



Focus on Harassment

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Focus on Harassment

From Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

The Focus series is a collection of reports that present the results of the 2017 Public Service Employee Annual Survey (PSEAS), broken down by theme. Focus on Harassment looks at results related to harassment and examines how they relate to results for other aspects of the workplace.

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Background

Under the [Policy on Harassment Prevention and Resolution](#), deputy heads are responsible for protecting employees from harassment by establishing and maintaining a respectful and harassment-free workplace and by responding to all forms of harassment. The PSEAS is one tool that helps gauge whether Government of Canada workplaces are free of harassment.

Overall results

Incidence of harassment

22% of employees indicated that they had been the victim of harassment on the job in the past 2 years.

Sources of harassment

Among employees who indicated that they had been the victim of harassment, more than half (64%) identified individuals with authority over them as a source of harassment.

Table 1 shows the results for the sources of harassment experienced by employees.

Table 1: source(s) of harassment

Question number	Source(s)	Result
15(a)	Co-workers	50%
15(b)	Individuals with authority over me	64%
15(c)	Individuals working for me	7%
15(d)	Individuals for whom I have custodial responsibility (for example, inmates, offenders, patients, detainees)	5%
15(e)	Individuals from other departments or agencies	6%
15(f)	Members of the public (individuals or organizations)	10%
<p>* _ Figures will not add up to 100% because respondents could indicate more than one source.</p>		

Key observations

The following observations do not necessarily indicate relationships of cause and effect, but they may provide insight into some of the connections between harassment and different aspects of the workplace.

<p>▼ In this section</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Psychological health of workplace ◦ Immediate supervisor ◦ Awareness of mental health ◦ Respect ◦ Innovation ◦ Discrimination ◦ Work-related stress and emotional exhaustion ◦ Satisfaction with organization
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Psychological health of workplace

Employees who indicated that their workplace was psychologically healthy were less likely to indicate that they had been harassed on the job in the past 2 years.

11% of employees who described their workplace as being psychologically healthy indicated that they had been harassed, compared with 47% for employees who did not describe their workplace as psychologically healthy.

Immediate supervisor

Employees who had positive perceptions of their immediate supervisor were less likely to indicate

that they had experienced harassment on the job in the past 2 years.

Only 16% of employees who agreed that their immediate supervisor creates an environment where they feel free to discuss matters that affect their well-being at work also indicated that they had been harassed, compared with 52% for employees who disagreed.

In addition, only 16% of employees who agreed that their immediate supervisor seems to care about them as a person indicated that they had been harassed, compared with 53% for those who disagreed.

Awareness of mental health

Employees who indicated that their organization does a good job of raising awareness of mental health in the workplace were less likely to indicate that they had been the victim of harassment on the job in the past 2 years.

Specifically, 15% of employees who agreed that their department or agency does a good job of raising awareness of mental health in the workplace indicated that they had been the victim of harassment, compared with 46% for employees who did not agree.

Respect

Employees who felt that their organization treats them with respect were less likely to indicate that they had experienced harassment on the job in the past 2 years.

14% of employees who agreed that their organization treats them with respect indicated that they had been harassed, compared with 53% for employees who disagreed.

Innovation

Employees who felt they had support for being innovative were less likely to indicate that they had experienced harassment on the job in the past 2 years.

15% of employees who agreed that they are encouraged to be innovative or to take initiative in their work indicated that they had been harassed, compared with 43% for employees who did not feel that they are encouraged to be innovative.

14% of employees who agreed that they would be supported if they proposed a new idea, even though it might not work, indicated that they had been harassed on the job in the past 2 years, compared with 42% for employees who did not believe they would be supported.

Discrimination

Employees who experienced discrimination on the job in the past 2 years were more likely to have also experienced harassment on the job during that period.

Specifically, 66% of employees who experienced discrimination also experienced harassment, compared with 16% for employees who indicated that they had not experienced discrimination.

