

## **San Luis Obispo County Policy Against Discriminatory Harassment**

It is the policy of San Luis Obispo County that all employees shall have a working environment free of unlawful discrimination. A businesslike workplace assures courteous treatment for both employees and the public we serve. Harassment of an applicant or employee by a supervisor, manager or coworker on the basis of race, religion, national origin, marital status, disability, age, sex or sexual orientation is employee misconduct that constitutes illegal discrimination and is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination. San Luis Obispo County requires that all employees treat the public and other employees with courtesy and respect.

**Discriminatory Harassment:** Includes unwelcome derogatory comments, physical acts, written or visual insults which are made on the basis of an employee's protected status. The harassing conduct unreasonably interferes with an employee's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

**Sexual Harassment:** Includes unwelcome sexual overtures by any officer, employee, supervisor or manager, whether written, verbal, physical or visual where submission is made a term or condition of employment or the basis of an employment decision. Sexually harassing conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

**Because the County seeks to prevent any form of illegal harassment, behavior such as unnecessary touching, sexual or discriminatory remarks or joking, which may lead to illegal harassment, will not be tolerated.**

Often, simply telling someone of the offensive nature of his/her behavior will resolve the problem. If possible, an employee should inform the harasser that his/her behavior is unwelcome, offensive, in poor taste, and highly inappropriate. An employee who wishes to seek advice is encouraged to contact the County's Affirmative Action Office at telephone number (805) 781-5959. Confidential advice is also available from the County's Employee Assistance Program at telephone number (800) 999-7222.

When an employee's efforts to resolve the discriminatory harassment concern are unsuccessful, or when an employee feels uncomfortable or threatened in raising the issue with the harasser, the employee is urged to:

1. Advise, in writing, closest level supervisor not a part of the problem, the department's Harassment Prevention Coordinator, or departmental personnel staff of the situation and/or
2. Make a complaint to the Personnel Department which will be investigated with the appointing authority.

**Please note:** It is the policy of the County to investigate all allegations of discriminatory harassment, including those in which anonymity is requested. Departmental supervisors, managers, personnel staff or Harassment Prevention Coordinators who receive complaints of discriminatory harassment including sexual harassment must document the complaint and advise the Personnel Department. At that time, a determination will be made by the Personnel Department in conjunction with the Department regarding an investigation into the alleged discriminatory harassment. The Personnel Department will ensure that allegations of discriminatory/illegal harassment are investigated. All departments must report to the Personnel Director the number and type of discriminatory harassment complaints received, the parties involved, the result of any investigation, and the action taken.

Further, every employee has the right to use the formal written grievance procedures of the Civil Service Commission. The Personnel Department Affirmative Action Officer (extension 5959) is available to discuss inquiries, formal and informal complaints and appropriate solutions.

Employees are also advised that state and federal enforcement agencies are available to provide protection to victims of discriminatory harassment. Those agencies are cited below:

<u>Agency:</u>	<u>Telephone No.</u>
State of California Fair Employment and Housing (Ventura Office)	(800) 884-1684
United States Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (Los Angeles Office)	(800) 669-4000