CIVIL RIGHTS IN THE WORKPLACE

What Are Your Civil Rights in the Workplace?

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, employees "have the right to work in an environment free of discrimination. You cannot be denied employment, harassed, demoted, terminated, paid less, or treated less favorably because of your race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or status as a protected veteran."

Most Recent Major Civil Rights Movements of the Last Decade

Over the past ten years, amidst the changing landscape of the 2010s into the 2020's some civil rights issues have persisted in new ways while others have gained more attention.
Here are a handful of the biggest US based civil rights movements of the last decade:

Black Lives Matter Movement

Focus: Racial justice and police accountability.
Key Events: Nationwide protests after the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 highlighted systemic racism and police brutality, becoming one of the largest movements in U.S. history.

Stop Asian Hate Movement

Focus: Combating anti-Asian racism and violence.
Key Events: Activism surged during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially after the Atlanta spa shootings in March 2021.

Me Too Movement

Focus: Addressing sexual harassment and assault.
Key Events: Ongoing influence since 2017 led to significant legal reforms and accountability cases, such as the conviction of Harvey Weinstein.

March for Our Lives

Focus: Gun control and ending gun violence.
Key Events: Initiated by students after the 2018 Parkland shooting, with continued advocacy after incidents like the Uvalde shooting in 2022.

Civil Rights Advocacy in the Workplace

Key Aspects of Advocacy:

Identifying and Addressing Discrimination:
Recognize and report instances of unequal treatment, harassment, or biased practices.

Educating Employees:
Provide training on civil rights laws, diversity, inclusion, and addressing discriminatory behavior.

Supporting Victims:
Offer confidential guidance, assist with complaints, or connect employees to legal counsel.

Policy Development and Enforcement:
Promote anti-discrimination policies, equal opportunity initiatives, and clear complaint procedures.

Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives:
Foster an inclusive environment with a diverse workforce where everyone feels valued.

Common Civil Rights Issues in the Workplace

- **Pay Disparity Based on Gender**
- **Racial Profiling in Hiring or Promotions**
- **Religious Discrimination**
- **Sexual Harassment**
- **Disability Discrimination**

How to Advocate for Civil Rights in the Workplace:

Raise Concerns Internally:
Speak with superiors about discriminatory behavior. Also reach out to your organization's diversity, equity, and inclusion department for further guidance.

Utilize or Form Employee Alliances:
Work with colleagues to address systemic issues and push for change. Look to Employee Resource groups or Business Resource Groups.

Engage with Leadership:
Communicate concerns to senior management and advocate for equitable policies.