

FRACUITY®

2025 Workplace Harassment and Misconduct Statistics

Four Gaps that Prevent
Employees from Speaking Up



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What happens *after* an employee comes forward matters more than most realize.

It shapes whether others report, whether leadership can be trusted to do the right thing and whether employees stay. HR Acuity surveyed over 2,000 employees to find out what they're experiencing and what separates organizations that get it right from those that don't.

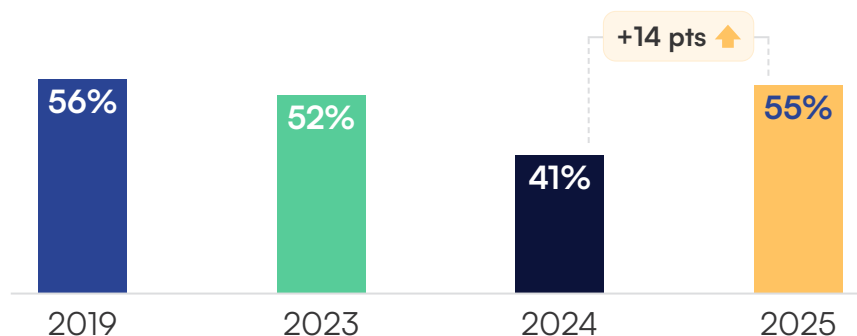
Workplace misconduct hit a near *seven-year high*.

In the years following #MeToo, organizations invested in the structural foundations of employee relations, including stronger processes, updated policies and expanded training. Progress followed. Misconduct rates fell 15 points over five years.

Then 2025 happened. 55% of employees experienced or witnessed misconduct, a near seven-year high, signaling that structural foundations are not enough. Lasting change depends on employees feeling safe to raise concerns and seeing issues investigated, resolved and addressed with accountability.



HARASSMENT & MISCONDUCT RATES BY YEAR



The single-year 14-point jump means more cases entering the system, more investigations to staff and more employees waiting for a response. For a function already stretched thin, increased volume alone is a liability.

Misconduct is no longer a single event. *Complexity* is increasingly common.

As employees become more confident in reporting concerns, cases are growing more complex, often involving multiple issue types that increase legal risk and extend investigation timelines.

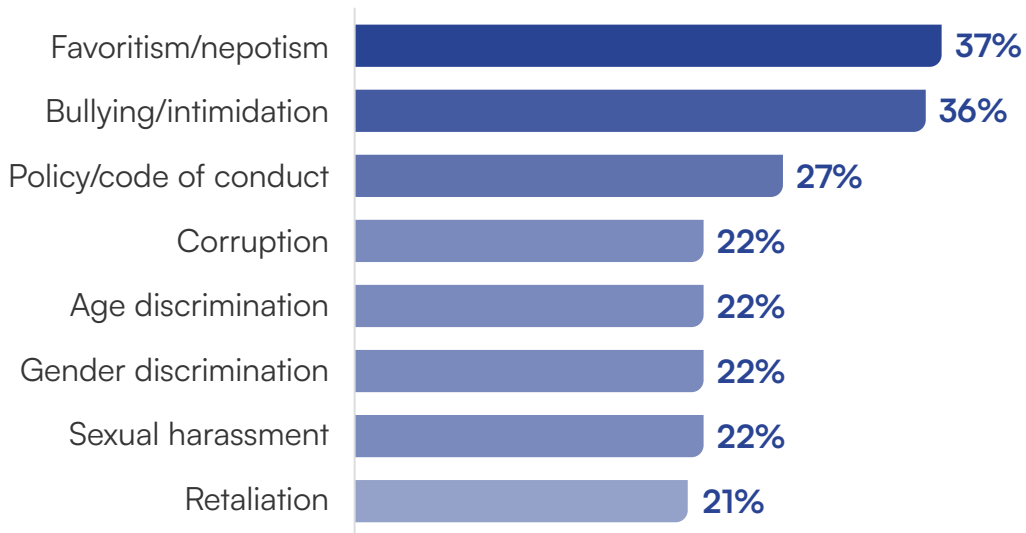
Employees are reporting issues ranging from favoritism and bullying to discrimination and retaliation. And nearly two in five employees were exposed to multiple incidents of misconduct.



of employees encountered 4+ distinct issue types*

+14 pts vs. 2024 ↑

TOP ISSUES EMPLOYEES ENCOUNTERED IN 2025



Case count alone doesn't accurately capture employee relations workload.

Organizations that track volume without complexity underestimate what their employee relations function is managing and the associated risks.

*This may include multiple issue types within a single case or across separate incidents.

More employees are *speaking up* and seeing their issues resolved.

