

Pinellas County Anti-Harassment Policy

1. General

It is the policy of Pinellas County to provide a work environment which is free from verbal or physical conduct that unreasonably harasses, disturbs, or interferes with an employee's work performance or that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile work environment.

2. Implementation

- a. All County employees are expected to avoid any activity which harasses or disrupts the work of their co-workers, subordinates, or the general public. Any verbal or physical conduct which harasses another worker, subordinate, or members of the general public with whom they may have contact, because of that person's race, national origin, religion, sex, disability, pregnancy, age or military status, is prohibited. In particular, sexual harassment is strictly forbidden.
- b. County managers and supervisors will be held responsible for fostering a "harassment-free" environment. The County has zero tolerance for any direct or implied statements from a manager or supervisor indicating that an employee's willingness or refusal to submit to sexual advances will have any impact upon an employee's terms or conditions of employment.
- c. Additionally, any sexually harassing or offensive conduct, whether by managers, supervisors, employees, or non-employees who enter the County's workplace, is prohibited. Such prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:
 - (1) unwanted physical contact or offensive conduct of a sexual nature, including flirtations, advances, or propositions;
 - (2) verbal harassment about an individual's sex, sexual interest, sexual innuendos, and offensive jokes or descriptions of personal sexual conduct;
 - (3) demeaning, degrading, or insulting comments about a person's physical appearance;
 - (4) displaying in the workplace photos or other media which are demeaning, insulting, intimidating, or sexually suggestive;
 - (5) demeaning, insulting, sexually suggestive, or otherwise offensive written, recorded, or electronically transmitted messages.
- d. Any of the above-listed activities or offensive behavior based upon an individual's race, national origin, religion, disability, pregnancy, age or military status is also prohibited.

3. Reporting

- a. An employee who experiences any of the prohibited conduct mentioned above, or who believes they may be experiencing such conduct, is requested to report or complain about such conduct as soon as possible, either verbally, in writing, or both, to their supervisor or department head. There will be no retaliation for the reporting of such conduct.
- b. Additionally, should an employee feel uncomfortable with reporting the prohibited conduct mentioned above to their superior or department head, they may report it to the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights or to the Pinellas County Personnel Director. Both of these departments are located in the County Annex building at 400 S. Ft. Harrison Avenue in Clearwater. The phone number for the Office of Human Rights is 464-4880, and the phone number for the Director of Personnel is 464-3389.

4. Investigation and Discipline

- a. Reports of violations of the County's harassment policy will be treated seriously, and investigated promptly. The victim's Appointing Authority may conduct an investigation of alleged violations, or the Appointing Authority or the victim may request an investigation by the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights. Employees also remain free to report such activity to outside agencies authorized by law to investigate unlawful employment activities, such as the EEOC.
- b. At a minimum, once an Appointing Authority becomes aware of a complaint of harassment under this policy, it will direct that no further contact take place between the alleged harasser and the complaining victim until an investigation has been concluded. However, no adverse action will be taken against a complaining employee in order to accomplish this separation.
- c. To ensure fairness to all parties, an investigation will include the taking of oral and written statements from all parties involved and any witnesses. Any alleged harasser will be provided with the opportunity to respond to allegations of harassment. To the extent possible, the investigation will be conducted in a confidential manner. Additionally, any refusal by an employee to participate in a harassment investigation by the designated County official will be considered a violation of this policy and may result in disciplinary action.
- d. Violations of this policy may result in discipline up to and including termination under the pertinent County Personnel Rule affected.