

IGDA Policy for Responding to Harassment Complaints

Overview

All IGDA events, gatherings, and workshops – online and in-person - are safe spaces where people can participate without fear of judgment or harassment. All participants and visitors are expected to treat other participants, visitors, staff and the general public with respect. Under the umbrella of respect, we expect all participants to be mindful of their speech and behaviors both in person and online. No form of harassment or assault will be tolerated. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, physical harassment, verbal harassment and any form of sexual assault.

The IGDA has adopted a zero tolerance policy towards any kind of harassment or violence, and takes complaints about harassment very seriously. Accordingly, this document describes the process by which IGDA will investigate and act on complaints of harassment or assault it may receive. These complaints may come from Chapters, Special Interest Groups, general members, or non-members; they may reference something that happened at an IGDA event, or actions by an IGDA member, staff, or volunteer at a non-affiliated event or venue. These complaints may also reference things that happen online.

When & How to Involve the IGDA

IGDA supports a safe and inclusive environment for all members of our community regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, race, ability, ethnicity or religion. This commitment extends beyond our in-person events and into social media, forums, livestreams and any other digital spaces affiliated with IGDA.

When addressing a complaint of harassment, the first priority is to ensure the safety of everyone involved. If anyone's safety is at risk, please seek assistance from event security and/or local authorities immediately. Additionally, after the immediate incident has passed, the [IGDA Harassment Resources page](#) offers suggested guidance on safety and self-care.

IGDA should be contacted if one or more of the following apply to the incident of harassment or assault:

- The incident took place at an IGDA-affiliated event, gathering, or workshop – online or in person
- The incident was committed by, or to, an employee, staff member, board member, IGDA Chapter/SIG leader, volunteer, or general member of the IGDA

If none of the above apply, please consider reporting the incident to the relevant event hosts, organizers, or employers as appropriate. The IGDA may also be contacted if the complainant

deems it appropriate that the IGDA be made aware of an incident involving an IGDA member, especially if there is reason to believe that there is risk of further harm to other members of the game development community and of the IGDA.

You may report a harassment complaint to the IGDA Executive Director (execdir@igda.org), the IGDA's Counsel (counsel@igda.org), or Board Chairperson (chair@igda.org).

General Principles

The most important consideration in any investigation of harassment is providing a safe, welcoming environment, in both physical and virtual spaces, for all members of the IGDA community. When acting upon a complaint of harassment or violence, protecting the safety of the IGDA community is the paramount goal.

Accordingly, anyone involved with the investigation of a complaint after it is received should be sure to adhere to the following principles:

- Treat everyone involved in the process with respect.
- Protect the identity of the person(s) making the complaint, to the extent legally permissible to do so.
- Never share details of the people involved or of the incident without specific permission from the victim. Ask for permission to share information as needed throughout the process.
- Assume that the person making the complaint would prefer to pursue it, but be sure to confirm this assumption. When speaking with the person making the complaint, do not overtly invite them to withdraw the complaint or mention that withdrawal is OK: this suggests that you *want* them to do so, and is therefore coercive. "If you're OK with it [pursuing the complaint]" suggests that you are by default pursuing it and is not coercive.
- Do not ask for the person who is making the complaint for their advice on how to deal with the complaint, or offer the person making the complaint input into penalties; this is the responsibility of the organization's leadership.
- Do not ask for, or encourage, an apology from the person accused or any interaction between the people involved in the situation. Understand and respect that the complainant may feel most comfortable avoiding any future interaction with the other person(s) involved.
- Ask for help if you encounter a difficult situation. If a member of an IGDA Chapter or SIG, or guest at your event, complains about harassment or assault, the worst possible response is to ignore the complaint. If you are not comfortable responding to the complaint, it is acceptable to find someone you feel is well-suited to handle the situation, beginning with the escalation list further in the document.
- Protecting the confidentiality of the people involved is of utmost importance. When responding to inquiries by the press, volunteers, or media, Staff and Board members should not provide any details beyond the agreed-upon message approved by the Board and Counsel.

- A fast, fair response is necessary to protect the safety of the community, particularly in response to a complaint at an event that is ongoing. Staff and Board members should treat the issue as an emergency, and work together to facilitate resolution as quickly as possible.
- When a complaint is made, the person responding to the complaint should ask the person if they are comfortable speaking with them, then offer, if necessary, to find someone with whom the complainant would be more comfortable. When possible, the person speaking with the person making the complaint should be of the same gender, or, if the harassment was triggered by another prejudice (such as race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual preference), be a member of the targeted group.

