

MHR WORKPLACE BEHAVIOUR AND HARASSMENT POLICY

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1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy sets standards for respectful workplace conduct and establishes how MHR will receive, assess, investigate and address reported harassment and other unacceptable behaviour involving MHR panel members.

It applies when an MHR panel member is a complainant, respondent, witness or otherwise involved in an incident with any person connected to the workplace or placement environment, including MHR or client employees, healthcare professionals, patients, visitors, contractors and service providers.

The policy covers conduct:

- at MHR premises, client facilities or other work-related locations;
- during shifts, training, meetings, work-related travel, events, accommodation or transport;
- in work-related communications, including email, messaging platforms, telephone calls and social media; and
- outside normal working hours where there is a direct connection to the workplace, placement or professional relationship.

2. POLICY STATEMENT AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

MHR does not condone any form of general or sexual harassment, bullying, intimidation, abuse, discrimination, threats, violence, victimisation or retaliation by or against an MHR panel member.

Everyone must be treated with dignity, respect and professional courtesy.

This policy supports applicable South African law, including the Employment Equity Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Code of Good Practice on the Prevention and Elimination of Harassment in the Workplace (2022).

Additional Policy Principles

- MHR will respond to reports fairly, impartially, as confidentially as reasonably possible, and in proportion to the circumstances.
- MHR will cooperate with clients and relevant authorities where concerns arise at client facilities.
- An allegation is not a finding of misconduct.
- A single serious incident may constitute harassment or misconduct, while repeated conduct may constitute ongoing harassment, bullying, victimisation or other misconduct.
- Knowingly false or malicious allegations may be addressed through applicable disciplinary or contractual processes.

3. DEFINITIONS

Term/Abbreviation	Definition/Description
Bullying	Repeated unreasonable conduct directed at a person or group that creates a risk to health, safety, dignity, or wellbeing, including intimidation, humiliation, exclusion, or undermining behaviour.
Complainant	A person who reports conduct that they have experienced, witnessed, or reasonably believe may constitute a violation of this policy.
Consent	Voluntary, informed, and freely given agreement to a specific interaction. Consent may be withdrawn at any time and cannot be assumed from silence, previous interactions, or a power imbalance.
Discrimination	Unfair differentiation, exclusion, preference, or treatment of a person based on a legally protected ground or another arbitrary ground, which has the purpose or effect of impairing that person's dignity, equality, rights, opportunities, or working environment.
General Harassment	Unwanted conduct that impairs dignity, creates a hostile or intimidating environment, or undermines a person's wellbeing, safety, or ability to work.
Incident	An alleged event involving unacceptable behaviour, harassment, abuse, threats, discrimination, bullying or violence.
MHR Panel Member	A candidate successfully registered with MHR.
Respondent	The person whose conduct is the subject of a complaint or report.
Retaliation or Victimisation	Any adverse treatment, intimidation, disadvantage, interference or punitive action against a person because they reported a concern in good faith, supported another person, provided information or participated in an investigation or related process.
Sexual Harassment	Sexual harassment is a form of harassment and discrimination and includes any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive environment.

4. EXAMPLES OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

4.1 The following conduct may constitute harassment, abuse, bullying, discrimination, victimisation, or misconduct:

- **Verbal Abuse:** Shouting, swearing, insulting, mocking, belittling, or humiliating others.
- **Bullying and Psychological Harassment:** Persistent ridicule, exclusion, malicious rumours, sabotaging work, withholding information, or setting a person up to fail.
- **Physical Abuse or Violence:** Hitting, pushing, kicking, grabbing, threatening physical harm, or damaging personal property.
- **Threats and Intimidation:** Aggressive behaviour, threats to a person's safety, reputation, employment, or shift opportunities.
- **Professional Undermining:** Deliberately interfering with work, spreading false allegations, or misrepresenting a person's performance.
- **Misuse of Authority:** Using position, access to shifts, information, or influence to intimidate, control, or unfairly disadvantage others.
- **Digital Misconduct:** Abusive emails, messages, social media posts, voice notes, or sharing offensive material in work-related groups.
- **Discriminatory Harassment:** Derogatory comments, stereotypes, slurs, exclusion, or hostile conduct based on protected or arbitrary grounds.
- **Retaliation or Victimisation:** Threatening, disadvantaging, excluding, or penalising a person because they reported a concern or participated in an investigation.

