



PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION

VBHC is an equal employment opportunity company and is committed to provide a safe and conducive work environment to its employees and expects them to combine "Expertise with responsibility". Towards this it is essential that each employee deals with their colleagues and third parties with full fairness and respect and realize that his/her behavior will be attributed to the company and can affect its inward and outward reputation.

Under the corporate compliance, harassment of any kind including sexual harassment is forbidden. Every employee has the right to be protected against harassment, regardless of whether the accused considers his/her own behavior to be normal or acceptable and of whether the harassed person has the opportunity to avoid the harassment.

VBHC is committed to create a healthy work environment that enables employees to work without fear of prejudice, gender bias and sexual harassment. The Company also believes that all employees of the Company have the right to be treated with dignity. Sexual harassment at the workplace or other than workplace if involving employees is a grave offence and is, therefore, punishable.

The VBHC Sexual Harassment Policy has been formed to prohibit, prevent or deter the commission of acts of sexual harassment at workplace and to provide the procedures for the redressal of complaints pertaining to sexual harassment and to comply the provisions of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and Rules framed thereunder (hereinafter referred to as "Act").

APPLICABILITY

Without prejudice to the provisions contained in the Act, the policy extends to all VBHC employees, co-workers, contract workers, probationer, trainee,



apprentice including a contractor working with Corporate/ Registered office & all offices operating in India which is controlled by VBHC for carrying on operations.

The Policy is deemed to be incorporated in the service condition of all employees and comes into effect immediately.

Where Sexual Harassment occurs to any employee of the Company as a result of an act by a third party or an outsider while on official duty, the Company will take all necessary and reasonable steps to assist the affected person in terms of support and preventive action.

DEFINITION

1. **Aggrieved Person or Complainant** means a person in relation to workplace whether employed or not, who alleges to have been subject to any act of sexual harassment by the Respondent.
2. **Appellate Authority** shall for the purposes of this Policy, mean such person of the Company appointed/nominated by the Board of Directors to be the Appellate Authority from, time to time, who will adjudicate on any appeals preferred on the order passed by the Internal Committee on a complaint filed by the Aggrieved person. The details of Appellate Authority is mentioned in *Annexure -A*.
3. **Company** means VBHC Value Homes Private Limited (VBHC) including its subsidiaries, Joint Ventures and associate Companies.
4. **Chairperson** means the person who presides over the meetings of the Internal Committee.
5. **Employee** means a person employed at a workplace for any work on regular, temporary, *ad hoc* or daily wages basis, either directly or through an agent, including a contractor, with or, without the knowledge of the



principal employer, whether for remuneration or not, or working on a voluntary basis or otherwise, whether the terms of employment are express or implied and includes a co-worker, a contract worker, probationer, trainee, apprentice or called by any other such name.

6. **Employer** for the purpose of this Policy means the Board of Directors of the Company or such other person/body of persons appointed by the Board of Directors for the purposes of the Act and the Rules, who will be the enforcing authority for the purposes of this Policy, Act and the Rules.
7. **Internal Committee** (hereinafter called 'Committee or IC') have been constituted by the Management of the Company to consider and redress complaints of Sexual Harassment.

As per the guidelines given by the law, the Committee have been appointed for all the offices of VBHC and its group companies. The Company will have a centralized redressal committee with representations across VBHC group companies or offices. The IC will be nominated by the appropriate function HR Head and would be headed by a woman employee. Not less than half of the members would be women and the Committee would also include an External member. While the centrally nominated members and the External Member will review the cases of sexual harassment reported within the Company, on case to case basis. In addition to handling complaints of sexual harassment, the committee will also co-ordinate preventive activities to create a sexual harassment free atmosphere via:

- a. Common Info mailers
- b. Floating Articles on the same from time to time

The Chairperson and every Member of the Committee shall hold office for such period, not exceeding three years, from the date of their nomination/appointment. The composition of the Committee is mentioned in *Annexure A*.

8. **Respondent or Accused** means a person against whom the aggrieved person has made a complaint.



9. Sexual Harassment would mean and include any of the following but not limited to:

- a. unwelcome sexual advances involving verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct, explicit or implicit;
- b. physical contact and advances;
- c. demand or request for sexual favours;
- d. sexually colored remarks, including but not limited to vulgar/indecent jokes, letters, phone calls, text messages, emails, gestures etc.;
- e. showing pornography;
- f. repeatedly asking to socialize during off-duty hours or continued expressions of sexual interest against a person's wishes;
- g. giving gifts or leaving objects that are sexually suggestive;
- h. eve teasing, innuendos and taunts, physical confinement against one's will or any such act likely to intrude upon one's privacy;
- i. persistent watching, following, contacting of a person; and
- j. any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.
- k. undefined working hours;
- l. Video calls and personal comments on social media platforms.
- m. Turning up inappropriately dressed for a virtual meeting.
- n. Managers insisting on spontaneous late night virtual meetings with full view of the person's body and not just the face.

