blame. Decide whether you want someone to accompany you.

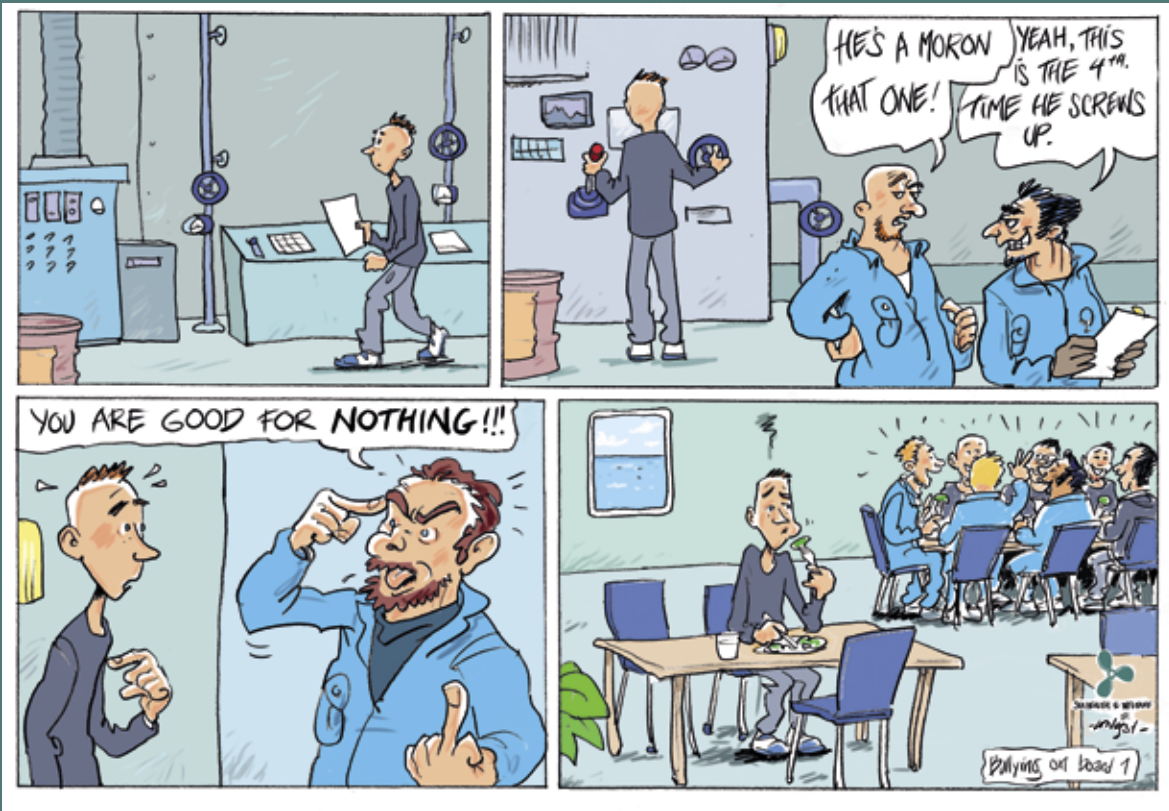
Alert the responsible person. When presenting your case to the responsible person consider using following sentence: 'I have something serious that I would like to talk to you about. I would prefer to do it in private. Is this a good time?' In that way the responsible person will know that you are talking about a serious matter and will set aside the time needed.

Stick to the facts. Tell the person what has happened in as much detail

as you can. Avoid making general remarks about the harasser or bully's personality ('He's an idiot!'). Report what he or she did; for e.g. "When I was cleaning the toilets yesterday, he kicked over the bucket I was using and swore at me".

Expect to be questioned. This does not mean that the responsible person does not believe you. Rather, the person who receives a complaint has a duty to investigate the case fairly and thoroughly. He or she will question you. He or she will, therefore, also question the person who has been harassing or bullying you. And he or she may talk to other colleagues as well.

Ask what happens next. In particular, it is essential for you to know how you are expected to work with the harasser or bully both while the situation is being investigated and afterwards, especially if the ship is at sea.





DO YOU HARASS OR BULLY?

Are you aware of how your behaviour is perceived by other colleagues? In some situations, 'the way we have always done things around here' can be perceived as offensive to another person. It is sometimes the case that a harasser or a bully is not aware of the impact of their actions on other colleagues. In other cases, the harasser and bully is well aware of their action and actively contributes to a poor working environment. All cases should be stopped immediately.

