

Discriminatory Harassment

315.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to prevent office members from being subjected to discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment and retaliation ([La. R.S. 42:342](#)). Nothing in this policy is intended to create a legal or employment right or duty that is not created by law.

315.2 POLICY

The Ascension Parish Sheriff's Office is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment that is free of all forms of discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment and retaliation. The Office will not tolerate discrimination against a member in hiring, promotion, discharge, compensation, fringe benefits and other privileges of employment. The Office will take preventive and corrective action to address any behavior that violates this policy or the rights and privileges it is designed to protect.

The nondiscrimination policies of the Office may be more comprehensive than state or federal law. Conduct that violates this policy may not violate state or federal law but still could subject a member to discipline.

315.3 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

315.3.1 DISCRIMINATION

The Office prohibits all forms of discrimination, including any employment-related action by a member that adversely affects an applicant or member and is based on actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, pregnancy, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and any other classification or status protected by law, including sickle cell trait, and discrimination with regard to veterans attending certain required medical appointments ([42 USC 2000e et seq.](#); [La. R.S. 23:301 et seq.](#)) (26.1.3).

Discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, is verbal or physical conduct that demeans or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual based upon that individual's protected class. It has the effect of interfering with an individual's work performance or creating a hostile or abusive work environment.

Conduct that may, under certain circumstances, constitute discriminatory harassment can include making derogatory comments; making crude and offensive statements or remarks; making slurs or off-color jokes; stereotyping; engaging in threatening acts; making indecent gestures, pictures, cartoons, posters, or material; making inappropriate physical contact; or using written material or office equipment and/or systems to transmit or receive offensive material, statements, or pictures. Such conduct is contrary to office policy and to a work environment that is free of discrimination.

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315.3.2 RETALIATION

Retaliation is treating a person differently or engaging in acts of reprisal or intimidation against the person because the person has engaged in protected activity, filed a charge of discrimination, participated in an investigation, or opposed a discriminatory practice. Retaliation will not be tolerated.

315.3.3 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Office prohibits all forms of discrimination and discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment ([La. R.S. 42:342](#)). It is unlawful to harass an applicant or a member because of that person's sex.

Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when ([La. R.S. 42:342](#)):

- A. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of employment, position, or compensation.
- B. Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is used as the basis for any employment decisions affecting the member.
- C. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a member's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

315.3.4 ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Discrimination and discriminatory harassment do not include actions that are in accordance with established rules, principles, or standards, including:

- A. Acts or omission of acts based solely upon bona fide occupational qualifications under the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guidelines and the Louisiana Employment Discrimination Law ([La. R.S. 23:301 et seq.](#)).
- B. Bona fide requests or demands by a supervisor that the member improve the member's work quality or output, that the member report to the job site on time, that the member comply with parish or office rules or regulations, or any other appropriate work-related communication between supervisor and member.

315.4 RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy applies to all office members, who shall follow the intent of these guidelines in a manner that reflects office policy, professional standards, and the best interest of the Office and its mission.

Members are encouraged to promptly report any discriminatory, retaliatory, or harassing conduct or known violations of this policy to a supervisor. Any member who is not comfortable with reporting violations of this policy to the member's immediate supervisor may bypass the chain of command and make the report to a higher-ranking supervisor or manager. Complaints may also be filed with the Sheriff, the H.R. Supervisor, or the Chief Deputy.

Any member who believes, in good faith, that the member has been discriminated against, harassed, or subjected to retaliation, or who has observed harassment, discrimination, or

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retaliation, is encouraged to promptly report such conduct in accordance with the procedures set forth in this policy.

Supervisors and managers receiving information regarding alleged violations of this policy shall determine if there is any basis for the allegation and shall proceed with a resolution as stated below.

315.4.1 ALLEGED WORKPLACE HARASSMENT BY EMPLOYEES

Employees who believe they have been harassed by an employee should tell the person or persons harassing them that their behavior is offensive and must stop. If an employee is not comfortable confronting that person, or if the harassment continues, the employee should immediately report the harassment to a first-line supervisor, or any supervisor, or ranking person who is not involved in the event.

315.4.2 QUESTIONS OR CLARIFICATION

Members with questions regarding what constitutes discrimination, sexual harassment or retaliation are encouraged to contact a supervisor, a manager, the Sheriff, the H.R. Supervisor or the Chief Deputy for further information, direction or clarification.

315.4.3 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of supervisors and managers shall include but are not limited to:

- A. Continually monitoring the work environment and striving to ensure that it is free from all types of unlawful discrimination, including harassment or retaliation.
- B. Taking prompt, appropriate action within their work units to avoid and minimize the incidence of any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.
- C. Ensuring that their subordinates understand their responsibilities under this policy.
- D. Ensuring that members who make complaints or who oppose any unlawful employment practices are protected from retaliation and that such matters are kept confidential to the extent possible.
- E. Making a timely determination regarding the substance of any allegation based upon all available facts.
- F. Notifying the Sheriff, the H.R. Supervisor, or Chief Deputy in writing of the circumstances surrounding any reported allegations or observed acts of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation no later than the next business day.

