

CORPORATE POLICY

SUBJECT: Harassment

CATEGORY: Human Resources

ORIGINAL DATE: May 1, 1985

REVIEWED DATE: April 22, 2019

REVISION DATE: July 12, 2019

I. POLICY:

The Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center (LCHD/CHC) is committed to maintaining a diverse workforce and providing an inclusive work environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. Harassment based on an individual's gender, gender identity, sex, race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, religion, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected characteristic, will not be tolerated in the workplace or in other work-related settings including, business trips, seminars and business-related social events. Additionally, employees should consider their conduct via social media platforms where they may interact with co-workers. These policies also apply to vendors, contractors and outside customers and visitors. All employees will acknowledge, upon hire and on an annual basis thereafter, they have read the harassment policy.

II. SCOPE:

All Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center employees.

III. PROCEDURE:

A. Sexual Harassment

1. Sexual harassment means any unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or any conduct of a sexual nature when:
 - a. Submission to such conduct is made 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 an individual; or
 - c. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.
2. Sexual harassment is not limited to sexual favors. Other examples include:
 - a. Sex-oriented verbal "teasing" or jokes;
 - b. Repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions;
 - c. Continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
 - d. Graphic or degrading comments about an individual or his/her appearance;
 - e. The display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures;
 - f. Subtle pressure for sexual activity; or
 - g. Inappropriate physical contact.

B. Other Forms of Harassment

1. Harassment is verbal, physical, visual, or other conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of race, color, religion, gender, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age,

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disability, genetic information or background, marital status, military status, gender identity, or other legally protected status, and

- a. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment;
- b. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or
- c. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities with the Health Department.

2. Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts that relate to race, color, religion, gender, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, genetic information or background, marital status, military status, gender identity, or other legally protected status; and
- b. Written or graphic material circulated, available on any Health Department electronic equipment, or posted, distributed, or maintained within the workplace that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of race, color, religion, gender, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, genetic information or background, marital status, military status, gender identity, or other legally protected status.

C. Hostile Work Environment

1. If an employee or supervisor is unsure whether verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct constitutes "harassment" under this policy, they should contact Human Resources for assistance. The following are some factors used to determine whether conduct rises to the level of a hostile work environment:
 - a. The frequency and severity of the conduct;
 - b. Whether a reasonable person would find the conduct intimidating or offensive; and
 - c. Whether the conduct unreasonably interferes with an employee's work performance.

D. Duty to Report Harassment:

All employees are responsible for ensuring that no form of unlawful harassment occurs in their workplace. If you observe such conduct or if such conduct is reported to you, you have a duty to report the incident to your supervisor, Director, the Director of Human Resources or the Human Resources Manager. Employees may report allegations directly to their Director or to Human Resources without first reporting the allegations to their supervisor. Employees may also report actions related to this policy to [EthicsPoint](#), an anonymous on-line reporting system. This service is a key piece of our Corporate Compliance Plan to ensure you are able to raise concerns or report possible improper behavior. Any employee who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment by anyone; including supervisors, coworkers, clients, or visitors should, if possible, make it clear to the offender that he or she finds such behavior offensive. However, employees are not required to confront the person accused of harassment and, in fact, should refrain from doing so

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- if they are concerned for their safety. Harassment should be reported even if an alleged victim or the alleged source of the harassment is not an employee of the Health Department. All allegations of harassment will be taken seriously and promptly investigated by Human Resources. If the investigation reveals harassment has occurred, this may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- E. Responsibilities of Supervisors:
1. If a supervisor hears about or observes any incident that may be construed as harassment, they are required to immediately report the incident to their Director, the Director of Human Resources or the Human Resources Manager, so Human Resources can initiate an investigation into the matter. Supervisors should report allegations of harassment even in situations where:
 - a. The complaint appears questionable;
 - b. The complainant has requested confidentiality;
 - c. The person being subjected to the conduct does not or refuses to complain about the conduct; or
 - d. The incident involves the conduct of non-employees or employees who do not work under their supervision.
- F. Retaliation Prohibited:
- The law prohibits retaliation against an employee who, in good faith, reports harassment or assists or cooperates in the investigation of a harassment complaint. Those individuals will not be subjected to discipline or retaliation for their cooperation in the investigation. Any threat of retaliation or attempt to do so should be reported immediately to the Director of Human Resources, the Human Resources Manager, or the employee's Director. If investigation reveals that retaliation has occurred, this may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees who feel they have been retaliated against may also be protected by the Whistle Blower Act (740 ILCS17/), the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/1-5), and the Illinois Human Rights Act (775 ILCS 5/1-101).

IV. REFERENCES:

None

V. AUTHORS/REVIEWERS:

Designated Review Team, Corporate Policy and Procedure Committee, Executive Team, and Lake County Board of Health Personnel Committee

VI. APPROVALS:

Lake County Board of Health President

Signature: _____ Date: _____