

Follow Up: A Reminder Regarding the Importance of Supervisor Training

August 24, 2011 by [Adam Santucci](#)

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[Two weeks ago we discussed](#) the importance of providing discrimination and harassment training to supervisors and managers. To follow up on that post, we thought it would be a good idea to provide a brief overview of the key aspects of an effective supervisor training program.

As we previously mentioned, the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#) has clearly stated that it is important to train all supervisors and managers, and not just those charged with receiving and investigating complaints. In addition, we suggest that employers provide training to all new supervisors, provide annual training sessions, and provide additional training sessions when changes are made to harassment policies. It is also important to document when training sessions are conducted, who attends those sessions, and the content of each session.

An effective training session should cover key topics, designed to help supervisors prevent harassment and remedy harassment that does occur, and these key points include:

- educating supervisors regarding what conduct is inappropriate;
- ensuring supervisors understand that they are required to report complaints of harassment or incidents they observe;
- ensuring supervisors understand that employees are permitted to make both informal and formal complaints of harassment, and that all such complaints must be investigated;
- describing the multiple channels through which employees can make complaints;
- detailing the complaint investigation and resolution process; and
- ensuring supervisors understand that retaliation is strictly prohibited.

A quality training session will be designed to educate supervisors and managers on appropriate workplace behavior and to help them avoid engaging in discriminatory conduct. Supervisors must be trained to appropriately respond to complaints and to

report incidents of harassment. Supervisors should also be aware of the consequences for failing to do so. As you can see, merely reiterating the content of a policy during a training session does not constitute effective supervisory training. Some states, such as California, even have specific requirements for supervisor training, including the minimum duration and frequency of such training.

Employers can also benefit from regularly training supervisors in a broader range of human resources issues, including hiring and interviewing techniques, discipline and performance management, employee privacy, Family and Medical Leave Act requirements, wage and hour issues, and maintaining a safe workplace.

[McNees Wallace & Nurick's Labor and Employment Group](#) can help employers develop effective training programs. McNees can also provide a list of suggested supervisory training topics, suggested re-training time lines and course materials. You can contact a McNees attorney by [clicking here](#).

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