Reporting rates, resolution and perceived fairness all moved in the right direction in 2025.



78%

of employees reported issues in 2025

+3 pts vs. 2024 ↑



75%

of reported issues were investigated and resolved

+16 pts vs. 2024 ↑



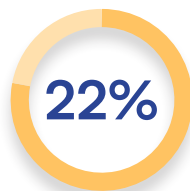
90%

of employees felt their issues were resolved fairly

+8 pts vs. 2024 ↑

Organizations have successfully created a speak-up culture and demonstrated their commitment to addressing misconduct. Teams that invested in the infrastructure to handle issues consistently are seeing it pay off.

The gains are meaningful, but *gaps remain.*



of employees who witnessed or experienced misconduct in 2025 remained silent.

Understanding why employees remain silent is critical to building a speak-up culture that works for everyone.

Beyond the progress, *four gaps* show where reporting still falls short.

The overall reporting rate obscures more than it reveals. Unreported misconduct concentrates in certain environments, among certain groups of employees and around distinct fears.

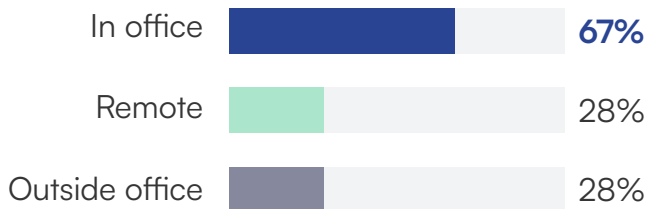
01

Misconduct most often occurs in the office...where it is *least reported*.



As more organizations shift back to in-office work, the reporting gap carries more weight than it appears. This is because misconduct is most prevalent when employees work in person.

MISCONDUCT BY WORK ENVIRONMENT*



REPORTING RATE BY WORK ENVIRONMENT



Culture becomes both the context for harm and the barrier to addressing it. Organizations that understand where and why reporting breaks down can target interventions where they'll actually have impact.

* Multiple responses were accepted.

02

Hourly worker issues are both underreported and *least investigated.*



When issues go uninvestigated, employees stop raising them. For hourly workers, that's already happening on both counts.

REPORTING RATE BY LEVEL



INVESTIGATION RATE BY LEVEL



Investigating every concern closes the gap and builds confidence. When employees don't believe speaking up will lead anywhere, they won't. Hourly employees need to know what qualifies as misconduct, how to report it, that they can do so anonymously and that their concerns will be taken seriously. Train managers to recognize, receive and escalate issues instead of handling them informally.

03

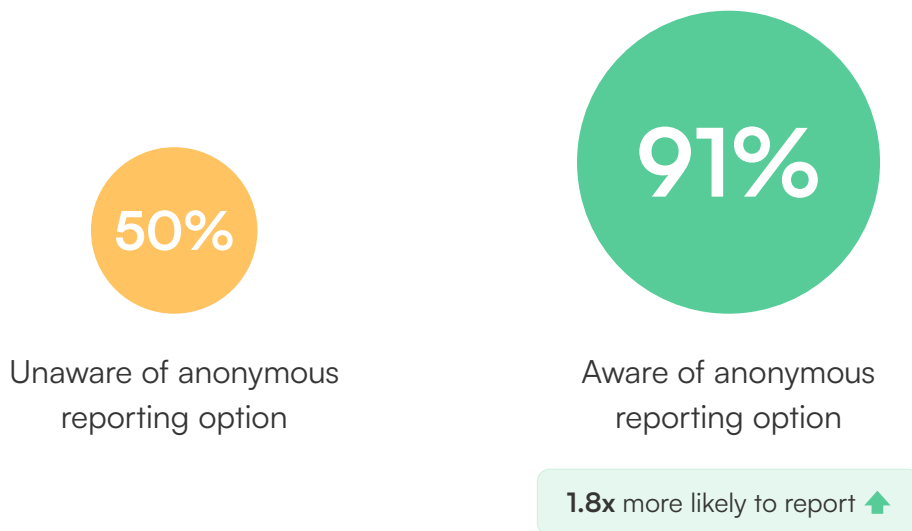
Anonymous reporting only works if employees *know it exists*.



When it comes to anonymous reporting, there's a clear disconnect between what employers provide and what employees know about. According to [HR Acuity's Annual Employee Relations Benchmark Study](#), nearly all organizations provide anonymous reporting tools, yet only 56% of employees are aware this option exists.

When employees know they can report anonymously, they do so at *nearly double* the rate.

LIKELIHOOD TO REPORT MISCONDUCT



Employees need to know that when they speak up, their employer will act.