Could the following statements be ascribed to you? If so, consider changing your approach to your colleagues.

- Do you raise your voice at others?
- Are you sarcastic or patronising to others?
- Do you criticise individuals in front of others?
- Do you criticise on errors made by individuals and fail to give credit for good work?
- Do you spread rumours or malicious gossip about individuals?

If you are concerned that aspects of your behaviour could be considered as harassment or bullying, contact your company or the responsible person and seek assistance.

Do not wait until a complaint is made against you!

Remember!

It is not your decision whether a particular way of behaving constitutes harassment or bullying. It is up to the person who is experiencing the harassment and bullying.

What to be aware of

Work pressure can cause people behaving in ways that may be considered as harassment or bullying.

The solution is to become more conscious of why we behave the way we do. In particular we should be aware of:

Triggers. All emotions are triggered by something and how you feel when you start to harass or bully someone is no exception.

- Do particular situations get you going?
- Do you pick on particular individuals or types of people?

Be aware that the trigger might not be immediate. If, e.g. you have a difficult meeting with the Master, be conscious of how this makes you feel so that you do not pick on someone later because you are irritated.

Being aware of your triggers can help prevent future harassment or bullying behaviour.

Positive thinking. Once you know what triggers your behaviour you can start to think consciously about it, and change a negative reaction to a constructive one. So, for example, if you see a piece of work that is not up to standard, avoid thinking '*Just let me get my hands on him!*'. Instead, try saying to yourself '*How can I teach him to do this properly?*'

Aggression signals. Harassment or bullying is aggressive behaviour. Evolution has programmed our bodies to prepare for aggression so that we can react effectively to being attacked. Our heart rate increases. Our blood pressure goes up. Adrenalin begins to flow. It is easy to recognise when this is happening to you. When it does, take a deep breath, tell yourself to calm down

and all automatic preparations will go into reverse.

Empathy. Think about the effect you might have on others. Put yourself in their shoes. Do not stand too close to people, it makes them feel threatened. Do not stare people down. If they are kneeling or sitting do not loom over them, come down to their level.

No matter how irritated or frustrated you may feel, try very hard not to let it show.

Questions to reflect on for those who might be a harasser or bully

- Have you, with others, ganged up on someone?
- Have you sent emails or social networking messages which might be deemed offensive or upsetting?
- Have you combined your criticism of an individual with any mention of their

gender, race, age, sexual orientation, religion or nationality?

- Do you treat women disrespectfully and degrading?
- Have you asked someone for a date or touched someone inappropriately? And do you know that grabbing someone is considered an assault, and therefore is a criminal offence?
- Have you justified to yourself that your actions were 'just a joke' or that 'they were what everyone does'?
- Have you made any comment on someone's physical appearance, age or because they have a disability?
- Have you read your company's harassment and bullying policy?

For the manager.

- Do you think that your way of doing a job is always right?
- Have you allocated work to a particular individual as a form of discipline? If so, have you done so repeatedly or out of proportion?

- Have you tried to offer constructive criticism or offered to help them understand their duties better?
- Would you describe your management style as 'robust'? If so, are you certain you are 'firm but fair'?
- Could you be described as a 'control freak'?
- Do you justify your actions against subordinates by remembering that you received such treatment early in your career?

Harassing or bullying others is serious misconduct

Those who are harassed or bullied are encouraged to report incidents. All such reports will be vigorously and thoroughly investigated. Provided the complaint is not malicious, the company will take action and, if appropriate, invoke its disciplinary procedure.

WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A COLLEAGUE?

Harassment and bullying in the workplace is a shared responsibility. A poor mental working environment, stress and frustrations lay the foundation to harassment and bullying. If you experience that a colleague is harassed or bullied on board, you should - as a good colleague - help stop the insulting behaviour as soon as possible. It can sometimes be difficult to stand up against a person who harasses or bullies. You may find inspiration in the following advice.

Say stop. If you see a colleague who harasses or bullies or shows a lack of tolerance towards others, don't join them. Tell colleagues who harass or bully to stop. Make sure they understand, through your speech and body language, that their actions are unacceptable.

The harasser or bully's behavior.

Usually it is tied to the colleague's own issues with self-esteem or frustrations. Perhaps you can encourage the harasser or bully to spend their time on more constructive things. Support the harasser or bully in activities other than harassment or bullying.

