

DOUGLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE		Policy and Procedure
Conduct		P&P-C-104
Workplace Harassment		
Effective Date: 06-12-23 Supersedes: 07-20-22	Approval: Sheriff	Number of Pages: 2
References:	Reevaluation Date: Annually or as needed	Standards CALEA LE 26.1.3

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Douglas County Sheriff's Office to provide employees with an environment free from harassment, direct or indirect threats, intimidation, and violence perpetrated by another employee.

II. DEFINITIONS

Harassment

Harassment is unwelcome conduct that is based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy), national origin, older age (beginning at age 40), disability, or genetic information (including family medical history). Harassment becomes unlawful where 1) enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or 2) the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive.

Petty slights, annoyances, and isolated incidents (unless extremely serious) will not rise to the level of illegality. To be unlawful, the conduct must create a work environment that would be intimidating, hostile, or offensive to reasonable people.

Matters of appropriate discipline or corrective action taken by a supervisor are not considered harassment.

Hostile Work Environment

A hostile work environment is a workplace in which the conduct of supervisors or coworkers has created a discriminatory environment that a reasonable person would find so abusive or intimidating that it impacts the ability to work.

According to the [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) (EEOC), an environment can become hostile when:

- Unwelcome conduct, or harassment, is based on race, sex, pregnancy, religion, national origin, age, disability, or genetics
- Harassment is continued and long lasting
- Conduct is severe enough that the environment becomes intimidating, offensive, or abusive

III. HARASSMENT ISSUES IN THE WORKPLACE

Members will not harass, embarrass, intimidate, provoke, or discriminate against members of the Office while on or off-duty.

If the member is comfortable with doing so, they should directly inform the person who is engaging in the harassing conduct that such conduct is offensive and must cease. If the conduct continues or the conduct is deemed by the effected member(s) to be serious, the member should report the incident to their direct supervisor. If the conduct involves the reporting employee's immediate supervisor, they must report the incident to the next higher-ranking supervisor or to the Internal Affairs Unit. <LE 26.1.3>

Nothing in this policy should be construed to place the responsibility and / or requirement on the involved member to address the person who is engaging in the harassing conduct prior to reporting such conduct to a supervisor.

Supervisory members will not tolerate, or participate in, any form of harassment or discrimination. Supervisory personnel failing to act upon a complaint shall be deemed in violation of this policy and subject to disciplinary action.

No supervisor or staff member may retaliate against any victim or witness who reports a violation of this policy. Any person who believes that he or she has been retaliated against as a result of reporting a harassment incident should report such information via their chain of command or directly to Internal Affairs.

IV. REPORTING ISSUES OF WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

All employees shall immediately report any acts of harassment to their direct supervisor. If the direct supervisor is involved, the reporting employee should go the next higher-ranking supervisor in their chain of command or directly to internal affairs.

V. WORKPLACE DISPUTES

Though a dispute in the workplace may be between friends or relatives, criminal acts must be treated as criminal. Victim employees will be strongly encouraged to pursue criminal charges, and no employee shall lessen the severity of any charges because of a personal relationship with the offender.

In some cases, a workplace dispute that does not constitute illegality or a hostile work environment can be addressed through mediation. Refer to DCSO policy *P&P-C-106 Inter-Office Mediation*.

VI. COMPLETION OF INCIDENT REPORT

When an incident occurs involving the allegation of harassment in the workplace, the victim(s), witness(es), and supervisor(s) will complete the appropriate report as soon as possible. This report will be routed via the chain of command to the appropriate division commander who will make a determination on the manner in which the allegation of harassment will be investigated.

A Blue Team report will be initiated as either a Personnel Comment Report (PCR) or an Internal Affairs investigation based upon the circumstances of the harassment.

By Order of the Sheriff