In addition, 38% of employees who experienced harassment on the job in the past 2 years also experienced discrimination, compared with only 5% for employees who indicated that they had not been harassed.

Work-related stress and emotional exhaustion

Employees who experienced harassment on the job in the past 2 years were more likely to report high levels of work-related stress and emotional exhaustion.

Specifically, 54% of employees who had been harassed at work in the past 2 years indicated that their work-related stress was “high” or “very high,” compared with 29% for employees who had not been harassed.

In addition, 55% of employees who had been harassed at work in the past 2 years indicated that they “always / almost always” or “often” felt emotionally drained at the end of their workday, compared with 27% for employees who had not been harassed.

Satisfaction with organization

Employees who experienced harassment on the job in the past 2 years tended to report lower levels of satisfaction with their organization.

Only 41% of employees who indicated that they had been harassed at work in the past 2 years agreed that they were satisfied with their department or agency, compared with 72% for employees who had not been harassed.

Demographic results

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Employment equity group

Women

Women were more likely than men to indicate that they had experienced harassment on the job in the past 2 years (23% compared with 20%).

Among employees who indicated that they had been harassed, women were less likely than men to indicate that they had been harassed by a superior, but more likely than men to indicate that they had been harassed by a co-worker.

Table 2 shows the results for sources of harassment for women and for men.

Table 2: source(s) of harassment for women and men

Question number	Source(s)	Women *	Men *
15(a)	Co-workers	52%	48%
15(b)	Individuals with authority over me	62%	68%
15(c)	Individuals working for me	7%	9%
15(d)	Individuals for whom I have custodial responsibility (for example, inmates, offenders, patients, detainees)	4%	8%
15(e)	Individuals from other departments or agencies	5%	8%
15(f)	Members of the public (individuals or organizations)	9%	11%
<hr/> * - Figures will not add up to 100% because respondents could indicate more than one source.			

Visible minority employees

Similar proportions of visible minority employees and other employees indicated that they had been the victim of harassment on the job in the past 2 years (22% and 21%, respectively).

Among employees who indicated that they had been harassed, visible minority employees were slightly more likely than other employees to indicate that they had been harassed by members of the public.

Table 3 shows the results for sources of harassment for visible minority employees and for other employees.

Table 3: source(s) of harassment for visible minority employees and other employees

Question number	Source(s)	Visible minority employees *	Other employees *
15(a)	Co-workers	51%	50%
15(b)	Individuals with authority over me	66%	64%
15(c)	Individuals working for me	7%	8%
15(d)	Individuals for whom I have custodial responsibility (for example, inmates, offenders, patients, detainees)	4%	6%
<hr/> * - Figures do not add up to 100% because respondents could indicate more than one source.			

Question number	Source(s)	Visible minority employees *	Other employees *
15(e)	Individuals from other departments or agencies	6%	6%
15(f)	Members of the public (individuals or organizations)	12%	9%
<hr/> * - Figures do not add up to 100% because respondents could indicate more than one source.			

Aboriginal employees

Aboriginal employees were more likely than other employees to indicate that they had been the victim of harassment on the job in the past 2 years (33% and 21%, respectively).

Among employees who indicated that they had been the victim of harassment, Aboriginal employees were more likely than other employees to indicate that the harassment was from co-workers or from individuals for whom they have custodial responsibility.

Table 4 shows the results for sources of harassment for Aboriginal employees and for other employees.

Table 4: source(s) of harassment for Aboriginal employees and other employees

Question number	Source(s)	Aboriginal employees *	Other employees *
15(a)	Co-workers	55%	50%
15(b)	Individuals with authority over me	64%	64%
15(c)	Individuals working for me	7%	7%
15(d)	Individuals for whom I have custodial responsibility (for example, inmates, offenders, patients, detainees)	8%	5%
15(e)	Individuals from other departments or agencies	8%	6%
15(f)	Members of the public (individuals or organizations)	12%	10%
<hr/> * - Figures will not add up to 100% because respondents could indicate more than one source.			

