

SAMPLE COMMUNICATIONS TEMPLATES FOR EMPLOYERS

Here are some practical examples of communication methods to help managers when they are handling different scenarios of sexual harassment complaints.

- Templates include: Templates for phone conversations, emails/letters and meeting minutes.

They are an adaptation of Norwegian media company VG's own templates and are meant as a guide only. It is best to tailor these so that they are based on the laws in your country and your organisation's own policies. Ensure that you consult a lawyer when drafting your own templates for all written and verbal communication.

TEMPLATES TO ACKNOWLEDGE A COMPLAINT AND INVITE TO A MEETING

TO PERSON MAKING SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINT

I am calling because you have reported a case of sexual harassment, and I would like to provide some brief information on what happens next.

Inform about the process

Thank you for helping us to deal with these challenges.

We will now investigate the matter more closely, starting by inviting you to a meeting. I will send you an email suggesting a time and place for the meeting.

Do you need to speak to someone now/is there anything we can help with?

Again, thank you for informing us.

TO PERSON WHO HAS BEEN SEXUALLY HARASSED (IF NOT COMPLAINANT)

I am calling because we have received a report that you have been sexually harassed. Are you aware that this incident has been reported?

I want to inform you briefly of what happens next.

When we as the employer receive messages of this nature it is our duty to investigate the situation, and we would therefore like to invite you to a meeting to obtain further information on what has happened.

At the meeting, you will meet me from the company and [INSERT NAME].

You are fully entitled to bring a representative/ advisor with you to the meeting. Minutes of the meeting will be recorded and submitted for your approval afterwards. Straight after this call, I will send you email calling you in

to a meeting, which will contain some of the same information I have just provided.

Do you need to speak to someone now/is there anything we can help with?

Do you have any questions now? See you at the meeting.

TO PERSON ACCUSED OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

I am calling because we have received a report/ reports of offensive sexual behaviour by you.

When we as the employer receive such reports, it is our duty to investigate the matter. We will be speaking with you as the accused party, and with the person who feels he/she has been offended. Specifically, we would like to call you in to a meeting to present the information we have been given. You will have the opportunity to give your comments. If you need some time to think, you will be given that time.

I cannot go into more detail about the matter by telephone. We will do so in the meeting. At the meeting, you will meet me from the company and [INSERT NAME].

You are fully entitled to bring a representative/advisor with you to the meeting. Straight after this call, I will be sending you an email suggesting a time and place for the meeting.

I must advise you at this time, that you are not permitted to contact the person you believe might have reported this matter.

Do you need to speak to someone now/is there anything we can help with?

Do you have any questions right now - if not, see you at the meeting.

TO PERSON WHO HAS BEEN SEXUALLY HARASSED OR PERSON MAKING SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINT

To: [INSERT NAME] [INSERT DATE]

INVITATION TO MEETING CONCERNING REPORT OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

We refer to the telephone call advising you that [INSERT COMPANY NAME] has received a report from you that you/someone else have/has [DELETE APPROPRIATE] been sexually harassed at work.

By law, the employer has a duty to investigate the matter further when such reports are received. Since the reported matter concerns your alleged conduct, we would like to invite you to a meeting where we can explain what this matter concerns. You will be given time to understand the matter, and the opportunity to give your comments. You will also get information on what happens next.

We would like to have the meeting within the next few days and have set aside some time on [INSERT DATE] at [INSERT TIME].

If you are unavailable and would prefer another time, please inform us immediately and we will do our best to find a time that suits you as soon as possible. If you wish, you are of course welcome to bring along a trade union representative or other advisor to the meeting.

[INSERT COMPANY NAME]'s representative at the meeting will be [INSERT NAME/S].

The meeting will be held at the HR office [OR ALTERNATIVE].

Please get back to me regarding the proposed time of the meeting as soon as possible.

Best regards,

[INSERT NAME]

TO PERSON ACCUSED OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

To: [INSERT NAME] [INSERT DATE]

INVITATION TO MEETING CONCERNING REPORT OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

As you are aware, [INSERT COMPANY NAME] has been informed of a claim of sexual harassment at work by you.