Aid the colleague that's getting harassed or bullied. If you see a colleague being harassed or bullied they may also suffer from issues with their self-esteem. This can be the result of the harassment or bullying, but can also be rooted in other things, such as personal issues. Can you offer them help and support? Maybe push them to seek help elsewhere!

Further assistance. When subjected to harassment or bullying it can be hard to recognize the ways you can

go to get help. Perhaps you can assist your colleague in approaching the responsible person on board or ashore.

Harassment or bullying can't be justified. As a witness to harassment or bullying in the workplace, you have a responsibility, both to your colleague and to yourself. Your colleague can experience serious physical and mental issues because of the harassment or bullying. And it will have consequences for all employee's well-being in the workplace.



WHAT CAN THE SHIP MANAGEMENT DO?

Harassment and bullying is a shared responsibility. The ship management has a great responsibility when it comes to creating a good working environment on board.

Get the climate right. Prevention is always better than cure. Harassment and bullying are unpleasant, disruptive types of behaviour. What can the on board management do to prevent this type of behaviour?

Here are some suggestions:

- Be aware of potential problems. Good management recognises that people from different cultures and with different backgrounds have different ways of dealing with harassment and bullying, and those in senior positions should be aware of employees who may be less inclined to speak up for themselves.
- People often find themselves being picked on because they stand out from the crowd. Do any crew members fit that profile – the only woman on

board? Or someone with a minority background?

- Are there any inexperienced individuals on board in need of support?
- Are the officers trained to work with a diverse crew?

Be aware of the early warnings.

Are those responsible for handling these situations clear about: What to look for? Partly this is a case of being conscious of the informal signs of a poisoned atmosphere, such as people appearing depressed or being reluctant to communicate. In addition, what often happens when people are being harassed or bullied is that their work performance deteriorates.

There is an obvious danger that this can be interpreted as a disciplinary problem, particularly if the harasser or bully is in a position to support that interpretation. It is very important for any investigation of poor performance to hear both sides of the story and identify the root causes.

Those who are being harassed or bullied often feel isolated, powerless and reluctant to believe that reporting incidents will do any good.


They tend to identify the bully with the shipowner, and think that making a complaint will make a bad situation worse.

It is therefore important that when the responsible person encounter evidence that harassment or bullying is taking place they can demonstrate that they know precisely what to do and are committed to taking action.

Stop systematic bullying or harassment

Unfair allocation of work is a very common symptom of harassment and bullying.

People are given more than their fair share of unpleasant jobs, or trivial work beneath their professional competence, or are denied access to interesting work which will help them



develop and advance their careers, or are simply given more work than they can cope with.

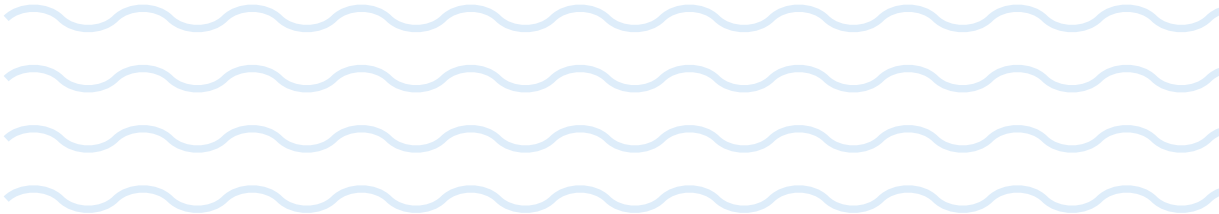
- Are there clear definitions of roles and responsibilities on your ship?
- Do you have clear work procedures and are they followed?
- Are there fair and transparent systems for allocating work?

Policy and procedures

- Is the company's policy on harassment and bullying clear to you?
- Has it been communicated to everyone on board?
- Does everyone on board understand that they can report harassment and bullying, in confidence, and that their complaints will be investigated and action taken?
- Do you know who you should report incidents of harassment and bullying to?

Read more

A Good Working Life at Sea - Published by SEA HEALTH & WELFARE
Chapter 2. Communication and information
Chapter 3. Conflict management and prevention



WHAT CAN THE SHIPOWNER DO?