Employees with a disability

Employees with a disability were twice as likely as other employees to indicate that they had been the

victim of harassment on the job in the past 2 years (40% and 20%, respectively).

Among employees who indicated that they had experienced harassment, those with a disability were much more likely than other employees to identify individuals with authority over them as a source of harassment.

Table 5 shows the results for sources of harassment for employees with a disability and for other employees.

Table 5: source(s) of harassment for employees with a disability and other employees

Question number	Source(s)	Employees with a disability [*]	Other employees [*]
15(a)	Co-workers	52%	50%
15(b)	Individuals with authority over me	75%	63%
15(c)	Individuals working for me	6%	8%
15(d)	Individuals for whom I have custodial responsibility (for example, inmates, offenders, patients, detainees)	5%	5%
15(e)	Individuals from other departments or agencies	7%	6%
15(f)	Members of the public (individuals or organizations)	11%	10%
<hr/> <p>* Figures will not add up to 100% because respondents could indicate more than one source.</p> <hr/>			

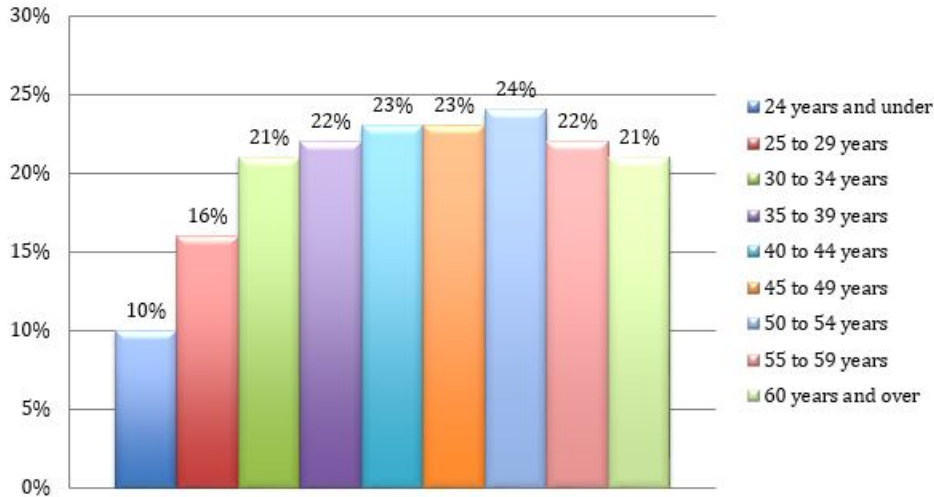
Age

Incidence of harassment

Younger employees, especially those aged 24 and under, were less likely than older employees to indicate that they had been the victim of harassment on the job in the past 2 years.

Figure 1 shows the results for the incidence of harassment by age.

Figure 1: incidence of harassment by age



▼ Figure 1 - Text version

Figure 1: incidence of harassment by age

24 years and under	25 to 29 years	30 to 34 years	35 to 39 years	40 to 44 years	45 to 49 years	50 to 54 years	55 to 59 years	60 years and over
10%	16%	21%	22%	23%	23%	24%	22%	21%

Source of harassment

Among employees who indicated that they had been the victim of harassment, those who are younger, especially those aged 24 and under, were more likely to identify co-workers or members of the public as sources of harassment. Older employees were more likely to identify individuals with authority over them or individuals working for them as sources of harassment.

Table 6 shows the results for sources of harassment by age.

Table 6: source(s) of harassment by age

Question number	Sources	Age group *								
		24 years and under	25 to 29 years	30 to 34 years	35 to 39 years	40 to 44 years	45 to 49 years	50 to 54 years	55 to 59 years	60 years and over
15(a)	Co-workers	66%	59%	56%	52%	51%	49%	47%	46%	47%

*
- Figures will not add up to 100% because respondents could indicate more than one source.

