



# RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE POLICY

**Effective Date: January 20, 2014**

<b>Owner</b>	Human Resources
<b>Reviewer(s)</b>	Human Resources
<b>Approver(s)</b>	County Manager
<b>Applicable Policies</b>	Grievance Policy
<b>Applicable Documents</b>	N/A
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## 1. PURPOSE

Durham County provides a workplace that is free from all discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

## 2. POLICY

The policy establishes that County services are performed without regard to race, sex, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, or any other non-merit factor, except where religion or sex are bona fide occupational qualifications for employment, and where disability does not create an unreasonable barrier to satisfactory job performance with or without accommodation. The County prohibits all conduct by its employees, consultants, contractors, vendors, and suppliers, which falls under the definition of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. In addition, the policy establishes procedures for the investigation and resolution of complaints about discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.

## 3. APPLICABILITY

All County employees covered by the Personnel Ordinance, and all those pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding; subcontractors, vendors and suppliers.

## 4. DEFINITIONS

Discrimination - Engaging in behavior that demonstrates favor of or against, a person based on the group, class, or category to which that person belongs rather than on individual merit.

Grievance - An employee-initiated process in response to any disciplinary action, working condition or application of policies, procedures or practices, or allegations of discrimination, retaliation, and harassment with which the employee does not agree.

Harassment - Engaging in behavior which is unwelcome or offensive to or retaliatory against an employee or group of employees based on their race, religion, color, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability or political affiliation and which affects an employee's conditions of employment; or interferes with an employee's ability to perform his or her job; or creates an intimidating or hostile work environment.



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Hostile Environment - A workplace that has become intimidating or offensive due to conduct of employees which is threatening in nature.

Retaliation- Unfavorable treatment which occurs as a result of reported workplace harassment or discrimination.

## 5. PROCEDURE

### General Standards and Expectations

The County disapproves of sexual, racial, disability, national origin, citizenship status, age, genetic information, veteran, religious, and all other forms of discrimination or harassment of any employee, whether it is by a co-worker, a manager, a customer, or a vendor. Sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexual or racial jokes; racial, ethnic, national origin, or disability slurs; and other harassing language or conduct have no place in our business. In addition, physical conduct of a sexual nature will not be tolerated. It is expected that employees will treat one another with mutual respect and dignity. Harassment, of any type, by any employee, is grounds for immediate dismissal.

#### A. Responsibilities

- Employees are expected to act responsibly to maintain a respectful working environment and must report knowledge of discrimination or harassment.
- Any employee who is aware of any instances of discrimination or harassment should report the alleged behavior immediately to a non-offending supervisor or to Human Resources.
- Supervisors and managers who receive a discrimination or harassment complaint must immediately contact Human Resources.

#### B. Retaliation Prohibited

- Any employee found to have harassed or discriminated against another employee or a customer will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
- No employee will be subject to retaliation for reporting harassment or discrimination.

#### C. Protection for Complainants

- Employees and applicants are protected from coercion, intimidation, interference, and discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation under the laws and County policies covering these individuals.

#### D. Religious Accommodations

- The County will reasonably accommodate the religious observances and practices of an employee or applicant unless such accommodation creates an undue hardship.



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- Any employee who requires a religious accommodation should speak with Human Resources.

## E. Periodic Review

- Periodic reviews will ensure that personnel decisions are in full accord with the principles and spirit of equal employment opportunity law.

## F. How to File a Grievance

### I. Informal Resolution:

- a. If possible, the employee or third party who feels a violation has occurred is encouraged to have a conversation with the other individual(s) involved.
- b. Employees and third parties are encouraged to speak with their supervisor or Human Resources office for assistance or guidance on how to resolve the situation
- c. If the concern is about the supervisor or manager, parties are encouraged to contact the Human Resources office to determine options for resolution.

### II. Formal Complaints

- a. An employee must submit the written grievance along with supporting attachments to Human Resources to report allegations of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.
- b. All verbal communication will be documented; however, the employee is required to submit a written statement of these allegations. Refer to the Grievance Policy.
- c. Former employees may also submit the written grievance to Human Resources within 180 calendar days of separation to report alleged acts of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation for filing a prior grievance. Refer to the Grievance Policy.

## 6. RESPONSIBILITY

- It is the responsibility of Durham County supervisors and managers to uniformly administer, communicate, and ensure compliance.
- It is the responsibility of the Human Resources Department to interpret, monitor, and update the policy content.
- It is all employees' responsibility to comply with policy guidelines.
- Any violation or policy misuse will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

## REVISION HISTORY

Version ID	Revision Date	Author	Reason for Revision
v.1.0-2014	01-20-2014	Human Resources	Adopted
v.2.0-2025	07-01-2025	Human Resources	Definitions, verbiage