Have a company policy on

harassment and bullying. The policy statement should:

- Contain a message from the Chief Executive or equivalent in the company.
- Set out the company's commitment to the elimination of harassment and bullying from on board ships and the goal of a working environment in which there is respect for the dignity and well-being of all seafarers.
- Identify a director or appropriate member of senior management in the company as the person with overall responsibility for the policy.
- Contain examples of the types of behaviour that may be classed as harassment and bullying.
- Contain contact information to enable seafarers to report incidents.

The shipowner may wish to discuss the policy with employee representatives and/or seafarers' organisations to obtain their support and commitment.

- Once agreed, the company should ensure that all seafarers and relevant

shore based personnel, are made aware of the policy and understand it.

- They should be presented with copies of documents containing the policy and a similar document should be displayed prominently on noticeboards on board ships and in shore-side offices.

Have complaints procedures.

Shipowners should maintain fair procedures for dealing promptly with complaints from employees.

Complaints of harassment and bullying can usually be dealt with using clear grievance and disciplinary procedures.

Such procedures should:

- Provide for confidentiality.
- Provide safeguards against victimisation of the complainant.
- Provide safeguards for both the person making the complaint and the alleged perpetrator to be accompanied by a fellow employee or seafarer representative of their choice, and
- Ensure that the parties to the complaint are treated with equal dignity and fairness.

- It is important that seafarers are aware that complaints of harassment or bullying, or information from staff relating to such complaints, will be dealt with fairly, confidentially, sensitively and expeditiously.

Employees may be reluctant to come forward if they feel they may be treated unsympathetically or are likely to be confronted aggressively by the person about whose behaviour the complaint concerns.

Harassment and bullying grievance procedure

The shipowner should designate a responsible person or persons to act as the first point of reference for each employee that wishes to make a complaint. This person could be a member of the ship's crew, a company employee based ashore, or a person designated by the company to act on its behalf.

If the designated person is a company employee, that person should be given the authority to deal with the

complaint, or to choose to refer it to a higher level in the company.

As well as the **formal procedure**, the company should provide the victim of harassment or bullying with the option, at their discretion, of resolving their complaint **informally**. This could involve the victim explaining the effects of the alleged perpetrator's actions in the presence of another person from the company trained in resolution of complaints. The alleged perpetrator may then be offered an opportunity to apologise for their actions and undertake not to repeat them. A victim should never be made to face an alleged perpetrator if they do not wish to.

The shipowner may wish to:

- Consider using an independent third party based ashore to whom those suffering harassment or bullying might address their complaints, or
- Make its employees aware of confidential helplines provided by seafarers' organisations.
- A system whereby complaints are heard by others onboard may be effective on ships with large numbers of crew members and officers.
- Where a ship has a smaller crew it may also be advisable for a point of contact ashore to be available to crew members for the reporting of incidents.

- Upon resolution, if the complaint is upheld, the company and seafarers' organisation should ensure that appropriate action is taken with regard to handling the perpetrator of the harassment or bullying when taking remedial action and provision of necessary support to the victim.
- It would be inappropriate to respond by simply moving the victim to a different job or ship as a way of resolving a case of harassment or bullying.

Awareness-raising activities.

Shipowners and seafarers organisations may wish to:

- Arrange for seafarers to participate in educational programmes explaining the undesirable effects of harassment and bullying and setting out the company's policy.
- Consider provision of literature, posters and videos to underpin and reinforce corporate policies, or
- Notices on staff notice boards
- A section in the staff handbook
- Management guides
- Seafarer guides
- Articles in the staff/union magazines

Example of Company Policy on Harassment and Bullying

- Company x will treat all complaints of harassment and bullying seriously and in strict confidence.
- Your senior officers on board and personnel manager ashore have been trained in dealing with complaints of harassment and bullying. You may approach either or both to report any incident you have suffered.
- The company considers any complaint of cyber bullying to be a serious issue.
- If you do not feel comfortable raising a complaint yourself, you may ask a friend or colleague to do so on your behalf. You will not be penalised by the company for making a complaint.
- Remember, it is the victim's perception of any actions that counts. If YOU feel you have suffered harassment or bullying, the company will look into the issue raised.
- Company Name: Contacts.

HELPLINE

**We offer seafarers and shipowners confidential,
neutral counselling and guidance on
harassment and bullying at sea**

Call us or send an SMS to +45 6015 5824

Email us: helpline@shw.dk

This guide is inspired by following materials:

"Guidance on eliminating shipboard harassment and bullying" (2016)

"Say no to bullying, say no to harassment" (2016)

Developed by the International chamber of shipping and International transport workers federation.

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