

Amendment to New York State Human Rights Law Establishes Toll-Free Confidential Hotline For Workplace Sexual Harassment Complaints

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An amendment to the New York State Human Rights Law is set to go into effect on July 14, 2022. The new law directs the New York State Division of Human Rights (Division) to operate a toll-free confidential hotline, during regular business hours, which will provide counsel and assistance to individuals with complaints of workplace sexual harassment. The Division is required to recruit attorneys who have experience in handling sexual harassment matters to provide advice and legal services—on a pro-bono basis—to hotline callers. It should be noted, that participating attorneys are prohibited from soliciting or permitting their employees to solicit on the attorney's behalf, "further representation of any individuals they advise through the hotline relating to discussed sexual harassment complaint."

The Division will also be responsible for working with the Department of Labor to ensure public knowledge of the hotline. Employers will be required to include information about the hotline in any materials they provide to their employees regarding sexual harassment. At this time, the hotline is limited to sexual harassment complaints occurring in the workplace, and does not extend to other forms of discrimination/harassment protected by the New York State Human Rights Law.

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