315.4.4 SUPERVISOR'S ROLE

Supervisors and managers shall be aware of the following:

- A. Behavior of supervisors and managers should represent the values of the Office and professional standards.
- B. False or mistaken accusations of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation can have negative effects on the careers of innocent members.

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Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent supervisors or managers from discharging supervisory or management responsibilities, such as determining duty assignments, evaluating or counseling members, or issuing discipline in a manner that is consistent with established procedures.

315.5 INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS

Various methods of resolution exist. During the pendency of any such investigation, the supervisor of the involved member should take prompt and reasonable steps to mitigate or eliminate any continuing abusive or hostile work environment. It is the policy of the Office that all complaints of discrimination, retaliation or harassment shall be fully documented and promptly and thoroughly investigated.

For procedures related to the investigation of complaints, refer to the Ascension Parish Sheriff's Office Procedure Manual: [Complaint Investigation Procedures](#).

315.5.1 SUPERVISOR RESOLUTION

Members who believe they are experiencing discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should be encouraged to inform the individual that the behavior is unwelcome, offensive, unprofessional, or inappropriate. However, if the member feels uncomfortable or threatened or has difficulty expressing the member's concern, or if this does not resolve the concern, assistance should be sought from a supervisor or manager who is a rank higher than the alleged transgressor.

315.5.2 FORMAL INVESTIGATION

If the complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved through the supervisory resolution process, a formal investigation will be conducted.

The person assigned to investigate the complaint will have full authority to investigate all aspects of the complaint. Investigative authority includes access to records and the cooperation of any members involved. No influence will be used to suppress any complaint and no member will be subject to retaliation or reprisal for filing a complaint, encouraging others to file a complaint, or for offering testimony or evidence in an investigation.

Formal investigation of the complaint will be confidential to the extent possible and will include, but is not limited to, details of the specific incident, frequency and dates of occurrences, and names of any witnesses. Witnesses will be advised regarding the prohibition against retaliation, and that a disciplinary process, up to and including termination, may result if retaliation occurs.

Members who believe they have been discriminated against, harassed or retaliated against because of their protected status are encouraged to follow the chain of command but may also file a complaint directly with the Sheriff, H.R. Supervisor, or the Chief Deputy.

315.5.3 ALTERNATIVE COMPLAINT PROCESS

No provision of this policy shall be construed to prevent any member from seeking legal redress outside the Office. Members who believe that they have been harassed, discriminated against, or retaliated against are entitled to bring complaints of employment discrimination to federal, state,

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and/or local agencies responsible for investigating such allegations. Specific time limitations apply to the filing of such charges. Members are advised that proceeding with complaints under the provisions of this policy does not in any way affect those filing requirements.

315.5.4 REQUIREMENTS FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT INVESTIGATIONS

The following additional requirements apply to any investigation process related to sexual harassment complaints ([La. R.S. 42:342](#)):

- A. A complainant and the accused member are required to participate in the investigation process (see the Standards of Conduct Policy).
- B. Upon conclusion of the investigation, any disciplinary action taken against an involved member, including against a complainant if applicable, will be administered in accordance with the Personnel Complaints Policy.

315.6 DOCUMENTATION OF COMPLAINTS

All complaints or allegations shall be thoroughly documented on the appropriate forms and in a manner designated by the Sheriff. The outcome of all reports shall be:

- A. Approved by the Sheriff, the Chief Deputy or the H.R. Supervisor, depending on the ranks of the involved parties.
- B. Maintained in accordance with the established records retention schedule.

315.6.1 NOTIFICATION OF DISPOSITION

The complainant and/or victim will be notified of the disposition of the investigation and the actions taken to remedy or address the circumstances giving rise to the complaint.

315.7 TRAINING

All members shall receive annual training on the requirements of this policy and shall acknowledge and certify that they have reviewed the policy, understand its contents and agree that they will continue to abide by its provisions.

315.7.1 SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION TRAINING

The Director of Training shall ensure that all members participate annually in sexual harassment prevention training as required by [La. R.S. 42:343](#). Supervisors and office members who are designated to accept or investigate complaints of sexual harassment should receive additional training as prescribed by the Sheriff([La . R.S. 42:343](#)).

315.8 POSTING

This policy and the office compliant procedure should be made available on the office website or the office should post a notice that includes how to obtain the information in each Ascension office ([La. R.S. 42:343](#)).

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315.9 ANNUAL REPORTING

The Administration Division Commander is responsible for compiling information to demonstrate the office's compliance with Title 42, Chapter 6 (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) in the timeframe prescribed by [La. R.S. 42:344](#).