

Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security



Policy and Procedure Manual

Policy No. 1.3
Issued 4/2006

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY STATEMENT

The Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) is committed to maintaining a workplace environment in which all people are treated with dignity and respect. DEMHS strictly prohibits sexual harassment as well as other forms of harassment such as those based on race, religion, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, disability or sexual orientation.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT:

DEMHS will not tolerate harassment by anyone, including any supervisor, co-worker, vendor, client or customer, whether in the workplace, at assignments outside the workplace, at DEMHS-sponsored social functions or elsewhere.

WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

Sexual harassment is defined as "unwanted conduct or communication of a sexual nature that adversely affects a person's employment relationship or working environment." It is prohibited by both Connecticut and federal law. The term "sexual harassment" means any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, where:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's employment;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for an employment decision affecting the person; **or**,
- Such conduct is so severe or pervasive that it unreasonably interferes with a person's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment can encompass more than just physical contact such as touching. It can be demonstrated in both verbal communication (for example, threats, sexual propositions/demands, gender based stereotypic comments, lewd comments, sexually explicit jokes and suggestive/insulting noises) and non-verbal communication (for example, obscene gestures and/or displays of obscene materials in the work area such as cartoons, posters, calendars, etc...).

Employees should be aware that sexual harassment is a type of sex discrimination that is prohibited as an Unfair Employment Practice under Section 46a-60(a)(8) of the Connecticut General Statutes and violates the guidelines set forth by the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Any

inappropriate and unwelcome behavior with a sexual overtone which causes a negative effect on a person's working environment is illegal under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, and will not be tolerated at DEMHS. All forms of sexually harassing conduct are illegal regardless of the degree of blatancy. This unacceptable conduct is not limited to such cases of discrimination involving females as targets, but can be female toward male or same gender harassment.

EXAMPLES OF OTHER PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR:

This agency is committed to creating and maintaining a professional work environment for all DEMHS employees. To that end, other prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Degrading statements, whether verbal or non verbal, based on an individual's age, race, religion, marital status, national origin, ancestry, disability and/or sexual orientation; **or**,
- Display of such materials.

REPORTING OF HARASSMENT:

If an employee believes that he or she is being harassed, the employee should clearly and promptly tell the offender that the behavior should stop. If for any reason the employee does not wish to confront the offender directly, or confrontation does not successfully end the harassment, the employee is encouraged to discuss the matter with, but not limited to, **any** of the following:

- Agency Contacts Wayne Sandford at (860) 256-0820 or Brenda Bergeron at (860) 256-0816;
- Supervisor or manager;
- Affirmative Action Program Manager from the Department of Administrative Services' Small Agency Resource Team (SMART), Natalie Shipman at (860) 713-5308;
- Personnel Officer from SMART, Timothy Geary at (860) 713- 5110; **or**,
- Commissioner's Office.

Any employee who witnesses harassment or becomes aware that another employee has been subjected to prohibited harassment is also encouraged to immediately report the conduct to one of the people listed above. Any supervisor or manager who receives a complaint about harassment or who believes that someone is engaging in conduct that may be prohibited harassment must immediately report it to the Commissioner or one of the two SMART representatives. Ignoring such conduct is not acceptable and may subject the supervisor or manager to disciplinary action.

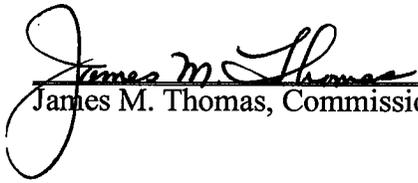
Any employee who believes that he or she has been subject to discrimination or harassment with regard to employment or to any program, service or activity at this agency may choose to file a complaint in accordance with the agency's Human Rights Complaint Procedure. A representative from the Department of Administrative Services' Small Agency Resource Team (SMART) will receive and investigate all complaints of discrimination and/or harassment in accordance with the agency's Human Rights Complaint Procedure. Upon receiving a complaint, the SMART Representative will follow established procedures to determine whether there is evidence to support the allegation. If investigation reveals the presence of discrimination or harassment, the employee behaving in such an inappropriate manner will be subject to progressive discipline.

No employee will be coerced, intimidated, or retaliated against by DEMHS or any employee for reporting harassment, participating in any internal or external investigation of harassment, or for performing any of the duties and responsibilities of developing and implementing the agency's affirmative action plan. Any person so aggrieved may file a complaint with the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities. Furthermore, no employee will be retaliated or discriminated against by DEMHS or any employee for opposing any discriminatory employment practice or for exercising their right to file or participate in the processing of a discrimination complaint.

Harassment and discrimination are serious issues. Any employee who is not sure how to deal with such an issue is encouraged to speak to DEMHS' SMART Representative, who will help address the matter and assist in resolving it.

Under no circumstances is it an appropriate strategy for an employee to address harassment or discrimination issues through rumor or innuendo; any employee found to have done so will be subject to progressive discipline. Unfounded allegations of harassment may unduly damage the reputation of others. Therefore, disciplinary action may also be imposed if it is determined that a knowingly false or malicious complaint was made under this policy.

Every employee has an absolute right to be treated professionally. I expect all DEMHS employees to be sensitive to this issue and to cooperate in creating a work environment free of any form of harassment or discrimination.


James M. Thomas, Commissioner

3/27/06
DATE