Organizations that actively communicate anonymous reporting and back it up with a clear, credible process are the ones employees trust. When employees trust the process and that action will follow, they're more inclined to report.

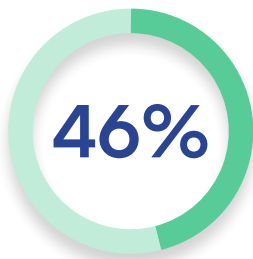
04

Fear of retaliation *silences* employees and undermines reporting culture.



Retaliation thrives in environments where power imbalances go unchecked, accountability is inconsistent and past incidents fester. Employees notice. When they watch peers experience negative consequences for reporting, the message is clear: Speaking up carries a cost. For many, it's not worth the risk.

WHY EMPLOYEES DON'T REPORT



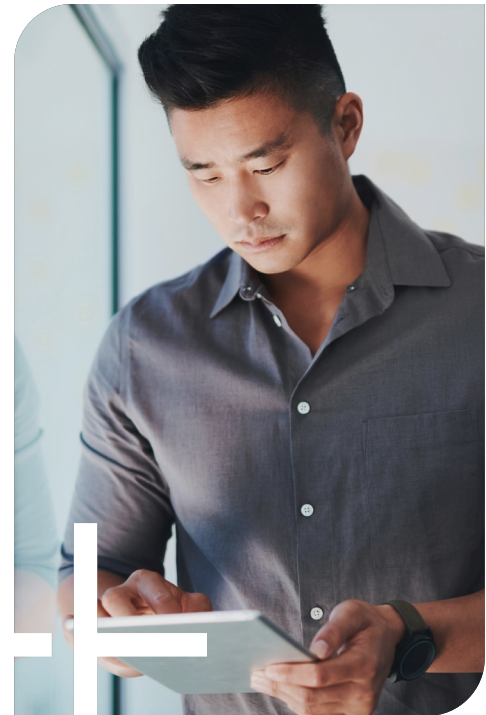
of employees cited fear of retaliation

Inconsistent aftercare *fuels those fears.*

POST-INVESTIGATION EXPERIENCE



of employees were monitored for retaliation



Retaliation monitoring after an investigation is the signal employees want to see.

Lax aftercare processes following investigations perpetuate silence. Employees already reluctant to report concerns stay silent. Visible throughcare, including check-ins and outcome sharing, builds confidence in the process which is essential for future reporting.

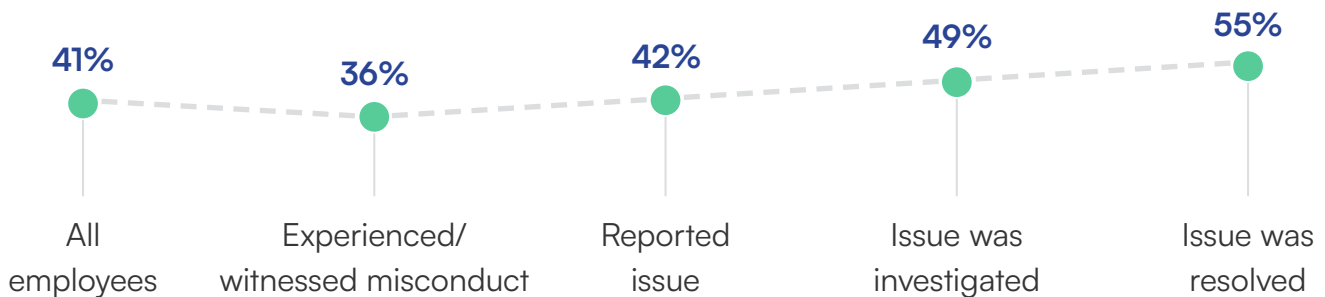
Misconduct tests trust. A strong response can do *more than restore it.*

Misconduct happens. And when it does, trust takes a hit — that’s expected. But what happens next is in your control.



Handled well from intake through resolution, an organization’s response restores trust and shapes the broader employee experience, including whether people stay, refer others and speak up again.

LIKELIHOOD TO RECOMMEND EMPLOYER



A closed case isn’t your cue to move on. Employees take a risk when they report. Organizations prove the system works by closing the loop, offering support services and monitoring for retaliation after a case closes.

METHODOLOGY

Survey Methodology & Respondents

Respondents

2,043

U.S. Employees

Data Collection

Jan. 2026

Confidence Level

+/- 2.1

percentage points

This research was conducted in partnership with Isurus Market Research and Consulting, an independent research firm. HR Acuity published similar employee studies in 2019, 2023 and 2024. HR Acuity also publishes an annual [Employee Relations Benchmark Study](#) providing insights into employee relations trends and practices.

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