

HR/LR Policy #1329

Date Issued: 06/17/1996

Date Revised: 06/12/2019

# Sexual Harassment Prohibited

Authority: Enterprise Human Capital

## OVERVIEW

### Objective

To create a work environment free from sexual harassment of any kind.

### Policy Statement

Sexual harassment in any form is strictly prohibited. Individuals who believe they have been subject to sexual harassment as described in this policy are encouraged to file a report with an appropriate authority, as set forth in Section II of this policy.

Any form of retaliation directed against an individual who opposes or reports sexual harassment, or who participates in any investigation concerning sexual harassment, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Violations of this policy by State employees will be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge. Violations of this policy by third parties will be subject to appropriate action.

### Scope

This policy applies to all employees of, and third parties who have business interactions with, executive branch agencies and the classified employees in the Office of the Legislative Auditor, Minnesota State Retirement System, Public Employee Retirement Association, and Teachers' Retirement Association.

### Definitions and Key Terms

#### *Complainant*

An individual who reports sexual harassment or retaliation.

#### *Public service environment*

A location where public service is being provided.

### *Sexual harassment*

Unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome requests for sexual favors, or other unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature.

### *Third party*

Individuals who are not State employees, but who have business interactions with State employees, including, but not limited to:

- Applicants for State employment
- Vendors
- Contractors
- Volunteers
- Customers
- Business Partners
- Unpaid interns
- Other individuals with whom State employees interact in the course of employees' work for the State, such as advocates, lobbyists, and representatives of individuals or entities with business with any branch of Minnesota state government

### **Exclusions**

N/A

### **Statutory References**

42 U.S.C. § 2000e, et al.

M.S. Ch. 363A

M.S. Ch. 43A

## **GENERAL STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS**

### **I. Prohibition of Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment of any employee or third party in the workplace or public service environment, or which affects the workplace or public service environment, is strictly prohibited.

Sexual harassment under this policy is any conduct or communication of a sexual nature which is unwelcome. The victim, as well as the harasser, can be of any gender. The victim does not have to be of the opposite sex as the harasser. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Unwelcome sexual innuendoes, suggestive comments, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, degrading sexual remarks, threats;

2. Unwelcome sexually suggestive objects or pictures, graphic commentaries, suggestive or insulting sounds, leering, whistling, obscene gestures;
3. Unwelcome physical contact, such as rape, sexual assault, molestation, or attempts to commit these assaults; unwelcome touching, pinching, or brushing of or by the body;
4. Preferential treatment or promises of preferential treatment for submitting to sexual conduct, including soliciting or attempting to solicit an individual to submit to sexual activity for compensation or reward;
5. Negative treatment or threats of negative treatment for refusing to submit to sexual conduct;
6. Subjecting, or threatening to subject, an individual to unwelcome sexual attention or conduct.

## **II. Employee and Third Party Responsibilities and Complaint Procedure**

Sexual harassment will not be tolerated. All employees and third parties are expected to comply with this policy.

Employees and third parties are strongly encouraged to report all incidents of sexual harassment, whether the individual is the recipient of the behavior, an observer, or is otherwise aware of the behavior. Individuals are encouraged to report incidents of sexual harassment as soon as possible after the incident occurs. Individuals may make a report of sexual harassment to any of the following:

1. Any of the agency's managers or supervisors
2. The agency's affirmative action officer
3. The agency's human resource office
4. Agency management, up to and including the agency head

If the report concerns an agency head, the complainant may contact Minnesota Management and Budget's Office of Equal Opportunity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

To ensure the prompt and thorough investigation of a report of sexual harassment, the complainant may be asked to provide information in writing, which may include, but is not limited to:

1. The name, department, and position of the person(s) allegedly causing the harassment
2. A description of the incident(s), including the date(s), location(s), and identity of any witnesses
3. The name(s) of other individuals who may have been subject to similar harassment
4. What, if any, steps have been taken to stop the harassment
5. Any other information the complainant believes to be relevant

Individuals are encouraged to use the agency's internal complaint procedure, but may also choose to file a complaint or charge externally with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and/or the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR), or other legal channels.

## **III. Manager/Supervisor Responsibility**

Managers and supervisors must:

1. Model appropriate behavior
2. Treat all reports of sexual harassment seriously
3. Appropriately respond to a report or problem when they receive a report of sexual harassment, or when they are otherwise aware a problem exists
4. Immediately report all allegations or incidents of sexual harassment to human resources or the agency Affirmative Action Officer

5. Comply with their agency's complaint and investigation procedures and/or the agency's Affirmative Action Plan

Managers and supervisors who knowingly participate in, allow, or tolerate sexual harassment or retaliation are in violation of this policy and are subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.