Question number	Sources	Age group *								
		24 years and under	25 to 29 years	30 to 34 years	35 to 39 years	40 to 44 years	45 to 49 years	50 to 54 years	55 to 59 years	60 years and over
15(b)	Individuals with authority over me	45%	57%	62%	64%	65%	66%	67%	66%	64%
15(c)	Individuals working for me	2%	3%	5%	7%	8%	8%	9%	8%	7%
15(d)	Individuals for whom I have custodial responsibility (for example, inmates, offenders, patients, detainees)	1%	7%	11%	8%	7%	5%	4%	2%	2%
15(e)	Individuals from other departments or agencies	7%	6%	7%	6%	6%	7%	6%	6%	7%
15(f)	Members of the public (individuals or organizations)	15%	14%	13%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	8%
<p>* Figures will not add up to 100% because respondents could indicate more than one source.</p>										

Years of service

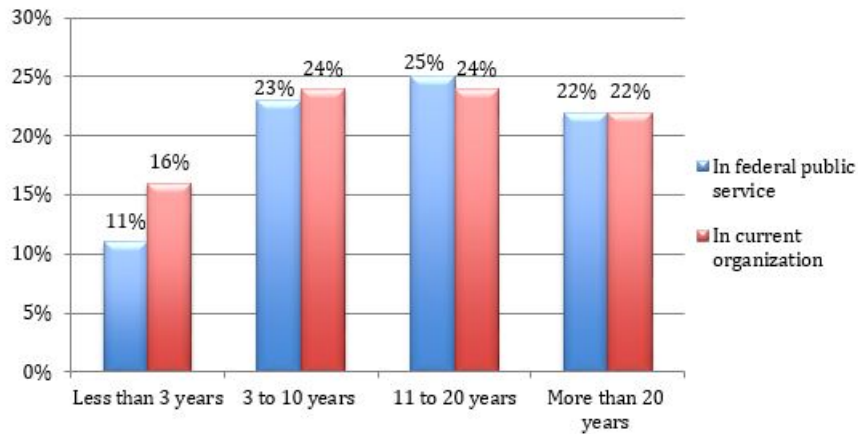
Incidence of harassment

Employees with 3 or more years of service in both the federal public service and in their department or agency had similar incidences of harassment. However, the incidence of harassment was lower for employees with less than 3 years of service in their current organization, and lower still for employees with less than 3 years in the federal public service.

Figure 2 shows the incidence of harassment by years of service.

Figure 2: harassment by years of service

Figure 2: harassment by years of service



▼ Figure 2 - Text version

Figure 2: harassment by years of service

Years of service	less than 3 years	3 to 10 years	11 to 20 years	More than 20 years
In federal public service	11%	23%	25%	22%
In current organization	16%	24%	24%	22%

Source of harassment

Employees with fewer than 3 years of service in their current organization or in the federal public service were more likely than employees with more years of service to identify co-workers as a source of harassment, and less likely to identify individuals with authority over them as a source of harassment.

Similarly, co-workers was the most commonly cited source of harassment for employees with fewer than 3 years of service in the federal public service, whereas individuals with authority was the most common cited source of harassment for all other employees. Also, as expected, employees with more than 20 years of service in either the federal public service or in their current organization were more likely than employees with fewer years of service to identify individuals working for them as a source of harassment.

Table 7 shows the results for sources of harassment by years of service.

Table 7: source(s) of harassment by years of service

Question number	Source(s)	Years in federal public service *				Years in current organization *			
		Less than 3 years	3 to 10 years	11 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Less than 3 years	3 to 10 years	11 to 20 years	More than 20 years
15(a)	Co-workers	60%	54%	48%	45%	53%	52%	48%	44%
15(b)	Individuals with authority over me	49%	62%	68%	67%	60%	64%	68%	65%
15(c)	Individuals working for me	3%	6%	8%	10%	5%	6%	9%	12%
15(d)	Individuals for whom I have custodial responsibility (for example, inmates, offenders, patients, detainees)	3%	7%	5%	4%	2%	6%	6%	4%
15(e)	Individuals from other departments or agencies	6%	6%	6%	6%	8%	6%	6%	6%
15(f)	Members of the public (individuals or organizations)	12%	11%	9%	9%	9%	9%	10%	10%
<p>* _ Figures will not add up to 100% because respondents could indicate more than one source.</p>									

