



HORRY COUNTY
FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT
PROUD * PREPARED * PROFESSIONAL



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

APPROVED BY GARRY B. ALDERMAN, FIRE CHIEF:

DATE: 25 February 2009

SOP 407

**HARASSMENT PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEER
PERSONNEL**

1.01 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Horry County is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free from discrimination and in which volunteers at all levels can devote their full attention and best efforts to the job. Harassment has no place in the work environment. The County does not authorize and will not tolerate any form of harassment based on the following factors:

Race, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, religion, or any other characteristic that is protected by law.

This policy applies to all volunteers and even to non-county employees who harass our volunteers.

2.01 HARASSMENT

Examples of harassment that are covered by this policy include offensive language, jokes, or other physical, verbal, written, or pictorial conduct relating to the volunteer's sex, race, religion, national origin, age, disability, or other factor protected by law that would make a reasonable person experiencing such behavior feel uncomfortable or would interfere with the person's work performance.

The examples below are just that—examples. It is impossible to list every type of behavior that can be considered harassment in violation of this policy. In general, any conduct based on these traits that could interfere with an individual's work performance or could create an offensive environment will be considered harassment in violation of this policy. ***This is the case even if the offending volunteer did not mean to be offensive. It is essential that volunteers be sensitive to the feelings of others.***

3.01 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment (whether opposite-sex or same-sex) is strictly prohibited. Examples of the types of behavior that are considered sexual harassment in violation of this policy include:

- Sexually offensive jokes or comments;
- Physical assaults or other touching that is sexual in nature;
- Promising favorable treatment or threatening unfavorable treatment based on the volunteer's response to sexual demands;
- Displays of sexually oriented reading materials or pictures, including electronic materials;
- Punishing a volunteer for complaining of sexual harassment.

4.01 HARASSMENT BASED ON RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, AGE, DISABILITY, OR RELIGION

Harassment based on these other traits deserves special mention and is also strictly prohibited. Examples of the types of behavior that will be considered harassment based on these characteristics include:

- Jokes or negative comments about these characteristics;
- Displays of reading materials or pictures containing negative material about these characteristics, including electronic materials;
- Vandalism or "pranks" based on these characteristics;
- Name-calling based on these characteristics;
- Punishing a volunteer for complaining of these types of harassment.

5.01 REPORTING HARASSMENT

The County cannot resolve matters that it does not know about. Every volunteer has a duty to immediately report harassment so that the County can try to resolve the situation. You should report harassment when:

- You feel that you have been harassed;
- You have seen someone else be harassed.

This is true whether the alleged harasser is a volunteer, an employee, a supervisor or manager, or even a non-employee, such as a vendor with whom the County does business.

To report harassment, you must contact your supervisor, Department Head, the Human Resources Director, Division Director, or the County Administrator. These individuals will respond appropriately to reports of harassment. A complaint must be filed through the process described in this policy, however, in order for an investigation to take place.

Any alleged harassment reported to a Supervisor or the Supervisor and/or Department Head must be immediately reported to the Human Resources Director, relevant Division Director, or the County Administrator.

Once your report has been received, the County will:

- Conduct a prompt and thorough investigation;
- Discuss the results with the complaining volunteer and, where appropriate, the action to be taken;
- Keep the investigation and results as confidential as possible;
- If the complaint is verified, take appropriate corrective action, up through and including termination.

No volunteer will be punished for bringing a report of harassment to the County's attention or for cooperating in an investigation.

6.01 OUR COMMITMENT TO AN EFFECTIVE NO-HARASSMENT POLICY

Finally, if you feel that the County has not met its obligations under this policy, or if you are not satisfied with the way in which your report of harassment was handled, you should contact the County Administrator. An effective No-Harassment policy depends on all of us, working together, to address this very important subject.

For further information concerning your rights to a work environment free of sexual harassment, including Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC") charge filing deadlines, please consult the EEOC poster posted on the County's bulletin board.