

Can we require harassment complaints in writing?

Q. Our new plant manager wants to revise the company's sexual harassment policy to require all employee complaints to be in writing. Can we do this?

A. Nothing in the law prohibits this, but that doesn't mean you can ignore oral complaints.

For an employer to defend a sexual harassment complaint successfully, it must be able to show that it reasonably acted upon and investigated an employee's complaint. Ignoring an oral complaint of sexual harassment—just because it wasn't in writing—could lead to significant liability.