

New Poll Finds Workplace Harassment Declining But Still a Problem



Because workplace harassment had become such a serious problem in Canada, the OHS laws in several jurisdictions were amended to specifically require employers to protect workers from harassment on the job. Have those laws been effective so far'

Queen's School of Business recently commissioned a poll by Leger Marketing to find out the percentage of Canadians who've witnessed or experienced harassment in the workplace.

The good news: That percentage has noticeably declined in the last two years.

The bad news: About one in four people is still experiencing harassment on the job.

The 2014 study, which mirrors a similar poll in 2012, found that 23% of Canadians say they've personally experienced workplace harassment in their own life, down from 28%. The percentage who say they've witnessed workplace harassment also dropped from 33% to 25%. In addition, 4% of Canadians report that they're currently experiencing workplace harassment or have in the last year, which is virtually unchanged from 2012.

Other survey results include:

- Although more men say they've *witnessed* workplace harassment than women (30% versus 20%), roughly one in three females (31%) has or is currently *experiencing* such harassment versus 22% of males.
- The percentage of Canadians reporting a male harasser has declined from 50% in 2012 to 42%, while the percentage reporting female harassers has stayed the same at 23%. But the percentage who say they've witnessed workplace harassment inflicted by both males and females has jumped to 35% from 27%.
- University-educated employees are the most likely to report that they've experienced or are currently experiencing harassment (29%), compared to those who have a high school education or less (23%).

'It's encouraging that incidents of workplace harassment appear to be declining.

It suggests that recent legislation and increased education against workplace harassment in Canada is helping. However, the fact that roughly one out of four people still admit to experiencing it personally is hardly cause for a celebration,' says Jana Raver, Associate Professor at Queen's School of Business.

Raver adds, 'While Hollywood may stereotype workplace harassers as males, the survey reveals that an increasing percentage of Canadians now report witnessing it from both genders.'

For information and tools on workplace violence and harassment, including bullying, go to the Workplace Violence Compliance Centre. For example, you'll find six tips for reducing the risk of workplace violence and harassment.