The following circumstances, among other circumstances, if it occurs or is present in relation to or connected with any act or behavior of sexual harassment may amount to sexual harassment:

- a. implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in her/his employment; or
- b. implied or explicit threat of detrimental treatment in her/his employment; or
- c. implied or explicit threat about her/his present or future employment status; or



- d. interference with her/his work or creating an intimidating or offensive or hostile work environment for her/his; or
- e. humiliating treatment likely to affect her/his health or safety.

An alleged act of Sexual Harassment committed during or outside of office hours falls under the purview of this policy.

10. Workplace means

- a. premises, locations, establishments, enterprises, institutions, offices, branches or units established, owned and controlled by the Company
- b. places visited by the Employee arising out of or during the course of employment including official events, transportation provided by the employer for undertaking such journey.

11. Workfromhome means

a dwelling place or a house making clear that the act applies to everybody who is working from their own house, leased/rented house, a company leased home or any other form of accommodation and any work related offsite, etc., - any place that comes under the ambit of a work related relationship.

COMPLAINT REDRESSAL MECHANISM

1. Any aggrieved person may make, in writing, a complaint of sexual harassment at workplace to the committee giving details of the sexual harassment meted out to her/him within a period of 3 months from the date of incident and in case of a series of incidents, within a period of 3 months from the date of last incident, which may be extended for a further period of 3 months, if circumstances warrant such extension in the opinion of the IC.
2. The Chairperson or any Member of the IC can render reasonable assistance to the person for making complaint in writing, in case they are unable to do so.



- 3.i) Where the aggrieved person is unable to make a complaint on account of their physical incapacity, a complaint may be filed by
- a) a relative or friend; or
 - b) a co-worker; or
 - c) any person who has knowledge of the incident, with the written consent of the aggrieved person.
- ii) Where the aggrieved person is unable to make a complaint on account of their mental incapacity, a complaint may be filed by
- a) a relative or friend; or
 - b) the guardian or authority under whose care they are receiving treatment or care; or
 - c) any person who has knowledge of the incident jointly with any of the above
- iii) Where the aggrieved person for any other reason is unable to make a complaint, a complaint may be filed by any person who has knowledge of the incident, with their written consent.
- iv) Where the aggrieved person is dead, a complaint may be filed by any person who has knowledge of the incident, with the written consent of their legal heir.
4. The IC may before initiating an inquiry, and at the aggrieved person's request, attempt to settle the matter through conciliation. However, IC shall ensure that:
- a) monetary settlement will not be made as a basis of conciliation;
 - b) where a settlement has been arrived, the settlement terms shall be signed by both the parties and shall be provided with a copy of it.

Where, a settlement is arrived as mentioned hereinabove, no further enquiry shall be conducted by the IC.

5. The complainant or person authorized on his/her behalf as per above provision, shall make a complaint to the IC through following mode:



- a) The complainant shall report the incident of Sexual Harassment to the Committee, in writing in six copies along with supporting documents and the names and addresses of the witnesses. Such incident can also be reported via e-mail at icc@vbhc.com
 - b) Under exceptional circumstances (eg. physically/ mentally incapability), the complainant may make a verbal complaint to IC. In such case, the complaint shall be reduced in writing and the confirmation of the complainant shall be obtained on the facts stated in complaint before presenting the case to the Committee.
6. On receipt of such complaint, IC shall send one of the copies received from aggrieved person to the respondent within 7 working days.
 7. The Respondent shall file his/her reply within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint along with list of documents, names and addresses of witnesses.
 8. IC on receipt of such written complaint, may, if require ask the aggrieved person to furnish additional information about the alleged harassment.
- 9i). On receipt of complaint, the IC shall decide the date, time and place for hearing the complaint and inform the same to both the parties.
 - ii) The IC shall follow principle of natural justice while handling such complaints.
 - iii) For conducting the enquiry, the quorum of the IC shall be of 3 members including the Presiding Officer.
 - iv) The IC during such investigation may exercise the power of a civil court, vested in it, in respect of:
 - a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person and examining him under oath;
 - b) requiring discovery and production of documents;
 - c) any other prescribed matter.



- v) The IC shall have the right to terminate the inquiry proceedings or to give ex-parte decision on the complaint, if the respondent or complainant remains absent for 3 consecutive hearings, without sufficient cause.

Provided that such termination or ex-parte order may not be passed without giving notice in writing, 15 days in advance, to the concerned parties.

- vi) The parties shall not be allowed to bring any legal practitioner to represent them in their case at any stage of the proceedings before the IC.
- vii) The inquiry proceedings shall be completed within a period of 90 days.
- viii) During such enquiry, upon written request by the aggrieved person, the committee may at its discretion recommend to the employer:
- a) to transfer the aggrieved person or the respondent to any other workplace;
 - b) to grant leave to the aggrieved person of up to three months which is in addition to leave to which she/he is otherwise entitled or;
 - c) to grant such other relief to the aggrieved person as it may deem fit.