Harassment Complaint Designated Response Team

When a complaint is received, it should be escalated immediately to the following people, as described:

1. Event enforcement and/or law enforcement, if someone's personal safety is immediately at risk
2. Executive Director
 - a. If the complaint is about the ED, or otherwise involves someone where their objectivity may be questioned, the person receiving the complaint should immediately bring the complaint to the attention of IGDA Counsel and Chair of the Board of Directors
3. The ED (or designated responder) will be responsible for informing the following people as quickly as is reasonable:
 - a. IGDA Counsel
 - b. Board of Directors
 - c. External Partners and/or Event Managers if the incident occurred at a non-IGDA function
 - d. Other people or organizations as needed (on a strict need-to-know basis)
4. When informing other parties, permission must always be sought to share names, contact information, or other personally-identifiable information.

Complaint Investigation/Resolution Process

If an IGDA Volunteer, Staff Member, or Board Member receives a complaint, the person receiving the complaint should escalate to the designated response team as detailed above, and assess the situation for any immediate action required. The process includes the following steps, in order:

1. Triage & Escalation
2. Documentation
3. Investigation
4. Conversation with accused

5. Convene Meeting
6. Action
7. Communication

The specific steps in the Complaint Investigation/Resolution Process are detailed below.

1. If the complaint is about an incident currently in process, act immediately to stop the harassment or assault.
 - a. Call event enforcement or law enforcement as needed to ensure everyone's safety.
 - b. Do not attempt to physically intervene if it would put your personal safety at risk.
 - c. When the immediate incident has been resolved, support the safety of the victim.
 - i. Offer the victim a private place to sit.
 - ii. Ask the victim if there is a trusted friend or companion they would like to be with them, and send someone else to find this person.
 - iii. Ask "how can I help?"
 - iv. Do not leave the victim alone; attending to the needs of the victim is more important than taking any action against the person making the assault.
 - v. Ask the victim if they would like to involve law enforcement.
 1. If the victim would like to notify law enforcement, contact the local emergency number (if there is an immediate threat to someone's safety) or local police department.
 2. if the victim does not immediately want to involve law enforcement, provide them with a list of contacts and let them know that you are available to help with reporting the incident to law enforcement.
 - d. As soon as is practical, document the incident with as many details as possible, including:
 - i. Identifying information (name/badge number) of the participant accused of doing the harassing
 - ii. The behavior that was in violation
 - iii. The approximate time of the behavior (if different than the time the report was made)
 - iv. The circumstances surrounding the incident
 - v. Other people involved in the incident
2. If the complaint is about an incident that happened to the person making the complaint, ask for them to provide a written account (preferable) or verbal account of exactly what happened. Because timeliness is important, the person making the complaint should provide a written or verbal account as soon as possible.

- a. If the person making the complaint prefers to give a verbal report, the interview should be held in a quiet, private place if at all possible. The person receiving the complaint should take extensive notes, as detailed below.
 - b. Thank them for reporting the incident. Assure the person making the complaint that IGDA takes these incidents very seriously, that we will begin investigating the incident, and our first priority is protecting the person making the complaint and protecting the game developer community.
 - c. If the following information is not included in the report of the incident, ask for these details, but do not pressure the person making the complaint.
 - i. Identifying information (name/badge number) of the participant doing the harassing
 - ii. The behavior that was in violation
 - iii. The approximate time of the behavior (if different than the time the report was made)
 - iv. The circumstances surrounding the incident
 - v. Other people involved in the incident
 - d. Ask them if there are other people we should speak with, and if so, if they would be comfortable introducing those people or if they would prefer we reach out to them separately.
 - e. Confirm that we will respect their privacy and not share any personal information without their permission or a subpoena or governmental order requiring disclosure.
 - f. If appropriate, ask if IGDA can share their account of the incident with other relevant groups (e. g. event staff, etc.) Assure them that IGDA will not share any information without their permission.
3. If the complaint is about an incident the person making the complaint witnessed, ask for them to provide a written account (preferable) or verbal account of exactly what happened. Because timeliness is important, the person making the complaint should provide a written or verbal account as soon as possible.
- a. If the person making the complaint prefers to give a verbal report, the interview should be held in a quiet, private place if at all possible. The person receiving the complaint should take extensive notes, as detailed below.
 - b. Thank them for reporting the incident. Assure the person making the complaint that IGDA takes these incidents very seriously, that we will begin investigating the incident, and our first priority is protecting the person making the complaint and protecting the game developer community.
 - c. If the following information is not included in the report of the incident, ask for these details, but do not pressure the person making the complaint.
 - i. Identifying information (name/badge number) of the participant doing the harassing
 - ii. The behavior that was in violation

- iii. The approximate time of the behavior (if different than the time the report was made)
 - iv. The circumstances surrounding the incident
 - v. Other people involved in the incident
 - d. Ask them if there are other people we should speak with, and if so, if they would be comfortable introducing those people or if they would prefer we reach out to them separately.
 - e. Confirm that we will respect their privacy and not share any personal information without their permission.
 - f. If appropriate, ask if IGDA can share their account of the incident with other relevant groups (e.g. event staff, etc.) Assure them that IGDA will not share any information without their permission.
4. If the complaint is about an incident the person heard about second hand, or is anonymous, thank the person reporting it, assure them that the IGDA takes any harassment very seriously but that we need to speak to the victim or a witness, and ask them if they are comfortable encouraging the person who experienced the harassment to come forward. Assure them that IGDA will take every measure possible to protect the person's privacy and identity.

