

Polk County Anti-Harassment Policy

Objective

Polk County strives to create and maintain a work environment in which people are treated with dignity, decency and respect. The environment of the company should be characterized by mutual trust and the absence of intimidation, oppression and exploitation. Employees should be able to work and learn in a safe, yet stimulating atmosphere. For that reason, Polk County will not tolerate unlawful discrimination or harassment of any kind.

All employees, regardless of their positions, are covered by and are expected to comply with this policy and to take appropriate measures to ensure that prohibited conduct does not occur. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who violates this policy. Based on the seriousness of the offense, disciplinary action may include verbal or written reprimand, suspension, demotion, or termination of employment.

Prohibited Conduct

Polk County, in compliance with all applicable federal, state and local anti-discrimination and harassment laws and regulations, enforces this policy in accordance with the following definitions and guidelines:

Discrimination

It is a violation of Polk County's policy to discriminate in the provision of employment opportunities, benefits or privileges; to create discriminatory work conditions if the basis of that discriminatory treatment is, in whole or in part, the person's race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information or marital status.

Discrimination of this kind may also be strictly prohibited by a variety of federal, state and local laws, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act 1964, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This policy is intended to comply with the prohibitions stated in these anti-discrimination laws.

Harassment

Polk County prohibits harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment, and will take appropriate and immediate action in response to complaints or knowledge of violations of this policy. For purposes of this policy, harassment is any verbal or physical conduct designed to threaten, intimidate or coerce an employee, co-worker or any person working for or on behalf of Polk County. Verbal taunting (including racial and ethnic slurs) that, in the employee's opinion, impairs his or her ability to perform his or her job is included in the definition of harassment.

The following examples of harassment are intended to be guidelines and are not exclusive when determining whether there has been a violation of this policy:

- Verbal harassment includes comments that are offensive or unwelcome regarding a person's nationality, origin, race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, body, disability or appearance, including epithets, slurs and negative stereotyping.
- Nonverbal harassment includes distribution, display or discussion of any written or graphic material that ridicules, denigrates, insults, belittles or shows hostility, aversion or disrespect toward an individual or group because of national origin, race, color, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, appearance, disability, sexual identity, marital or other protected status.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of unlawful employment discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and is also prohibited under the Polk County's Sexual Harassment policy.

Retaliation

No hardship, loss, benefit or penalty may be imposed on an employee in response to:

- Filing or responding to a bona fide complaint of discrimination or harassment.
- Appearing as a witness in the investigation of a complaint.
- Serving as an investigator of a complaint.

Retaliation or attempted retaliation in response to lodging a complaint or invoking the complaint process is a violation of this policy. Any person who is found to have violated this aspect of the policy will be subject to sanctions up to and including termination of employment.

Polk County will courteously treat any person who invokes this complaint procedure, and will handle all complaints swiftly and confidentially to the extent possible. Lodging a complaint will in no way be used against the employee or have an adverse impact on the individual's employment status. Because of the damaging nature of harassment to the victims and to the entire workforce, aggrieved employees are strongly urged to use this procedure. However, filing groundless or malicious complaints is an abuse of this policy and will be treated as a violation.

Confidentiality

The employee assistance program (EAP) provides confidential counseling services to Polk County employees. Individuals wishing to discuss an incident confidentially or seeking information and advice of a personal nature are encouraged to contact the EAP. The role of the EAP in such cases will be limited to personal counseling and treatment for the person who is then an EAP client. Contacting the EAP will not qualify as notification to Polk County of a potential harassment or discrimination issue (see below complaint procedure for more on how to notify the company of an issue or complaint).

All complaints filed under these procedures are confidential and this policy prohibits the intimidation, reprisals and/or retaliation against any person who files a complaint under these procedures or with other enforcement agencies. The expressed wishes of the

complaining person for confidentiality will be considered in the context of the company's legal obligation to act on the charge and the right of the charged party to obtain information. In most cases, however, confidentiality will be strictly maintained by Polk County and those involved in the investigation. In addition, any notes or documents written by or received by the person(s) conducting the investigation will be kept confidential to the extent possible and according to any existing state or federal law.

Complaint procedure

Any person who feels that they have encountered harassment may file a complaint with the Labor Relations Manager. The Labor Relations Manager or the Benefits-LM Administer will assist the complainant in filling out the appropriate form/report and offer any other technical assistance needed. Complaints should be filed as soon as possible following any alleged harassment.

The Labor Relations Manager will investigate the complaint and present the findings to the Director of Human Resources no later than 20 work days after it is received. Before a determination is rendered by the Human Resources Director, the complainant, if desired, will be given the opportunity to appear before the Director of Human Resources to offer any additional information relative to the case.

The Human Resources Director will have 15 work days upon receipt of the information from the Labor Relations Manager to render a determination. In the event the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, the complainant shall be advised of the outcome and shall be given the opportunity to file with other federal and state enforcement agencies.

When a "finding of fact" of harassment is determined, corrective action will be taken immediately. The scope of disciplinary action shall range from a written warning, reprimand, suspension without pay, demotion, or possible termination.

Contact: Human Resources
(515) 286-3200

Effective: 03/06/2018