Provided, the aggrieved person has to tender justified reason for such transfer or leave, such as threat to work in the workplace.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN ON COMPLETION OF INQUIRY

1. The Committee shall provide a report of its findings to the employer within 10 days from the date of completion of the inquiry and such report shall be made available to the concerned parties.
2. If the allegation against the respondent has not been proved, the Committee shall recommend to the employer that no action is required to be taken in the matter.
3. If the IC arrives at the conclusion that the allegation against the respondent has been proved, it shall recommend the following actions to the employer :



- a) to take action for sexual harassment as a misconduct,
 - b) to tender written apology to the complainant, issue warning letter, withholding of promotions/increments of the Respondent, terminating the Respondent;
 - c) to deduct from salary / wages of the respondent or issue direction for payment; such sum as it may consider appropriate to be paid to the aggrieved person or to their legal heirs, as it may determine.
4. The employer shall act upon the recommendation within 60 days of the receipt of the report by him.

APPEAL

1. The Aggrieved Person and the Respondent shall have the right to appeal before the Appellate Authority, if they are dissatisfied with the findings and/or recommendations as contained in the report of the IC. The said appeal shall be filed with the Appellate Authority within ten (10) days from the date of receipt of the report/ from the Employer / IC, and in no event later than ninety (90) days from the date of receipt of the inquiry report prepared by IC.
2. The Appellate Authority while considering the appeal preferred by the parties shall not entertain any additional documents and/or evidence from the parties which was not a part of the records before the IC and shall dispose of the appeal, as expeditiously as possible, based on the records before the IC and after hearing both the parties.
3. Nothing in this Policy shall prevent the Aggrieved Person or the Respondent from preferring an appeal and approaching the Local Committee / Court / Tribunal or any other relevant appellate authority defined under the Act, as the case may be, within ninety (90) days from the date of receipt of the inquiry report from IC.



COMPLAINTS MADE WITH A MALICIOUS INTENT

This policy has been evolved as a tool to ensure in the interest of justice and fair play, our employees have been provided a forum to approach the instances of sexual harassment. However, if on investigation it is revealed that the complaint was made with malicious intent and with the motive of maligning the concerned individual tarnishing his/her image in the company and to settle personal/professional scores, strict action will be taken against the complainant. The employees who are victims of sexual harassment may in addition to the above, seek legal remedies as may be provided under the various laws for the time being in force.

CONFIDENTIALITY

1. All complaints/grievances, proceedings, including the proceedings before the Appellate Authority, under this Policy shall be kept confidential. The terms in respect of the Company's Policy with respect to confidentiality and non-disclosure as contained in the Employee Handbook, so far as it is applicable, will be applicable to this Policy.
2. Neither party nor the Company shall in any manner communicate or publish or make known to the public, press or media with regard to the identity and addresses of the Aggrieved Person, Respondent and witnesses, any information relating to conciliation, all complaints/grievances, proceedings, including the proceedings before the Appellate Authority, under this Policy.
3. All records of complaints, including contents of meetings, results of investigations and other relevant material will be kept confidential by the Company, except where disclosure is required to be made under disciplinary or other remedial process or to statutory or judicial authorities under a written order from them.



MISCELLANEOUS

- a. The Committee shall keep complete and accurate documentation of the complaint, its investigation and the resolution thereof.
- b. The Company may make any alteration or amendment or rescind any of the clauses of this Policy as and when it finds it necessary to do so as long as it complies with and is in consonance with the Act and the Rules. Any such alterations or amendment or rescinding will come into effect forthwith or the date on which it is notified to come into effect and would apply to all proceedings pending as on that date.
- c. This Policy would be read *pari-materia* with the provisions of the Act and the Rules and in the event of any conflict between the clauses of the Policy and the provisions of the said Act, the Act will prevail.
- d. The Company is empowered to frame Rules/Procedure to be followed by the IC for enquiry and manner of proceedings in accordance with the procedure to be followed by the IC, during inquiry in accordance with the Policy, Act and the Rules.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Company reiterates its commitments to provide its employees, a workplace free from harassment/discrimination and where every employee is treated with dignity and respect.



Annexure-A

1. COMPOSITION OF INTERNAL COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

Name	ICC Designation
Ms. Anila Kalathingai Vinudan	Chairperson/Presiding Officer
Ms. Rebecca Chandy, ResilienceWorks	External Member
Mr. Siddesh Kumar Patil GR	Member
Mr. Ajith Kumar K C	Member
Ms. Manjula B	Member

2. APPELLATE AUTHORITY – Mr. P Chandrasekaran