After receiving the complaint, the person who received the complaint should provide an overview of this process to those making the complaint, and should update the person(s) making the complaint periodically through the process, taking care to not share any confidential information.

One person should collate all information provided, remove identifying information (see below for additional information), and share a comprehensive written report with the Board, Counsel, and Staff so that the Board can respond to a pattern (if it exists) instead of an individual incident.

1. There should be an additional version of the report, which includes names, contact information, and other identifying information, which should be shared with IGDA Counsel under client privilege, and transmitted in a secure way.

The person being accused should be given a brief description of the complaint, with identifying information removed, and asked if they would like to respond in a discussion or in writing.

1. In the notification of the complaint, the person being accused should be asked to keep all information confidential, out of respect for the privacy of the individuals involved.
2. The person being accused should be given a reasonable amount of time to respond, while also considering that timely resolution of the complaint is imperative. Unless there

3. are extenuating circumstances (such as illness, holidays, or international travel), 3 days is a sufficient amount of time to respond to the complaint.
4. If the response to the complaint happens verbally, at least two members of the Designated Response Team should listen to the verbal response.
 - a. If possible, the people listening to the response should include a member of the same gender; if the person(s) involved are of different cultures or nationalities, the Designated Response Team should include international representation if possible.
 - i. If the accused person claims that “cultural differences” caused the problem, the Designated Response Team may approach a third party, of the same culture as the accused person, for feedback. However, the incident must only be referred to in a very general (or hypothetical) way, and no identifying information about anyone involved may be shared.
5. If the accused person provides witnesses, they should be contacted immediately, and should be given a reasonable amount of time to provide any relevant information they have.

A meeting should be convened with the IGDA Board and other people as needed (which may include the person(s) who received the complaint, IGDA Staff, and IGDA Counsel), as soon as possible after the information is shared with the Board and with the person being accused, to discuss next steps. Specific topics to be addressed should include:

1. A report of what happened
2. The response, if any, of the person(s) being accused.
3. Potential penalties and recommended course of action
 - a. Potential penalties should take into account a pattern of behavior, if it exists; the severity of the incident; the accused person’s response and acknowledgement of wrongdoing; and, most importantly, the safety of the IGDA community. Potential penalties include, but are not limited to:
 - i. A formal written warning about the behavior
 - ii. Requiring that the harasser avoid any interaction with the person(s) making the complaint
 - iii. Not allowing the harasser to make additional talks at an event, or at future events
 - iv. Requiring that the harasser leave the event immediately
 - v. Immediately ending any volunteer responsibilities and privileges the harasser holds
 - vi. A ban on volunteering with the IGDA
 - vii. Expulsion from the IGDA
 1. The IGDA bylaws (Article III, Section 6) give the Board the ability to remove someone from membership if that person has "demonstrated a lack of integrity or unethical behavior, as

2. determined by the Board of Directors (e.g., violating the IGDA's Code of Ethics)".
 - viii. A ban on participation in IGDA activities, events, or communities
 - b. If the incident occurred while the person was acting in a formal or official capacity for their employer, the IGDA may choose to provide information on their investigation, and their decisions, with the permission of the person(s) making the complaint to the accused's employer.
 - c. If the incident happened at a non-IGDA event, the IGDA may choose to provide information on their investigation, and their decisions, with the permission of the person(s) making the complaint to the host organization.
4. After the discussion of the Board, and the selection of a course of action, if any, Board or Staff should communicate the outcome of the discussion as quickly as possible.
 - a. Communication to person accused should come from the Chair or Executive Director, and include Counsel at their discretion, and should outline the decision of the Board.
 - b. Communication to person(s) making complaint(s) should come from the Chair or Executive Director, and provide a brief description of the decision of the Board.
 - c. Communication to other stakeholders (may include event staff, other organizations, Chapter leaders, SIG leaders) should come as needed based on the details of the complaint as well as the decision of the Board.

At the next formal meeting, Staff should be prepared to provide an update to Board members as needed. Counsel should retain records of the investigation and outcome.

Preparing an Emergency Contact List

When preparing to host an event of any kind, Staff should prepare the Emergency Contact List described below, and share it with all event volunteers.

Event Emergency Contact List

IGDA ED

IGDA Counsel

IGDA Chair

Designated staff member to assist attendees/participants/volunteers in difficult situations

Event Management

Event Enforcement

Local Emergency Services

Crisis Hotline for Mental Health

Crisis Hotline for Sexual Assault

Crisis Hotline for Physical Violence