

Polk County Wisconsin

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Policy 703

Effective Date: 03-15-94

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3-11-08, 9-21-10**

Polk County is committed to providing a work environment that is free of sexual harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment (both overt and subtle) is a form of misconduct that is demeaning to another person and undermines the integrity of the employment relationship. Sexual harassment by any employee, elected official, or County Board member of Polk County is strictly prohibited. In addition, acts of sexual harassment by members of the public that create a hostile work environment for any employee, elected official, County Board member, or other member of the public are strictly prohibited.

Specifically, sexual harassment is defined as:

- 1) Threat of retaliation against for refusal, or promises of rewards to an employee in return for the granting of sexual acts or favors. Such threats or promises include but are not limited to such job related areas as termination, promotion, transfers, employee evaluation, or monetary or other valuable compensation.
- 2) Any physical, verbal, or nonverbal action of an employee, elected official, County Board member, or member of the public, or a physical attribute of the workplace that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment for another employee, elected official, County Board member, or member of the public. This includes but is not limited to:

offensive language, jokes, gestures, or comments

sexually oriented material such as pictures, calendars, graffiti, or objects

Any employee, elected official, County Board member, or member of the public who wishes to report an incident of sexual harassment should promptly report the matter to the Employee Relations Director. If the Employee Relations Director is unavailable or the individual believes it would be inappropriate to contact the Employee Relations Director, the individual should immediately contact the Corporation Counsel or County Administrator. Individuals can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. All reports filed shall be kept strictly confidential.

Any supervisor or manager who becomes aware of possible sexual or other harassment shall promptly report the incident to the Employee Relations Director.

The Employee Relations Director, or if there is a potential conflict of interest the Corporation Counsel, County Administrator, or outside legal counsel, shall be responsible for conducting a complete and thorough investigation of all complaints filed under this policy. Investigations of complaints filed involving an elected official, the County Administrator, or a County Board Supervisor will immediately be turned over to outside legal counsel. All investigations will be confidential in nature, and shall protect the identity of both the party filing the complaint and of the person the complaint is filed against.

Upon completion of the investigation, the Employee Relations Director, County Administrator, or the Corporation Counsel shall issue a determination of facts and a recommendation of action to the Personnel Committee. Recommendations of action shall include all necessary steps to correct and alleviate the complaint, and may include disciplinary action against an employee, elected official, or County Board member who violates this policy.

The Personnel Committee or County Administrator shall take such action as is recommended and any further action that is required to address the issues raised in the complaint. Any disciplinary action taken by the County Administrator shall be appropriate to the severity of the violation of this policy, and may include termination. Disciplinary actions taken under this policy shall be subject to the procedural requirements of the County's progressive discipline policy. Elected officials and County Board members who violate this policy may be subject to a vote of censure or removal from office pursuant to Sec. 17.09 Wis. Stat., and the rules of order of the County Board.