

Harassment Policy

The Court has a policy of zero tolerance with respect to unlawful harassment of its employees by anyone. The Court expressly prohibits any form of harassment, discrimination or ill treatment based on an employee's race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, uniformed service member status, or the exercise of any legal rights. Also, interference with the ability of other employees to perform their expected job duties will not be tolerated.

In addition, Louisiana law requires all public agencies within the state to have a policy which specifically states that unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, physical, or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when the conduct implicitly affects an individual's employment or the holding of office, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment and shall not be tolerated.

Though sexual harassment encompasses a wide-range of conduct, some examples of specifically prohibited conduct include the following:

- Physical assaults of a sexual nature, such as rape, sexual battery, molestation or attempts to commit these assaults, and intentional physical conduct that is sexual in nature, such as touching, pinching, grabbing, brushing against another employee's body or poking another employee's body.
- Unwelcome sexual advances, propositions or other sexual comments, such as sexually oriented gestures, noises, remarks, jokes, or comments about a person's sexuality or sexual experience.
- Preferential treatment or promises of preferential treatment to an employee for submitting to sexual conduct, including soliciting or attempting to solicit any employee to engage in sexual activity for compensation or reward.
- Subjecting, or threats of subjecting, an employee to unwelcome sexual attention or conduct or intentionally making performance of employee's job more difficult because of that employee's sex.
- Sexual or discriminatory displays or publications anywhere in the court's workplace by court employees.

If an employee feels that he or she is being subjected to harassment (sexual or otherwise) he or she may immediately inform the harasser that the conduct is unwelcome and needs to stop. If the inappropriate conduct does not cease, or if the employee is unable to or uncomfortable with addressing the alleged harasser directly, he or she should report the incident to his or her own supervisor or other appropriate party listed in this policy.

Our mission is to provide a work environment in which all employees and affiliates of the Court (including our clientele, vendors and independent consultants), are free from unlawful or otherwise improper harassment. However, we cannot put a stop to harassment if we are not aware of it. Therefore, it is critical for any employee who experiences or witnesses possible harassment to report it promptly.

If you believe that your supervisor or anyone else is harassing you, or you believe you have witnessed an incident of harassment, you must bring your concerns to an individual designated

by this policy. Even though you have a choice as to whom you may report harassment, it is every employee's responsibility to promptly report any relevant concerns either to their supervisor, another supervisor, the Judicial Administrator or Deputy Judicial Administrators, or a Judge. Whomever you chose to report an incident of harassment will ensure that your complaint is handled appropriately. If you report to a Judge, the Judge will promptly submit a report to the Judicial Administrator. You will be asked to provide an account of the incident(s), including the identification of any witnesses.

The Court has an obligation to investigate any such reports and the investigator must discuss the complaint with the complainant and the accused harasser. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the entire investigatory process to the extent possible and appropriate under the circumstances to protect the privacy of persons involved. However, the Court cannot guarantee complete confidentiality where it would conflict with the Court's obligation to investigate.

The Court will not retaliate against any employee who makes a good faith report of possible harassment. Retaliatory or intimidating conduct against any individual who has made a good faith harassment complaint or who has testified or assisted in any manner in an investigation is specifically prohibited and shall provide grounds for a separate complaint and/or disciplinary action against any person who retaliates. Examples of such retaliatory or intimidating conduct include unsupported disciplinary acts, changing working conditions without cause, intentionally providing inaccurate and/or misleading information concerning a work-related matter, or refusing to cooperate and/or discuss a work-related matter with any individual who has either initiated or participated in the investigation of a harassment complaint. The initiation of a good faith complaint of harassment by an employee will not reflect negatively on that employee nor will it affect the employee's rights, privileges, or working conditions.

Employees who violate this policy are subject to appropriate discipline. If an investigation results in a finding that this policy has been violated, the mandatory discipline is a written reprimand. The discipline for a very serious or repeat violations is termination of employment. Persons who violate this policy may also be subject to civil damages or criminal penalties under federal and/or state laws.