



## **Rights of Staff Members**

Employees have many rights and responsibilities that are enforceable by law. Employee rights protect workers from hazardous workplace conditions, employer discrimination and other circumstances that threaten an employee's safety and well-being. The U.S. Department of Labor establishes the rights of employees and gives workers access to information that can affect their personal and professional lives.

### **Rights to Workplace Safety**

Employees have the right to do their jobs in a safe and healthy work environment. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) reduces workplace hazards by setting safety standards and investigating the violation of those standards. According to OSHA, an employee "has the right to refuse to perform unsafe work." Unsafe work is considered a job assignment that might cause serious injury or death to the employee. If a worker feels that they are working in an unsafe environment, they may file a complaint with the appropriate regulating authority or request an investigation be conducted without the fear of retaliation from their employer. In addition, an employee has the right to request and review information about proper workplace regulations regarding office safety and health hazards.

### **Rights to Equal Employment Opportunity**

Employees have the right to work in an environment free from discrimination and harassment. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, as well as other federal amendments to the act, protects against pregnancy, age and disability discrimination. It safeguards employees against prejudice and unfair treatment in the workplace. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission enforces these laws and investigates allegations of harassment and discrimination. They also handle employee complaints. Employees have the right to request protection from their employer in the event they feel threatened by a superior, co-worker or client. They also have the right to equal opportunity of workplace benefits, promotions, fair wages and fair treatment without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other characteristic protected by law.

### **Right to Access Information**

Employees have the right to access and review records and other information. Employees can review their personal files. They may also obtain their medical records as well as have access to employer information with regards to events or changes that can affect the employee's work environment. Employers must maintain copies of illness and injury records and are obligated to make the documents available to employees that request them at any time.