

# What is the difference between sex discrimination and sexual harassment?

Sex discrimination is a behavior that occurs when an employer makes a work-related decision based on an employee's gender. It can also occur when someone is treated differently because of his or her gender.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VII applies to private employers, most public employers, labor organizations, employment agencies and joint employer-union apprenticeship programs with 15 or more employees.

There are other terms relating to sexual harassment as well:

- › Sexism: An attitude that one gender is superior to another.
- › Subtle sexual harassment: A behavior that is not recognized by a law. When not corrected, subtle sexual harassment can turn into sexual harassment.
- › Quid pro quo harassment: When an employer's work-related decision is based on whether or not an employee accepts or rejects unwelcome sexual advances.
- › Hostile work environment: An environment in which an employee does not feel safe or welcome because of pervasive sexual behavior.

## Resources

United Nations: [www.un.org/womenwatch](http://www.un.org/womenwatch)

U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission: [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov)

Equal Rights Advocates: [www.equalrights.org](http://www.equalrights.org)

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