



HARASSMENT AT TOYOTA

Everyone deserves to go to work and come home each day with their safety and dignity intact. The law requires all employers to provide a harassment-free workplace, but experience tells us that employers like Toyota, tend to use the quickest, cheapest solution rather than investigating the matter thoroughly.

Unifor organizers receive questions and complaints regularly from Team Members about harassment in the workplace, including bullying and other demeaning, degrading, and humiliating behaviour at Toyota. This is too often the case in non-unionised workplaces where harassment is treated as a personal problem and workers are often ignored or discouraged from raising harassment issues and are even face potential reprisals.

Harassment has a specific legal definition related to prohibited grounds outlined in human rights legislation and can include: race, gender, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, political affiliation, or religion, gender expression, gender identity. The law further defines harassment as behaviour that the offender knows, or ought reasonably to know, is offensive. Harassment, particularly by management, is about power. Very often, the odds are stacked against a worker who may have to hire expensive outside legal support.

UNIFOR'S ANTI-HARASSMENT STRATEGY

In unionised workplaces, harassment in the workplace is treated as a serious health and safety issue and support is provided directly to workers through their union. Unionised workers have a wide variety of workplace anti-harassment protections and supports that non-unionised workers simply don't or, when they do, exist in name only and are difficult to access. Unionised workers are protected by comprehensive anti-harassment policies backed by Collective Agreement language that management is legally required to follow, independent investigations and grievance procedures to resolve cases of harassment, access to resources and specific benefits, as well as specially-trained in-plant advocates including a Women's and Racial Justice Advocate.

Together, these anti-harassment mechanisms work together to protect workers from all forms of harassment and discrimination in the workplace.

Why Team Members need anti-harassment policies

Joining a union means having the strongest possible anti-harassment policies and safeguards written directly into a Collective Agreement with all workers that the company is legally obligated to follow. Management doesn't always live up to its obligations to provide a harassment-free workplace, so it's the job of a workers through their union to hold management accountable. Unifor's comprehensive anti-harassment policy is enshrined in collective agreements giving union members the ability to conduct their own investigations by trained equity representatives and take a proactive approach to harassment in the workplace.

Why Team Members should investigate harassment at Toyota

Even when employers say they take harassment seriously or have agreed to work jointly with workers on an anti-harassment procedure, having a union means taking a different approach that includes accountability, a fair resolution, and a self-directed investigation by workers. Rather than have Toyota management investigate cases of workplace harassment, Team Members should take the lead. Joining Unifor means that a Toyota Team Member who works in the plant is specially trained as your representative and helps workers report their complaints. It also means a clear investigative process, a review of existing management policies, and negotiation of an appropriate resolution that works for you.



Why Team Members need enhanced harassment-related benefits

Unifor members in the auto sector receive access to sickness and accident benefits that Toyota workers don't. These include enhanced benefits that cover specific harassment-related cases such as domestic or sexual violence that occurs outside the workplace. In recent negotiations with the Detroit Three, Unifor members enhanced harassment-related benefits to include up to 10 days of paid leave for workers who have are experiencing or been threatened with domestic or sexual violence.

Why Team Members Need Unifor's Women's Advocate Program

A Women's Advocate is a specially trained workplace representative who assists women with concerns such as workplace harassment, intimate partner violence and domestic violence. In the auto sector, Unifor represented autoworkers have a Women's Advocate in their workplace who provides support for women accessing community and workplace resources. The program was pioneered by auto workers recognizing that women are five times more likely to speak to someone they know from their workplace when they are looking for help. The program is a widely-recognized example of a successful joint union-management workplace initiative that helps to create healthy, respectful, and safe workplaces.

Why Team Members Need a Racial Justice Advocate

In 2020, Unifor successfully negotiated a new Racial Justice program to combat racial inequality in our workplaces and our communities. This new program expands the equity work of the union and builds on the success of Unifor's Women's Advocate program. Racial Justice advocates are stationed in each workplace and are a member of the Black, Indigenous or racialized community to provide support to fellow union members on matters related to racial discrimination and violence. The Racial Justice Advocate is also responsible for co-developing a workplace-based Anti-Racism Action Plan that includes educating all workers about racism and racial inequality.



OTHER QUESTIONS?

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