By law, we have a duty to investigate the matter further when such reports are received. In this regard, we would like to invite you to a meeting where you may provide more details on the matter to give [INSERT COMPANY NAME] an overview, as well as any further information that could be relevant to the matter.

In this meeting you will also be briefed on what happens next. We would like to have the meeting within the next few days and have set aside some time on [INSERT DATE] at [INSERT TIME] If you are unavailable and would prefer another time, please inform us immediately and we will do our best to find a time that suits you as soon as possible.

If you wish, you are of course welcome to bring along a trade union representative or other advisor to the meeting. [INSERT COMPANY NAME] representative at the meeting will be [INSERT NAME AND POSITION].

The meeting will be held at the HR office [OR ALTERNATIVE].

Please get back to me regarding the proposed time of the meeting as soon as possible.

Best regards,

[INSERT NAME]

TEMPLATES FOR MEETING/INTERVIEWS DURING AN INVESTIGATION

WITH PERSON WHO HAS BEEN SEXUALLY HARASSED OR PERSON MAKING SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINT

Name/Position: _____

Time/Place: _____

Employer's representatives: _____

Advisor/Trade union representative for employee (optional): _____

The employer has requested a meeting with the employee to discuss the reported matter(s) of improper conduct. The following conditions have been reported:

Include a summary of key points of the conditions reported. If more than one condition, use a new bullet point for each one.

1. INFORMATION ON HOW THE MEETING IS CONDUCTED

Prior to the meeting the employee was informed that he/she was fully entitled to representation by either a representative or other advisor, if so desired. At the commencement of the meeting the employee was also informed about:

Principle of contradiction

Minutes of the meeting will be recorded. The minutes will be sent to the employee for review and any adjustments/elaborations. We wish to present the information to the accused party.

Use of information obtained in the meeting

Information obtained in the meeting will be used in connection with further investigations of the matter by the employer.

Processing of personal data

The employer treats personal data in accordance with the [INSERT COUNTY NAME]'s Data Act

You will need to determine the laws around data protection in your country.

2. MEETING MINUTES:

Suggested main components:

For each incident/action:

- When did this happen – as accurately as possible?
- What occasion was it? (work, broadcasting, party, trip...)
- Where did it happen – as precisely as possible?
- Can you elaborate more specifically on what happened/was said?
- Were there any others present/close by – who might have seen or overheard anything?
- Is there any documentation you would like to present now or at a later time?
- Is there any key information that we should have knowledge of that was not brought up at the time of reporting this, or any other conditions/episodes that may be relevant for the employer's assessment of the case?
- Provide information on access to support from the occupational health service, etc. – ask if there is any specific form of support/follow-up the employee wants from the employer.
- Provide general information of how the reported matter will be handled going forward.

The employer informed you that the accused party is not permitted to contact you. If he/she still gets in touch, we request that you immediately report this to me, as the employer's representative.

The employee has received the minutes of this meeting for review and has been given the opportunity to correct any statements made.

The employee confirms by signing these minutes are approved.

WITH PERSON ACCUSED OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Name/Position: _____

Time/Place: _____

Employer's representatives: _____

Advisor/Trade union representative for employee
(optional): _____

The employer has requested a meeting with the employee on the basis of reported claims of improper conduct.

The following conduct will be discussed at the meeting:

- Summary of key points of the conditions reported. If more than one condition, use a new bullet point for each one.
- Present the specific incidents reported - open or anonymous, depending on how it is assessed.

1. INFORMATION ON HOW THE MEETING IS CONDUCTED

Prior to the meeting the employee was informed that he/she was fully entitled to representation by either a representative or other advisor, if so desired. At the commencement of the meeting the employee was also informed about:

- **Principle of contradiction**

Minutes of the meeting will be recorded. The minutes will be sent to the employee for review and any adjustments/elaborations. We wish to present the information to the accused party.

- **Use of information obtained in the meeting**

Information obtained in the meeting will be used in connection with further investigations of the matter by the employer.

- **Processing of personal data**

The employer treats personal data in accordance with the [INSERT COUNTY NAME]'s Data Act.

You will need to determine the laws around data protection in your country.