Conduct not listed above may still violate this policy if it is unreasonable, harmful, threatening, humiliating or inconsistent with professional standards.

4.2 The following conduct may constitute sexual harassment:

Physical Conduct

- Unwanted touching
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Sexual assault
- Attempts to kiss or embrace a person against their wishes

Verbal Conduct

- Sexual comments or jokes
- Suggestive remarks
- Repeated unwanted compliments of a sexual nature
- Requests for sexual favours
- Inappropriate questions about a person's body or private life

Non-Verbal Conduct

- Displaying sexually explicit material
- Sending inappropriate images, videos, or messages
- Gestures of a sexual nature
- Staring or leering

Electronic Harassment

- Inappropriate WhatsApp messages
- Unwanted social media contact
- Sexual comments via email or messaging platforms
- Sharing sexually explicit content electronically

Abuse of Authority

- Offering preferred shifts, placements, or benefits in exchange for sexual favours
- Threatening adverse consequences if advances are rejected

These examples are not exhaustive. Any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment.

5. INFORMAL RESOLUTION

Where appropriate and when safe to do so, the affected person may:

- Tell the offender that the behaviour is unwelcome.
- Request that the behaviour stop immediately.
- Record details of the incident.

If the behaviour continues, submit a formal complaint to MHR.

MHR recognises that a person may choose not to pursue informal resolution where it is unsafe, inappropriate, or likely to cause further distress.

6. REPORTING

6.1 Reporting process

- Immediate safety and patient care take priority. A person does not need to confront the respondent before reporting a concern.
- Incidents should be reported to MHR as soon as reasonably possible.
- Delayed reporting will not automatically prevent MHR from assessing or investigating a complaint.
- Follow the client's incident-management and reporting processes where applicable, including any required client incident-reporting system.
- If applicable, prepare a written account of the incident and complete any required reporting documentation, including the relevant incident or grievance form.
- Reports should include available details of what occurred, when and where it occurred, the persons involved, any witnesses, and relevant supporting information. Preserve records, messages, photographs, and other evidence where appropriate.
- Where a patient is involved, illness, impairment, distress or a clinical condition may be relevant when assessing the incident. This does not remove the need to report the matter or implement appropriate safeguards.

6.2 Reporting channels

6.2.1 Anonymous reporting

A person who prefers to submit an anonymous complaint may do so through the MHR Anonymous Feedback Page ([Anonymous Feedback Page](#)).

Because anonymous reports do not include contact details, MHR may be limited in its ability to fully investigate the matter, obtain additional information, or provide feedback on the outcome.

6.2.2 Client and confidential reporting channels

Clients or MHR panel members who require support, follow-up or feedback are encouraged to report the matter using the designated regional reporting email addresses below:

- **MHR Central (Eastern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal and Northern Cape)**
events.central@mhr.co.za
- **MHR North (Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West)**
events.north@mhr.co.za
- **MHR Western Cape (all Southern and Western Cape locations)**
events.wc@mhr.co.za

Important: Where the complainant reasonably believes that the designated reporting channel presents a conflict of interest, the matter may be escalated to a senior MHR manager or another authorised reporting channel designated by MHR.

Reports will be handled subject to the confidentiality requirements in **section 8**.

7. INVESTIGATION PROCESS

Step	Procedure	Responsible party
Safety and urgent response	Address immediate risk, protect patient care and report the incident.	Affected person, witness, panel member or client manager on duty.
Record and assess	Record the report, assess the matter and determine immediate next steps.	MHR representative, with client input where applicable.
Investigate	Any person responsible for investigating a matter must disclose any actual or perceived conflict of interest and may be replaced where impartiality could reasonably be questioned. Gather relevant information; obtain statements; interview parties separately where appropriate; inform the respondent of the allegation; and provide a fair opportunity to respond. Consider and implement appropriate interim safeguards where reasonably necessary.	Designated investigator or MHR senior representative.
Findings and action	Assess information fairly and determine appropriate action within the relevant authority. Findings will be based on the available evidence and assessed on a balance of probabilities.	MHR senior representative, with Employee Relations and client input where appropriate.
Feedback and closure	Provide updates to relevant parties at reasonable intervals where appropriate. Communicate the outcome subject to procedural fairness and the confidentiality requirements in section 8. Monitor for retaliation where necessary.	MHR senior representative

