



A shipping sector with world-class work environment

- How to actively prevent discrimination and harassment

A shipping sector with world-class work environment

The primary target group for this brochure is leaders of the shipping sector. The brochure is produced by the Swedish Shipowners' Association's Equal Treatment Group.

The brochure aims to serve as support for shipping companies with their work on world-class work environment, attractive workplaces and a shipping industry that is free from discrimination and harassment.

The law of victimization and discrimination

Victimization and offensive treatment is governed by the Swedish Work Environment Authority's regulations on organizational and social work environment (AFS 2015: 4) (the OSA regulation).

The term is actions directed against one or more workers in an offensive manner and which can lead to ill-health or that they are placed outside the community of the workplace.

Examples of offensive treatment/ victimization:

- not greet a person
- call someone a nickname
- freezing out someone
- exclude anyone from meetings
- accuse someone on unfair grounds
- call someone something offensive in front of others



If the victimization or offensive treatment is related to one of the grounds for discrimination, the Discrimination Act (2008: 567) regulates and the incident might instead be defined as discrimination.

The seven grounds for discrimination are:

- gender
- transgender identity or expression
- ethnicity
- religion or other belief
- disability
- sexual orientation
- age

For example, discrimination has taken place if women are excluded from working on the ship simply because they are just women.



What does the law on harassment and sexual harassment say?

Harassment is an act that violates someone's dignity and is associated with one of the seven grounds of discrimination.

Sexual harassment is a behavior of sexual nature that violates someone's dignity. Harassment can for example be to express stultifying or degrading generalizations, related to discrimination. Sexual harassment can, in addition to comments and words, be that someone, for example, groping or unwelcome compliments, invitations and annotations. It is always each individual who decides what is offensive and unwelcomed.

Examples of sexual harassment:

- physical contact, such as groping
- demands for sexual services
- gestures of a sexual nature
- texts, SMS, e-mails or pictures of sexual nature
- unwelcome compliments
- sexual references



Preventive work

Employers must, according to the Discrimination Act, work with active measures to counter harassment and discrimination regardless of grounds of discrimination.

According to law, the following active measures must therefore be implemented by the shipping company:

1. Investigate whether there are risks of discrimination or retaliation or if there are other obstacles to the equal rights of individuals and opportunities in the business
2. Analyze causes of detected risks and obstacles
3. Take the necessary preventative and promotional measures
4. Follow up and evaluate the work done by the shipping company in terms of examination of the current situation, analysis of causes and the prevention and promotion measures.

Five areas should be investigated within the organization:

1. Working conditions
2. Provisions and practices on salaries and other terms of employment
3. Recruitment and promotion
4. Education and other skills development
5. Opportunities to mix work-and family-life

Examples of preventive work for shipping companies regarding victimization, offensive treatment and harassment:

- Introduce and communicate zero tolerance in the workplace against all types of harassment and victimization.
- Take a stand against victimization and harassment; for example, in writing and during meetings.
- Discuss the issues at least once a year based on situations – make sure that you and your employees have the opportunity to train on how to speak up if victimization or harassment are taking place.
- Discuss the issue regularly and during interviews, introduction and staff conferences
- Include the questions in the employee survey.
- Develop written procedures on who to contact if you have been exposed, what the employer does and who is responsible for the investigation. According to the law, routines should be in print and available at the workplace.
- Work with inclusion – acquire knowledge about how to work with including leadership and suppression techniques.
- As a leader in shipping; be and act as a role model.
- Introduce zero tolerance in the workplace for all types of images included lightly dressed women or men, "joke e-mail" or sexual jargon or that is degrading to women or men
- Work for increased gender equality and equality.
- Communicate the information through, for example, summaries to seafarers, posters, notices on bulletin board, include as part of the staff manual, articles in industry-, company- and trade union magazines and on ship meetings.



A course exists – for free and in English!

In Sweden, a course has been developed called "Equal Treatment Training": The course is free and is also available in English. You will find the course [here](#):

In order to achieve results, research shows that web-based courses should be followed by discussions and workshops. The course can therefore be used as an introduction for continuous work within the company – both on board and ashore.

Examples of discussion questions

Discussing the issues both in groups and in employee discussions regularly is important. Questions for discussion may include:

- What is good at the workplace?
- What is less good at the workplace? Is something unpleasant, unpleasant, incomprehensible or unfair?
- How do we make everyone feel welcomed?
- Do we have guidelines and procedures that work to prevent harassment, sexual harassment and victimization?
- How do we set limits on what kind of jokes we accept at coffee breaks or when working?
- How do we solve conflicts?
- Are we resolving conflicts in a good way?
- Is our workplace adapted to different people's conditions and needs?



Guidelines and policy

Guidelines and policy are important documents to follow in order to achieve a world-class work environment. Having a written guideline is an employer responsibility and in the Swedish Discrimination Act.

A guideline or policy should include the following:

- Active condemnation of all forms of harassment and victimization.
- What harassment is.
- How to report if something happened and who you should turn to if a superior is the one who victimizes or harasses.
- Which measures that take place after a report taken place. No penalties or retaliation may occur against the person who reports/is subjected to harassment.
- What preventative measures that are taken place.

Processes when something happened

When a manager or other designated person finds out that an employee feels harassed, they should immediately investigate what has happened. The investigation shall be carried out in order to give the manager or the designated person sufficient information and knowledge about the situation, so that the person in charge at the shipping company can assess whether it is a case of harassment or sexual harassment, or if the events depend on something else that needs to be addressed.

If harassment has taken place, the manager or the designated person (and any special investigator) must assess which measures that must be implemented to bring the harassment to an end.

It is important to show support for the person who is victimized or harassed. This also gives a clear signal that harassment is not accepted at the shipping company.

Exemple on company policy

[Company name] has zero tolerance against harassment and victimization. These actions are taken seriously and and leaders and managers have training in the area.

Employees can turn to [name / position] to report events.

Employees who are not comfortable reporting themselves can ask a friend or colleague to report in his/her place. No retaliation takes place against employees who report. All managers are responsible for taking the case further when they become witnesses or receive information about suspected victimization or harassment. Employees are responsible for speaking up when behaviors that are perceived as offensive occurs and are also responsible for treating others in the workplace with respect.

We take each report very seriously and handle these promptly.

[Company name]
[Contact]

Source: ICS



Links for more information

<http://www.ics-shipping.org/docs/default-source/Other-documents/guidance-on-eliminating-shipboard-harassment-and-bullying.pdf?sfvrsn=4>

<https://www.av.se/en/>





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