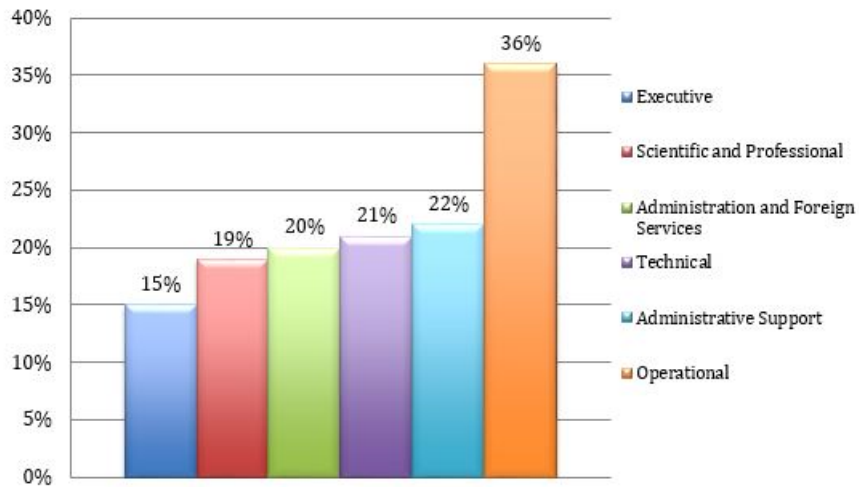
Occupational category

Incidence of harassment

Employees in the Executive category were the least likely to indicate that they had been the victim of harassment on the job in the past 2 years; employees in the Operational category were more than twice as likely as employees in the Executive category to indicate that they had been harassed on the job during that period.

Figure 3 shows the incidence of harassment by occupational category.

Figure 3: harassment by occupational category



▼ Figure 3 - Text version

Figure 3: harassment by occupational category

Executive	Scientific and professional	Administration and Foreign Services	Technical	Administrative Support	Operational
15%	19%	20%	21%	22%	36%

Source of harassment

The source of harassment most commonly indicated by employees in all occupational categories was individuals with authority over them, and Operational employees indicated this source the most often.

Employees in the Operational occupational category were also more likely to identify individuals for whom they have custodial responsibility as a source of harassment. Employees in the Administrative Support category were the most likely to report co-workers as a source of harassment, and employees in the Executive category were the most likely to identify individuals working for them as a source of harassment.

Table 8 shows the sources of harassment by occupational category. See Appendix 1 for a listing of occupational groups in each occupational category.

Table 8: source(s) of harassment by occupational category

Question number	Source(s)	Category *					
		Executive	Scientific and Professional	Administration and Foreign Services	Technical	Administrative Support	Operational

* Figures will not add up to 100% because respondents could indicate more than one source.

Question number	Source(s)	Category *					
		Executive	Scientific and Professional	Administration and Foreign Services	Technical	Administrative Support	Operati
15(a)	Co-workers	27%	43%	49%	51%	59%	57%
15(b)	Individuals with authority over me	66%	66%	64%	62%	59%	69%
15(c)	Individuals working for me	21%	6%	7%	7%	3%	10%
15(d)	Individuals for whom I have custodial responsibility (for example, inmates, offenders, patients, detainees)	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	21%
15(e)	Individuals from other departments or agencies	5%	5%	6%	8%	6%	9%
15(f)	Members of the public (individuals or organizations)	5%	7%	9%	12%	7%	14%

* Figures will not add up to 100% because respondents could indicate more than one source.

Supervisory status

Incidence of harassment

Supervisors were slightly less likely than non-supervisors to indicate they were the victim of harassment on the job in the past 2 years (20% and 22%, respectively).