2. MEETING MINUTES:

Suggested main components:

- Prior to the meeting, did the employee have knowledge of the condition(s) reported?
- If any, what constitutes new information for the employee?
- What are the employee's remarks regarding each matter? (go through each matter)
- Is there any documentation the employee wishes to present now or by an agreed deadline?
- Are there any key details the employer should be made aware of that have not been included in the reported matter, or any other conduct/ episodes that could be relevant for the employer's assessment of the case?
- Provide information on access to support from the occupational health service, etc. – ask if there is any specific form of support/follow-up the employee wants from the employer.
- Provide general information of how the reported matter will be handled going forward.

The employer informed the employee that he/she is not permitted to contact the person who reported the matter or any other affected parties. If he/she still does so, it will be treated as a violation of confidentiality.

The employee has received the minutes of this meeting for review and has been given the opportunity to correct any statements he/she has made.

The employee confirms by signing this that these minutes are approved.

TEMPLATES FOR FEEDBACK ON A DECISION

FEEDBACK TO PERSON ACCUSED OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Option 1: No case of sexual harassment

We have now assessed all the information that we have obtained. The conclusion is that we do not consider this to be a case of improper conduct on your part.

Open for questions, reactions...

The documents pertaining to the matter will be destroyed, meaning that they will not be filed in your personnel file.

The person/s that reported the matter/s will be informed by email that the case has been processed and of the decision.

Do you have any questions?

I must remind you that retaliation against the person who reported the case is a serious offence.

I appreciate this has been a difficult time.

If you should need our help or to speak to us at [INSERT COMPANY NAME], or if you would like guidance on how to access support services, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Option 2: No case of sexual harassment – but problematic behaviour

We have now assessed all the information that we have obtained. The conclusion is that we do not consider this to be a serious matter on your part with any personnel-related consequences for you.

The report/s we have received, however, show that your behaviour is perceived as bothersome and problematic. We request that you take these signals seriously.

(For calls - open for questions, reactions...)

We emphasise that the documents relating to this case will not be filed in your personnel file with the company.

The person/s that reported the matter/s will be informed by email that the case has been processed. Only the recipient of your behaviour will be informed of the decision and outcome.

I must remind you that retaliation against the person/s who reported the case is a serious offence.

Do you have any questions?

I appreciate this has been a difficult time.

If you should need our help or to speak to us at [INSERT COMPANY NAME], or if you would like guidance on how to access support services, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Option 3: A clear case of sexual harassment

I hope you are doing well. I fully understand that this is a difficult situation.

We have now assessed all the information that we have obtained. The conclusion is that we consider this to be a serious matter on your part, that will have personnel-related consequences for you.

The report(s) we have reviewed show that your behaviour is perceived as bothersome and problematic. We request that you take these signals seriously.

As you know, [INSERT COMPANY NAME] has a zero tolerance policy when it comes to unwanted sexual attention and/or sexual harassment. Therefore, we have concluded that we have to respond by issuing you with [INSERT DISCIPLINARY MEASURE].

(For calls - open for questions, reactions...)

You have the right to appeal to this decision within [INSERT TIME PERIOD].

The documents pertaining to this case will be filed in your personnel file with the company.

The person/s that reported the matter/s will be informed by email that the case has been processed. Only the recipient of your behaviour will be informed of the decision and outcome.

I must remind you that retaliation against the person who reported the case is a serious offence.

FEEDBACK TO PERSON WHO HAS BEEN SEXUALLY HARASSED OR PERSON MAKING SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINT

We have now investigated the matter in question by talking to you, any other affected parties, and witnesses as well as the person accused. [INSERT COMPANY NAME] has concluded that there is no case/a clear case/a clear case of serious [DELETE APPROPRIATE] sexual harassment resulting in [INSERT DISCIPLINARY MEASURE] of the person accused.

You have the right to appeal to this decision within [INSERT TIME PERIOD].

If no appeals are made by either party, [INSERT COMPANY NAME] will consider the matter concluded in accordance with the applicable laws and guidelines.

(For calls - open for questions, reactions...)

I appreciate this has been a difficult time.

If you should need our help or to speak to us at [INSERT COMPANY NAME], or if you would like guidance on how to access support services, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

By reporting this you have helped us in our work to secure a safe working environment. Thank you again for your help.