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AMANDA FARAHANY IS A WORLD-CLASS LAWYER AND LEADER.
IF YOU NEED AN EMPLOYMENT ATTORNEY, THIS SHOULD BE
YOUR FIRST CALL.” - B.K.

WHEN IS BULLYING ILLEGAL IN THE WORKPLACE?

Workplace bullying can make your job feel unbearable. It might involve insults, isolation, or even sabotage, creating a toxic atmosphere that harms your mental health and career. But is it illegal? While many forms of mistreatment at work are unfair, they don't always break the law. This can be confusing and leave victims feeling powerless.

The employment law attorneys at Barrett & Farahany will clarify when bullying in the workplace crosses the line from unprofessional behavior to illegal harassment. We'll explore the legal definitions, explain what constitutes a hostile work environment, and outline the concrete steps you can take if you are a target. Understanding your rights is the first step toward reclaiming your peace

and professional dignity.



Defining Illegal Workplace Bullying

Not all bullying is illegal, but it becomes unlawful when it turns into harassment targeting an individual's protected characteristics. Federal and state laws protect employees from discrimination based on specific attributes. When workplace bullies target you because of these traits, their actions may be illegal.

What to Do If You're Being Bullied

If you are facing bullying in the workplace, especially if you believe it is illegal, taking strategic action is crucial. Here are the steps you should follow to protect yourself and build a case.

1. Document Everything

Keep a detailed, private record of every incident. For each event, write down:

- The date and time it occurred.
- Where it happened.
- Who was involved (the bully and any witnesses)?
- A specific description of what was said or done.
- How the incident made you feel and how it impacted your work.

Save any relevant emails, text messages, or physical evidence. This documentation is powerful evidence that establishes a pattern of behavior and will be invaluable if you decide to take formal action.

2. Report the Bullying

Review your company's employee handbook to understand its policy on harassment and reporting procedures. Follow the official process, which usually involves reporting the behavior to your supervisor, a human resources representative, or a designated manager.

When you file a report, do so in writing (such as an email) so you have a record of it. Be professional and stick to the facts you've documented. Reporting the conduct gives your employer a chance to investigate and resolve the issue. It is also a necessary legal step if you plan to pursue a claim later.

3. Seek Legal Counsel

If the bullying continues after you've reported it, or if you are unsure about your rights, it's time to speak with an attorney. An employment lawyer can help you understand whether the behavior you're experiencing is illegal and explain your legal options.

They can provide guidance on navigating your company's internal processes and, if necessary, help you file a formal complaint with government agencies like the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)...

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Meet the Team at Barrett & Farahany