Source of harassment

Supervisors were less likely than non-supervisors to report individuals with authority over them and co-workers as sources of harassment. Supervisors were much more likely than non-supervisors to report individuals working for them as a source of harassment.

Table 9 shows the sources of harassment by supervisory status.

Table 9: source(s) of harassment by supervisory status

Question number	Source(s)	Supervisor %	Non-supervisor %
15(a)	Co-workers	40%	53%
15(b)	Individuals with authority over me	60%	65%
15(c)	Individuals working for me	24%	3%
15(d)	Individuals for whom I have custodial responsibility (for example, inmates, offenders, patients, detainees)	2%	6%
15(e)	Individuals from other departments or agencies	7%	6%
15(f)	Members of the public (individuals or organizations)	6%	10%

* Figures will not add up to 100% because respondents could indicate more than one source.

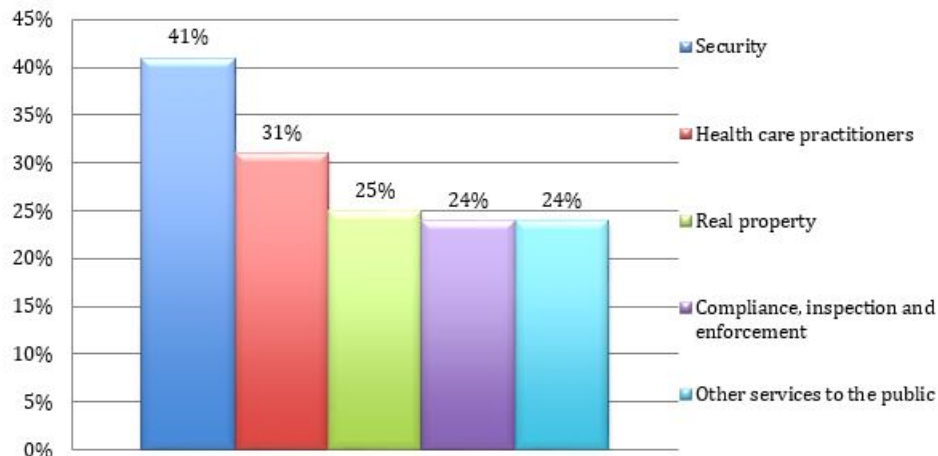
Community

Incidence of harassment

The survey asked employees to indicate the community with which they most closely identify. Employees who identified with the security community were the most likely to indicate that they had been the victim of harassment on the job in the past 2 years, followed by those who identified as health care practitioners.

Figure 4 shows the results of the 5 communities with the highest incidence of employees experiencing harassment.

Figure 4: harassment by community (top 5)



▼ Figure 4 - Text version

Figure 4: harassment by community (top 5)

Security	Health care practitioners	Real property	Compliance, inspection and enforcement	Other services to the public
41%	31%	25%	24%	24%

Source of harassment

Employees in the security, real property, other services to the public and compliance, inspection and enforcement communities most often reported individuals with authority over them as a source of harassment. Employees who identified with the health care practitioners community most often reported co-workers as a source of harassment.

Table 10 shows the results for sources of harassment for the 5 communities with the highest incidence of employees experiencing harassment.

Table 10: source(s) of harassment by community (top 5)

Question number	Source(s)	Community *				
		Security	Healthcare practitioners	Real property	Compliance, inspection and enforcement	Other services to the public
15(a)	Co-workers	60%	55%	45%	48%	52%
15(b)	Individuals with authority over me	71%	54%	66%	66%	61%
15(c)	Individuals working for me	9%	8%	11%	5%	8%
15(d)	Individuals for whom I have custodial responsibility (e.g., inmates, offenders, patients, detainees)	37%	16%	n/a **	4%	3%
15(e)	Individuals from other departments or agencies	9%	8%	12%	4%	6%

* Figures will not add up to 100% because respondents could indicate more than one source.

