

TRAINING COMPLIANCE · CHECKLIST COMPANION

Supervisor Onboarding

How to onboard a new supervisor so they protect your people, your organization, and themselves. The reasoning behind each step on the one-page checklist.

TRAINING COMPLIANCE

SUPERVISORS

LIABILITY

Why It Matters

A promotion changes the exposure

Moving someone into supervision changes their legal exposure and yours. Supervisors are the people who receive complaints, and in a growing number of states they face potential personal liability if they mishandle them.

Under *Faragher* and *Ellerth*, an employer can be vicariously liable for a supervisor's harassment. Where no tangible employment action was taken, the employer may raise an affirmative defense, and its first element is that the employer exercised reasonable care to prevent and correct promptly any harassing behavior. Supervisor training is a core part of that showing. Getting onboarding right is both a compliance step and a genuine act of support for the new leader.

Screen and prepare before day one

Confirm a background and reference check appropriate to the role, and assemble a supervisor-specific policy packet covering anti-harassment, anti-retaliation, and complaint-handling duties. The goal is that the new supervisor starts with the standards already in hand, not weeks later.

Train for the role they are stepping into

Provide supervisor-level harassment-prevention training on or near the start date, including any state-mandated supervisor content, and make it practical: how to recognize, receive, and escalate a complaint, and how to avoid retaliation. Be explicit about personal exposure. Some states, Texas among them, have opened the door to individual liability for supervisors, and courts there are still defining how far it reaches. Cover any mandatory-reporting duties that apply in your setting as well.

Set expectations and capture the record

Review boundaries and conduct standards, including a two-adult rule where relevant, and walk through every reporting channel, including the neutral hotline, so the supervisor knows where to send a concern. Then close the loop: a dated acknowledgment of policy and training, a completion entry in the roster, and a scheduled follow-up and refresher. Those records are what evidence reasonable care later.

WHY THE PAPERWORK MATTERS

A signed acknowledgment and a training roster entry are small tasks that carry real weight. Together they are part of the documented program that supports the affirmative defense, and they make the new supervisor's responsibilities unambiguous from day one.

At a Glance

The checklist, step by step

The companion checkbox sheet walks through these 12 steps. Use the sheet in the moment; use this companion to understand the why behind each move.

BEFORE DAY ONE

- ☐ **1 Confirm a background and reference check appropriate to the role.**
- ☐ **2 Prepare the supervisor-specific policy packet.**
Anti-harassment, anti-retaliation, and complaint-handling duties.

TRAIN AND EQUIP

- ☐ **3 Provide supervisor-level harassment-prevention training on or near the start date.**
Include any state-mandated supervisor content.
- ☐ **4 Cover how to recognize, receive, and escalate complaints.**
- ☐ **5 Cover the prohibition on retaliation and how to avoid it.**
- ☐ **6 Explain personal liability where it applies.**
In Texas, for example, supervisors face potential individual liability under SB 45, with courts still defining its scope.
- ☐ **7 Explain mandatory-reporting duties where relevant.**
For example, minors, healthcare settings, or ministry contexts.

SET EXPECTATIONS & DOCUMENT

- ☐ **8 Review boundaries and conduct standards.**
Include the two-adult rule where it applies.
- ☐ **9 Walk through every reporting channel, including the neutral hotline.**
- ☐ **10 Have the supervisor sign a dated acknowledgment of policy and training.**
- ☐ **11 Record completion in the training roster.**
- ☐ **12 Schedule a follow-up check-in and a periodic refresher.**

WHERE EMPATHIHR FITS

We deliver supervisor-level training that satisfies state mandates, run the neutral reporting hotline your supervisors escalate into, and maintain the records that evidence the program. **Schedule a compliance assessment · 866.240.6618 · empathihr.com**

Important

About this companion

Educational information, not legal advice. This companion is provided by empathiHR for general educational purposes. It is not legal advice and does not create an attorney–client or consultant–client relationship. Employment law changes frequently and varies by jurisdiction, industry, and the specific facts of each situation.

Supervisor training mandates, mandatory–reporting duties, and the availability of individual liability all vary by jurisdiction and are unsettled in places. Before acting on anything in this companion, review your policies, programs, and specific circumstances with qualified employment counsel. empathiHR works alongside your legal counsel to build and maintain the operational program described here.

Case citations, statutes, and figures were current as of the update date on the cover and should be re–verified against primary sources before you rely on them. Where the law is unsettled or a figure is not fixed by statute, this companion says so.



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