#### **IV. Human Resources Responsibilities**

Agency human resources must:

1. Model appropriate behavior
2. Distribute the Sexual Harassment Prohibited Policy to all employees, through a method whereby receipt can be verified
3. Treat all reports of sexual harassment seriously
4. Comply with the agency's complaint and investigation procedures and/or the agency's Affirmative Action Plan

#### **V. Affirmative Action Officer or Designee Responsibilities**

Agency Affirmative Action Officer/designee must:

- Model appropriate behavior
- Treat all reports of sexual harassment seriously
- Comply with the agency's complaint and investigation procedures
- Keep the agency apprised of changes and developments in the law and policy

#### **VI. Investigation and Discipline**

State agencies will take seriously all reports of sexual harassment and retaliation, and will take prompt and appropriate action. When conducting an investigation, managers and supervisors, human resources, and Affirmative Action Officers must follow their agency's investigation procedures.

State agencies will take prompt and appropriate corrective action when there is a violation of this policy.

Employees who are found to have engaged in conduct in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Third parties who are found to have engaged in conduct in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate action. Appropriate action for policy violations by third parties will depend on the facts and circumstances, including the relationship between the third party and the agency. Agencies may contact MMB's Office of Equal Opportunity, Diversity, and Inclusion for assistance in determining appropriate action for third parties. MMB may refer agencies to the appropriate resources, which may include, for example, the Department of Administration with respect to policy violations by vendors or contractors.

Employees who knowingly file a false report of sexual harassment or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

#### **VII. Non-Retaliation**

Retaliation against any person who opposes sexual harassment, who reports sexual harassment, or who participates in an investigation of such reports, is strictly prohibited. Retaliation also includes conduct or communication designed to

prevent a person from opposing or reporting sexual harassment or participating in an investigation. Retaliation will not be tolerated. Any employee who is found to have engaged in retaliation in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge. Third parties who are found to have engaged in retaliation in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate action.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### Agencies are responsible for:

- Adopting this policy.
- Disseminating this policy to agency employees through a method whereby receipt can be verified.
- Posting this policy in a manner that can be accessed by all employees and third parties.
- Including this policy in their Affirmative Action Plan.
- Implementing this policy, which includes:
  - Implementing an educational program
  - Developing and implementing a procedure for reporting complaints
  - Communicating the complaint procedure to employees
  - Developing and implementing a procedure under which reports will be addressed promptly
- Enforcing this policy.
- Reporting annually dispositions of reports of sexual harassment using the Affirmative Action Report.

### MMB is responsible for:

- Ensuring that state agencies carry out their responsibilities under this policy, developing training, and updating this policy as necessary.

## FORMS AND SUPPLEMENTS

For a sample investigation procedure, please review the documents available on the [MMB Equal Opportunity, Diversity, and Inclusion website](#), including:

- [Agency AAP Planning Guide](#)
- [For agencies with more than 25 employees](#)

[For agencies with 25 or fewer employees](#)

[Harassment Complaint Form](#)

Acknowledgment Form (below) – This form may be used to verify receipt by agency employees.

### Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received and read the policy, HR/LR Policy #1329, Sexual Harassment Prohibited, including the policy's complaint procedure.

I understand that sexual harassment and retaliation are strictly prohibited. I understand that if I engage in conduct in violation of the policy toward any State employee, or any “third party” as defined by the policy, I will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

I understand that if I believe that I have been subjected to sexually harassing or retaliatory conduct as defined by the policy by any State employee, or by any “third party” as defined by the policy, I am encouraged to report that behavior. I understand that I can make a report to any of my agency’s managers or supervisors, the agency’s affirmative action officer, the agency’s human resources office, or agency management, up to and including the agency head. I understand that if my report concerns an agency head, I may contact Minnesota Management and Budget.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## REFERENCES

- For issues related to harassment or discrimination based on protected class, please refer to HR/LR Policy #1436 Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited. For issues not related to sexual harassment or harassment or discrimination based on protected class, please see HR/LR Policy #1432 Respectful Workplace.
- MMB Equal Opportunity, Diversity, and Inclusion Office: <http://www.mn.gov/mmb/employee-relations/equal-opportunity/>.  
Consult your agency’s Affirmative Action Plan, or in the absence of an Agency Affirmative Action Plan, see the following:
  - a. [Affirmative Action Plan Template - More Than 25 Employees \(word version\)](#)
  - b. [Affirmative Action Plan Template - 25 or Fewer Employees \(word version\)](#)

## CONTACTS

Research, Policy, and Projects - MMB

[Office of Equal Opportunity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#)

Any appropriate authority, as set forth in Section II of this policy.