

5.01 ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

A. Purpose

The Board is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits unlawful discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, the Board expects that all relationships among employees be cordial, professional, and free of bias, prejudice and harassment.

B. Definitions of Harassment

1. Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment constitutes discrimination and is illegal under federal, state and local laws. For the purpose of this policy, sexual harassment is defined, using the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guidelines](#), as the unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example:

- a. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual;
- c. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle, or not-so-subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexuality; leering, whistling or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

2. Harassment on the Basis of any Other Protected Characteristic

Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal, written or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by law or that of his/her relatives, friends or associates, and that:

- d. has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment;
- e. has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or
- f. otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and written or graphic material that



denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group and that is placed on walls or elsewhere on the employer's premises or circulated in the workplace via email, phone or text, on County time or using County equipment.

C. Persons Covered

The Board's non-harassment policy applies to all job applicants and employees, whether related to conduct engaged in by fellow employees or someone not directly connected to the County (e.g. an outside vendor, consultant or customer).

Conduct prohibited by this policy is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside of the workplace, such as during business trips, meetings and business related social events.

D. Complaint Process

Individuals who believe that they have been affected by conduct prohibited in this policy statement or who believe they have witnessed such conduct should discuss their concerns with their immediate supervisor or another member of management. Supervisors will then bring the complaint to the Department of Human Resources. If an employee, for any reason, is uncomfortable approaching management with the complaint or concern, the employee may bring the complaint or concern directly to the Department of Human Resources.

When possible, individuals who believe they are being subjected to such inappropriate conduct should advise the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome and request that it be discontinued immediately.

The Board encourages the prompt reporting of complaints or concerns so that constructive action can be taken before relationships become irreparably damaged. Therefore, although no fixed reporting period has been established, early reporting and intervention are strongly recommended as they have proven to be the most effective method of resolving actual or perceived incidents of harassment.

When reporting an allegation, please provide the following information:

1. the date(s), time(s), and location(s) of the incident(s) which took place;
2. a description of the incident(s), including what was said and/or done; and
3. the name(s) of witness(es) present during the incident(s).

All reported allegations of harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be investigated promptly. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved, and where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge.

E. Retaliation

Under no circumstance shall the complainant be subjected to retaliation for having registered the complaint or reporting the conduct. Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation of a claim of harassment or discrimination is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to corrective action. Acts of retaliation should be reported immediately and will be promptly investigated and addressed. Misconduct constituting harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be dealt with appropriately.



However, false or malicious complaints of harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be subject to appropriate corrective action.

