

The 5 W's of Reporting

A practical guide to raising a workplace harassment concern.

01 / WHO • Choose a reporting contact

Use HR, a designated manager, ethics contact, or another channel in your organization's policy. If your supervisor is involved, use an alternate contact. You can report something you experienced or witnessed.

02 / WHAT • Describe what happened

Include dates, approximate times, locations or platforms, names and roles, specific words or behavior, witnesses, and relevant messages. Separate what you observed from what someone told you. It is okay not to know every detail.

03 / WHEN • Raise the concern promptly

Report as soon as you can. You do not need to wait for repeated behavior or gather complete proof. A delayed report still deserves attention. If there is immediate danger, seek emergency help first.

04 / WHERE • Use the designated channel

Request a private conversation or use the approved email, form, hotline, or portal. Ask how information will be shared; complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Keep a copy securely and ask for acknowledgment.

05 / WHY • Make the concern visible

Reporting gives the organization an opportunity to assess the concern, respond, and prevent further harm. You do not have to decide whether the behavior is legally harassment before raising it.

YOU CAN SAY

"I want to report a workplace concern. On [date], at [place/platform], I observed or experienced [specific behavior]. [People] may have relevant information. What are the next steps, and when should I expect a follow-up?"

Remember: You do not have to confront the person first. Raise concerns about retaliation through an alternate channel if needed. Internal reporting does not replace external options or their filing deadlines.

Educational resource, not legal advice. Follow your organization's policy. U.S. guidance: [eeoc.gov/harassment](https://www.eeoc.gov/harassment) and EEOC employer checklist.