



MCA INDUSTRY TOOLKIT

The minerals industry is committed to eliminating sexual harassment in its workplaces and has adopted a national Industry Code that provides clear expectations on members to establish both preventative and response measures to address sexual harassment.

This document is part of the MCA Industry Toolkit that has been developed for our members and their employees and comprises a suite of Fact Sheets, Guidance and Templates.

FACT SHEET

What is casual sexism?

“Casual” sexism may not be overt but can be as harmful as those behaviours defined as sexual harassment. It is the normalised behaviour that is accepted in a workplace and in turn forms part of the culture of an organisation. This normalised behaviour can be early warning signs akin to safety near misses.

These behaviours may not be taken as seriously and can be more difficult to identify. They include generalised sexist remarks or attitudes, crude language and an overall workplace culture that is degrading or intimidating.

Research shows that in workplaces that are perceived to be more tolerant or permissive of sexual harassment, people are more likely to experience sexual harassment.

Values or beliefs about sex, gender or sexual orientation in a society or community, also occur in workplaces. This includes ideas about what is ‘normal’ in relation to gender, and beliefs about what people should do and how they should act. In mostly male workplaces this can encourage people to adopt distinct gender roles and expectations.

Examples of “casual” sexism

- Rude or discourteous behaviour that is disrespectful towards others, even if it lacks intent to harm.
- Organisational characteristics that imply tolerance of sexual harassment
- Acceptance of or excusing poor behaviour e.g. the perpetrator “doesn’t know any better”, or “is from a different generation”.
- Implying that to fit in to a workplace a person needs to “toughen up” or
- Protection of ‘high value’ individuals regardless of behaviour
- Job titles – while many have no issue with ‘man’ in titles, others consider they would not be eligible for the job or the position by default would go to a male e.g. Foreman, Tradesman. These terms have declined in use but still remain in some businesses.
- Presuming a job title refers to a male holding it e.g. engineer versus female engineer
- The way equipment is given a gender or nickname e.g. mechanised equipment is often given a feminine name
- Patterns of social interaction that are implicitly sanctioned by the management environment e.g. the female given the role of subservient in meetings by being asked to make coffees
- Gender exclusion e.g. meetings held in single-gendered environments/clubs.