** Not applicable. Data are suppressed to protect the confidentiality of responses.

Question number	Source(s)	Community *				
		Security	Healthcare practitioners	Real property	Compliance, inspection and enforcement	Other services to the public
15(f)	Members of the public (individuals or organizations)	15%	9%	5%	19%	16%

* Figures will not add up to 100% because respondents could indicate more than one source.

** Not applicable. Data are suppressed to protect the confidentiality of responses.

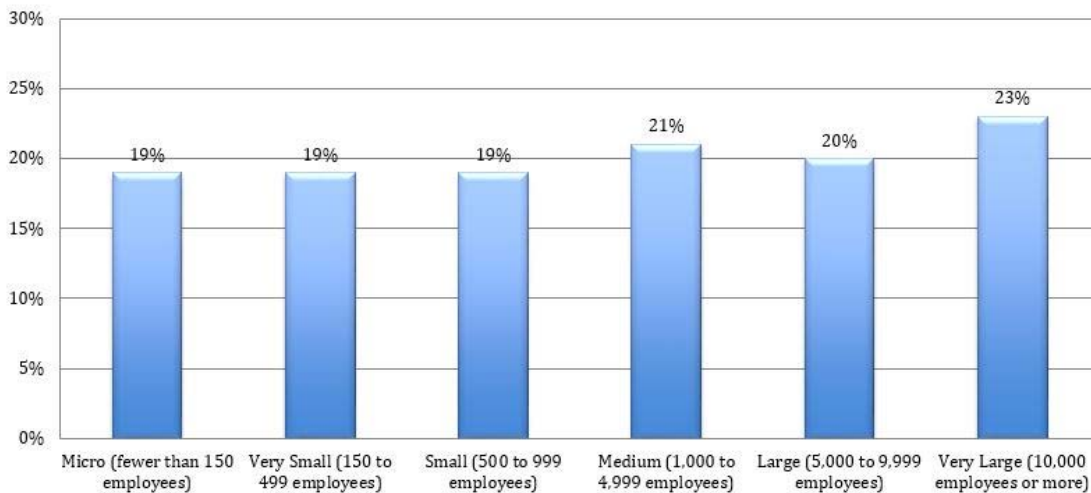
Size of organization

Incidence of harassment

Employees in very large organizations were the most likely to report being the victim of harassment on the job in the past 2 years.

Figure 5 shows the results for harassment by size of organization. See Appendix 2 for a listing of departments and agencies by size of organization.

Figure 5: harassment by size of organization



▼ Figure 5 - Text version

Figure 5: harassment by size of organization

Micro †	Very small †	Small †	Medium †	Large †	Very Large †
19%	19%	19%	21%	20%	23%
<hr/> * - Micro (fewer than 150 employees) Very small (150 to 499 employees) Small (500 to 999) Medium (1,000 to 4,999 employees) Large (5,000 to 9,999 employees) Very Large (10,000 employees or more)					

Source of harassment

In all sizes of organizations, the source of harassment most commonly indicated by employees was individuals with authority over them; and employees in micro organizations indicated this source most often. Employees in very large organizations were the most likely to cite members of the public as a source of harassment.

Table 11 shows the results for sources of harassment by size of organization.

Table 11: source(s) of harassment by size of organization

Question number	Source(s)	Size of organization †					
		Micro	Very small	Small	Medium	Large	Very large
15(a)	Co-workers	51%	48%	51%	47%	48%	52%
15(b)	Individuals with authority over me	69%	67%	61%	66%	63%	65%
15(c)	Individuals working for me	5%	5%	6%	7%	8%	7%
15(d)	Individuals for whom I have custodial responsibility (for example, inmates, offenders, patients, detainees)	n/a **	0%	n/a **	1%	1%	9%
15(e)	Individuals from other departments or agencies	6%	4%	4%	6%	6%	7%
15(f)	Members of the public	8%	4%	6%	7%	8%	12%

Question number	Source(s)	Size of organization [†]					
		Micro	Very small	Small	Medium	Large	Very large
* _	Figures will not add up to 100% because respondents could indicate more than one source. Micro (fewer than 150 employees) Very small (150 to 499 employees) Small (500 to 999 employees) Medium (1,000 to 4,999 employees) Large (5,000 to 9,999 employees) Very Large (10,000 employees or more)						
** _	Not applicable. Data are suppressed to protect the confidentiality of responses.						

