

POSH ACT: MAHARASHTRA MANDATES INSPECTIONS OF ALL WORKPLACES

Circular No. MKK/2026/PR.K.11/KA.15 | Issued: 14 May 2026 | Dept. of Women & Child Development, Maharashtra

IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED — Inspections are now authorised across all private and public establishments in Maharashtra under Section 25 of the POSH Act, 2013.

*The Maharashtra Government has activated a formal inspection regime under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (“**POSH Act**”). Non-compliant establishments now face penal action under Section 26 of the Act. Companies, private and public, large and small, must treat this circular as an immediate compliance trigger.*

WHAT CHANGED

Until now, POSH compliance in Maharashtra rested largely on self-regulation. The Circular of 14 May 2026 changes this fundamentally: invoking Section 25 of the POSH Act, the State has authorised a twelve-category network of officials, ranging from District Officers to Anganwadi supervisors, to physically inspect establishments for compliance. A standardised checklist of 31 compliance points governs every inspection. Both private and government establishments, corporations and semi-government bodies are squarely within scope.

THE INSPECTION FRAMEWORK

WHO CAN INSPECT YOU

District Officers, Divisional Deputy Commissioners (WCD), District Women & Child Development Officers, Child Development Project Officers (urban, rural and Tribal), District Programme Officers (Zila Parishad), Probation Officers, Coordination Officers, Protection Officers (district and taluka level), Anganwadi supervisors, and NGO superintendents nominated by the government across all districts.

COORDINATION PROTOCOL

The State Nodal Officer (Commissioner, WCD, Pune) sets targets and inspection zones. Only one officer or team may inspect a single establishment, parallel or duplicate inspections are prohibited. Anganwadi workers are formally authorised as front-line inspection support staff.

KEY OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE 31-POINT CHECKLIST

- ✓ Written POSH policy adopted and widely disseminated (Rule 13(a))
- ✓ IC constituted at every office/unit — min. 4 members, at least 50% women (Sec. 4)
- ✓ External NGO/independent member on IC (Sec. 4(2)(c))
- ✓ SHe-Box portal link visible on establishment website & official social media
- ✓ IC members trained on complaint handling (Sec. 19(c))
- ✓ No retaliation against complainants or witnesses (Sec. 19)
- ✓ Policy covers interns, contractual staff & remote/WFH environments
- ✓ Senior woman employee appointed as IC Chairperson (Sec. 4(2)(a))
- ✓ IC order and penal consequences displayed prominently at all premises (Sec. 19(b))
- ✓ Multiple complaint channels available: email, written, SHe-Box (Sec. 9)
- ✓ Annual report filed with the employer and District Officer (Sec. 21 / Rule 14)
- ✓ Nodal Officer for SHe-Box appointed; IC details uploaded for all offices

STATUTORY TIMELINES YOU MUST MEET

7	90	60	3
DAYS	DAYS	DAYS	MONTHS
Acknowledge complaint & serve copy on respondent (Rule 7(2))	Complete IC inquiry from date of complaint (Sec. 11(4))	Employer acts on IC report after receipt (Sec. 13(4))	Max interim leave for aggrieved woman during inquiry (Sec. 12)

PENAL CONSEQUENCES

SECTION 26 — PENALTIES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

Inspectors who identify deficiencies are empowered to recommend penal action under Section 26 of the POSH Act. This includes a fine of up to ₹50,000 for a first offence, and critically the cancellation or non-renewal of business licences, permits, or registrations for repeat violations. For companies operating multiple branches, each non-compliant unit constitutes a separate breach.

SHE-BOX: THE DIGITAL COMPLIANCE LAYER

WHAT MUST BE ON SHE-BOX

Nodal Officer details for every office with 10 or more employees; IC constitution details for the head office and all branch offices; annual IC report, all uploaded and kept current at shebox.wcd.gov.in.

PORTAL ACCESS FOR EMPLOYEES

All employees must be able to access and file complaints directly at shebox.wcd.gov.in. The portal link must appear on the establishment's official website and all social media channels. Its absence is a specific inspection point.

IMMEDIATE ACTION POINTS FOR YOUR ORGANISATION

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| → Audit IC composition against Section 4 requirements (4 members, 50% women, external member) | → Display IC constitution order and penal consequences at all premises |
| → Verify POSH policy covers WFH and digital workspaces | → Conduct IC member training if not done within the past year |
| → Register on SHe-Box; upload IC details for every office/unit | → Confirm annual report has been filed with the District Officer |
| → Appoint a dedicated SHe-Box Nodal Officer | → Run a mock inspection against the government's 31-point compliance checklist |

Our Employment & Regulatory team is available to assist with compliance audits, IC constitution reviews, POSH policy drafting, and mock-inspection exercises. We recommend initiating an internal gap assessment immediately.