8. SAFEGUARDS, CONFIDENTIALITY AND NON-RETALIATION

- MHR, together with the client, if applicable, may implement reasonable and proportionate temporary measures to protect affected persons, preserve the integrity of the investigation and maintain safe service delivery. These measures do not constitute a finding of misconduct.
- MHR will handle reports and investigation records as confidentially as reasonably possible. Information may be shared only where necessary to investigate, protect affected persons, comply with legal obligations, follow client processes or ensure procedural fairness.
- Records must be stored securely and accessed only by authorised persons.

- MHR must securely retain investigation records in accordance with applicable legal and privacy requirements.
 - Retaliation, intimidation, victimisation or interference is prohibited and may be investigated as a separate breach, regardless of the outcome of the original matter.
 - No panel member will be disadvantaged, penalised, victimised or lose future placement opportunities for reporting a concern or participating in an investigation in good faith. MHR will take reasonable steps to protect affected persons throughout the investigation process.
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9. OUTCOMES AND CONSEQUENCES

- Where an allegation is substantiated, MHR may take lawful and proportionate action, including counselling, training, warnings, placement restrictions, removal from placements, suspension, termination of the contractual relationship, referral to a professional body or referral to law enforcement.
 - Where the respondent is not an MHR panel member or employee, MHR will engage the relevant client, employer, professional body or other competent authority and implement any measures available within MHR's authority.
 - Where an allegation is not substantiated, MHR may consider whether any ongoing support or safeguards remain necessary. A finding that an allegation is not substantiated does not, by itself, mean that the complaint was false or malicious. MHR may address knowingly false or malicious allegations through applicable disciplinary or contractual processes.
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10. REVIEW OF OUTCOMES

A complainant or respondent who believes that a matter was not handled fairly, that relevant information was overlooked, or that a procedural irregularity occurred may submit a written request for review to MHR after being informed of the outcome and within the period specified in the applicable MHR grievance, disciplinary or contractual procedure.

The review will consider whether:

- the process was conducted fairly and impartially;
- relevant information was appropriately considered; and
- the outcome was reasonable based on the available evidence.

A review is not a re-investigation unless new material information that was not reasonably available during the original investigation becomes available, or a significant procedural concern is identified.

The outcome of the review will be communicated in writing and, where applicable, will constitute MHR's final internal decision.

11. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS AND LEGISLATIVE REFERENCES

Document/reference	Location/note
MHR Code of Conduct	MHR Policies and Documents Intranet Page
MHR Conduct Corrective Counselling	MHR Policies and Documents Intranet Page

MHR Grievance Form	MHR Policies and Documents Intranet Page
MHR Event Reporting and Management documents/policies	MHR Policies and Documents Intranet Page
Applicable client incident and safety procedures	Relevant client system/policy repository
Code of Good Practice on the Prevention and Elimination of Harassment in the Workplace, 2022, issued in terms of section 54(1)(b) of the Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998, Government Notice R1890, Government Gazette 46056, 18 March 2022 (Link: Code of Good Practice on the Prevention and Elimination of Harassment in the Workplace (2022)).	Department of Employment and Labour
Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, particularly the rights to equality, human dignity, privacy, freedom and security of the person, and fair labour practices.	South African legislation
Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998 (as amended), particularly section 6(3), recognises harassment, including sexual harassment, as unfair discrimination.	South African legislation
Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995	South African legislation
Occupational Health and Safety Act, 85 of 1993	South African legislation
Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 4 of 2000, where applicable.	South African legislation
Protection from Harassment Act, 17 of 2011, which provides legal remedies and protection orders for persons subjected to harassment.	South African legislation
Protection of Personal Information Act, 4 of 2013	South African legislation

12. HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL

Version	Effective date	Author/owner	Details of update
1.0	8 October 2026	MHR Operations Department	First version
Approved by		Alina van der Merwe	
Approved date		8 October 2026	
Next review date		This policy will be reviewed periodically and whenever legislative, regulatory or organisational changes require amendment.	