

New CareerBuilder Survey Finds 72 Percent of Workers Who Experience Sexual Harassment at Work Do Not Report it

- Those who did not report being sexually harassed most often did not because they didn't want to be labeled a troublemaker, said it was their word against the other person, or were afraid of losing their job
- Twenty-eight percent of those who have felt sexually harassed at work said they were sexually harassed by their boss
- More than half of people sexually harassed (54 percent) say they did not confront the person responsible for harassment

CHICAGO and ATLANTA, Jan. 19, 2018 [/PRNewswire/](#) -- Thanks to the #MeToo movement, more victims are feeling empowered to come forward about workplace sexual harassment, but according to a new CareerBuilder survey, the majority continue to keep quiet. Of those who have been sexually harassed, the majority (72 percent) did not report the incident and more than half (54 percent) did not confront the person responsible for harassment.

Looking at who has felt sexually harassed in the workplace, more than 1 in 10 workers (12 percent) say they have, with women (17 percent) more likely to feel harassed than men (7 percent), and 17 percent of those ages 18-34 report feeling sexually harassed at work compared to those 35-44 (11 percent), 45-54 (10 percent) or 55+ (9 percent).

This survey was conducted online by The Harris Poll from November 28 and December 20, 2017 and included a representative sample of 809 full-time workers across industries and company sizes in the U.S. private sector.

An Issue Across Levels

When asked who they were harassed by, employees pointed to a number of statuses and positions. Twenty-eight percent of those who have felt sexually harassed at work said they were sexually harassed by their boss, and nearly 2 in 5 (37 percent) said they were sexually harassed by more than one person. Overall, those who felt harassed said the person(s) responsible for the harassment held these positions:

- Peer: 60 percent
- Manager or supervisor: 36 percent
- Client: 9 percent
- Senior management: 8 percent
- Vendor: 5 percent
- Direct report: 3 percent

Most Victims Remain Silent

While the majority of those who say they have felt sexually harassed in the workplace say they did not confront the person responsible for harassment, of those who did (46 percent), 13 percent said the situation stayed the same and 9 percent said it became worse.

Overall, 28 percent of those harassed said they reported it, with 15 percent telling the person's boss or someone higher up in the organization, 11 percent telling HR and 3 percent the legal department.

Those who did not report the sexual harassment most often did not because they didn't want to be labeled a troublemaker (40 percent), said it was their word against the other person (22 percent) or were afraid of losing their job (18 percent)ⁱ. On the other hand, of those who did report it, 76 percent said the issue was resolved – 29 percent said the person stopped the harassment and 21 percent said the person was firedⁱⁱ.

While most employees stick it out, 13 percent of those harassed said they left their job because of it.

Four Steps to Take if You Feel Sexually Harassed at Work

Rosemary Haefner, chief human resources officer at CareerBuilder, shared the below tips for workers dealing who have been sexually harassed in the workplace.

- **Know your rights:** Find out if your company has a policy in place. The policy will usually include your rights, protections against retaliation and an outline of what happens if a claim is reported. Even if your company doesn't have a policy, keep in mind that according to the EEOC, sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. You have the legal right to be protected from sex discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlines protections that Americans have in the workplace. Other state laws or employer policies may also protect you from sexual harassment.
- **Write it down:** Write down what you plan to say to report the harassment. Have as many specifics as

possible. Make sure you clarify how the harassment has affected your ability to do your job. Whether or not you ultimately decide to file a complaint, it can be useful to keep track of the times you have felt harassed and the types of harassment you have experienced.

- **Voice your concern:** If you feel comfortable speaking to the person directly, politely but firmly tell them to stop, being specific about what behaviors make you uncomfortable. You can send them a letter if you don't feel comfortable talking in person.
- **Tell someone:** If you don't feel comfortable speaking to the person directly, report the harassment to your superior, your harasser's superior or your HR department. How you should go about this will depend on your company's individual policies.

Research Method

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by The Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder among 809 employees ages 18 and over (employed full-time, not self-employed, non-government) between November 28 and December 20, 2017. With a pure probability sample of 809, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/-3.45 percentage points.

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About The Harris Poll:

The Harris Poll is one of the longest running surveys in the U.S. tracking public opinion, motivations and social sentiment since 1963 that is now part of Harris Insights & Analytics, a global consulting and market research firm that delivers social intelligence for transformational times. We work with clients in three primary areas; building twenty-first-century corporate reputation, crafting brand strategy and performance tracking, and earning organic media through public relations research. Our mission is to provide insights and advisory to help leaders make the best decisions possible. To learn more, please visit www.harrisinsights.com.

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ⁱ Caution: Small base size (less than n=100)

ⁱⁱ Caution: Very small base size (less than n=50); results should only be viewed as directional

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