Methodological notes

Throughout this report, the totals used to calculate the percentages are based on the following and do not include the responses “Don’t know” and “Not applicable”:

- the sum of “Strongly agree” and “Somewhat agree” responses
- the sum of “Always / Almost always” and “Often” responses
- the sum of “Very high” and “High” responses

For additional results, consult the [Public service employee surveys website](#).

Appendix

<p>▼ In this section</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Appendix 1: Occupational categories ◦ Appendix 2: Organizations by size

Appendix 1: Occupational categories

Occupational category	Occupational group
Executive	CIEXC, DE (NFB), DM, EC (CRA), EX, EXPCX, GR-EX, MGT (CNSC), MGT (NRC), REX, RLE
Scientific and Professional	AC, AG, AR, AU, BI, CH, CISPC, DE, DS, EC, ED, EN, ES, FO, HR, LC, LIB, LP, LS, MA, MD, MT, ND, NU, OP, PC, PH, PM-MCO, PS, RCO, RO (NRC), SE, SG, SI, SP (NFB), SW, UT, VM

Occupational category	Occupational group
Administration and Foreign Services	AD (NFB), AS, CO, CS, FI, FS, HR/RH (CRA), IS, OM, PE, PG, PM, SP (CRA), TR, WP
Technical	AI, AO, CIPTC, DD, EG, EL, EU, GT, PI, PY, RO, SO, TC, TI, TO
Administrative Support	AD (NRC), AS (NFB), CIASC, CM, CR, DA, OE, ST
Operational	CX, FB, FR, GL, GS, HP, HS, LI, OP (NFB), OP (NRC), PO-IMA, PO-TCO, PR, SC, SR
Other	AB, CIPTC, Governor in Council Appointees, GR, IM, MG, Other, RE, REG, Students

Appendix 2: Organizations by size

Micro (fewer than 150 employees)

- Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat
- Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency
- Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP
- Copyright Board Canada
- The Correctional Investigator Canada
- Farm Products Council of Canada
- Financial Consumer Agency of Canada
- Indian Oil and Gas Canada
- International Joint Commission
- Military Grievances External Review Committee
- Military Police Complaints Commission of Canada
- Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada
- Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada
- Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada
- Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner of Canada
- Patented Medicine Prices Review Board
- Polar Knowledge Canada
- RCMP External Review Committee
- Status of Women Canada
- Veterans Review and Appeal Board

Very small (150 to 499 employees)

- Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada
- Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
- Canadian Grain Commission
- Canadian Human Rights Commission
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research
- Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission
- Canadian Transportation Agency
- Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario
- Infrastructure Canada

- National Film Board
- Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council
- Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages
- Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada
- Office of the Secretary to the Governor General
- Parole Board of Canada
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
- Transportation Safety Board of Canada

Small (500 to 999 employees)

- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
- Canada School of Public Service
- Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission
- Canadian Space Agency
- Courts Administration Service
- Department of Finance Canada
- Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
- Library and Archives Canada
- Privy Council Office
- Public Prosecution Service of Canada
- Public Service Commission of Canada

Medium (1,000 to 4,999 employees)

- Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
- National Research Council Canada
- Natural Resources Canada
- Parks Canada
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Public Safety Canada
- Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat
- Veterans Affairs Canada

Large (5,000 to 9,999 employees)

- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency
- Department of Justice Canada
- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Health Canada
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Shared Services Canada
- Statistics Canada
- Transport Canada

Very large (10,000 employees or more)

- Canada Border Services Agency
- Canada Revenue Agency

- Correctional Service Canada
- Department of National Defence
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Public Services and Procurement Canada

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