



Harassment Policy

Version: 2

Summary:	This document details the Institute of Fire Safety Managers (IFSM) policy on harassment, explaining the different types of harassment it includes and gives guidance and procedures on how incidences will be dealt with.	
Target Audience:	All Members, Staff and Council, Contractors.	
Next Review Date:	October 2027	
Approved by:	Management Team	25/10/24
Ratified by:	Council	14/11/24
Date issued:	October 2024	

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1. Purpose

This policy outlines the stance of the Institute regarding all forms of harassment in the workplace, including but not limited to sexual, racial, religious, and personal harassment. The organisation is committed to maintaining an environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Any form of harassment is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This policy is enacted under the By-Laws of the Institute.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, council members, contractors, members, volunteers, and anyone affiliated with the Institute in connection with their professional duties. It covers harassment occurring in the workplace, during any work-related events, and on social or digital media platforms. It should be read alongside the following Institute policies available publicly on the Institute's website:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Ethics Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Digital & Social Media Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

3. Definitions of Harassment

3.1. Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. This includes verbal or physical actions, sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and inappropriate remarks or gestures.

3.2. Racial Harassment: Any unwelcome conduct based on race, ethnicity, or national origin that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment.

3.3. Religious Harassment: Offensive behaviour, comments, or actions that are based on someone's religious beliefs or lack thereof.

3.4. Personal Harassment: Unwelcome behaviour that is not specifically related to gender, race, or religion, but which is offensive, intimidating, or humiliating. This may include bullying, threatening behaviour, or any form of abusive treatment.

3.5. Verbal harassment refers to the use of words, comments, or statements intended to insult, demean, or intimidate another person. It can include name-calling, offensive jokes, threats, or any other language that causes emotional harm or creates a hostile environment for the individual being targeted.

4. Responsibilities

Council, the management team and line managers have a responsibility to foster a work environment free from harassment and to take immediate action when complaints are raised. They must ensure that all allegations are treated seriously, confidentially, and in line with the company's procedures.

Employees, Members and all individuals affiliated with the Institute are responsible for behaving in a manner that respects others and adheres to the Institute's policies. This includes reporting any observed harassment or inappropriate behaviour.

5. Harassment on Social and Digital Media

Harassment that occurs on social media or digital platforms in connection with work or professional activities is also covered by this policy. Any inappropriate behaviour online that reflects negatively on the organisation or targets other members or colleagues will be subject to disciplinary action. Please refer to the Social and Digital Media Policy for full guidance.

6. Reporting Procedure

Informal Resolution: In some cases, the individual experiencing harassment may choose to address the situation directly with the person involved. If this is not possible or does not resolve the issue, a formal complaint should be filed.

Formal Complaints: Individuals experiencing harassment may submit a formal complaint to reportit@ifsm.org.uk and copy in their line manager. The complaint must include details of the incident(s), including dates, times, and any witnesses.

Investigation: All formal complaints will be thoroughly investigated in a confidential manner. Both parties involved will be given the opportunity to provide statements. The investigation will be conducted impartially and promptly. Allegations made against an employee will follow the Institute's grievance and / or disciplinary procedures. Allegations against a member or Institute official will follow the procedures set out in the Institute's code of conduct.

Serious or systemic concerns relating to bullying or harassment may also be raised under the IFSM Whistleblowing Policy.

7. Consequences of Harassment

If harassment is found to have occurred, disciplinary actions will be taken, which may include:

- Verbal or written warnings
- Suspension or termination of employment or membership
- Reporting to external authorities, if required by law

8. Support for Affected Individuals

Individuals who experience harassment will have access to support services, which may include counselling, mediation, or any other resources deemed appropriate by the Institute. In instances where false reports of harassment have been made no disciplinary action will be taken if no malice was intended. Reporting concerns in good faith is encouraged; however, deliberately false or malicious reports will not be tolerated.

9. Confidentiality

All harassment complaints and investigations will be handled confidentially, and information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis to protect the privacy of all individuals involved. Complaints will be logged electronically in a secure area.

Version Control

Change Record

Date	Author	Version	Page	Reason for Change
08/04/26	H Hilton	2	4	Reference made to Whistleblowing policy for serious or systemic concerns (Employment Rights Act 2025)

Reviewers/contributors

Name	Position	Version Reviewed & Date