

Claims of hostile work environments, based on the conduct of managers and co-workers are on the rise. In addition to sexual harassment, complaints frequently focus on offensive verbal or written exchanges based on race, religion, age and now disability.

Broadened definitions of disability in California, coupled with legislation aimed at punishing employers for retaliating against employees who are injured, take medical leave or claim disability harassment, make this the newest "bet the company" lawsuit in California.

Leaders who threaten to terminate employees injured on the job; e-mails that refer to disabled employees "gimps" and supervisors who permit employees to bully their disabled co-workers are all grounds for costly disability harassment lawsuits.

Hostile, abusive or insensitive work environments also increase work errors, impact the way employees perceive themselves and your peers, and create conflict among entire work groups. Greater awareness of colleagues' perceptions and values, in turn, encourages managers and non-managers to interact more favorably with one another as well as the diverse population of vendors, suppliers, customers and clients.

California law requires training for managers and supervisors on sexual harassment. Mandates for other forms of harassment won't be far behind. Proactive employers, with five or more employees, are taking steps to train their leaders to spot - and stop - disability harassment in its tracks. This program fulfills all legislative training requirements under AB1825 for California employers.

***Participants Will Learn To:***

- o Identify behaviors which may constitute unlawful harassment, based on actual case studies.
- o Describe your organization's legal and policy responsibilities for the prevention of hostile work environments, and identify the steps that should be taken to comply with the law.
- o Understand the process to follow in addressing complaints of workplace harassment, reporting incidents and coordinating with your human resources departments.
- o Recognize how stereotyped thinking impacts working relationships and, in turn, productivity, by focusing on the effect on employees at all levels of your organization.
- o Recognize how personal values affect collaborative environments, identify verbal and non-verbal barriers to effective communication and develop strategies to enhance peer-to-peer communication.
- o Identify the specific requirements for preventing harassment and retaliation against employees who request an accommodation for a disability, are assigned modified duty, or raise a complaint for disability discrimination.