

GREEN GOLD LIBRARY CONSORTIUM SEXUAL HARRASSMENT POLICY

Sexual harassment - is defined as: "Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, physical, or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature when the conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment or the holding of office, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment" **Sexual harassment will not be tolerated.**

Ordinary socializing, horseplay, and flirtation should not be mistaken for discriminatory conditions of employment. Only behavior so offensive, severe, and pervasive as to alter work conditions is forbidden by law.

[Since sexual harassment is still undergoing changes in its definition, we present several pertinent RECENT quotes which may help clarify.]

Sexual harassment is: "intentional, uninvited workplace behavior related to a person's gender or sexuality that interferes with a person's ability to do work or which affects one's job status."

Sexual harassment is: a workplace situation in which employees are "subjected to unwelcome sexual remarks or advances that affect their work performance or make the work environment intimidating or hostile or uncomfortable."

[Sexual] discrimination occurs whenever "the environment would reasonably be perceived, or is perceived, as hostile or abusive..."

EXAMPLES

Physical Sexual Harassment

Examples of unacceptable *physical* sexual harassment include:

1. "Cornering, pinching, patting, stroking, touching, kissing, grabbing, hugging, and bumping"
2. "Coerced sexual intercourse and assault"

There are some *gray areas*. Other physical contact which may be appropriate in many contexts (e.g., patting on the back), **may** be considered sexual harassment when it "continues even after the individual makes it clear that it is unwanted" or when it causes "uneasiness or displeasure."

Non-Physical Sexual Harassment

Examples of unacceptable *nonphysical* sexual harassment include:

1. "Jokes of a sexual nature or those that put down members of a particular gender"
2. "Repeated invitations to social activities when the recipient has indicated that he or she is not interested"
3. "Threats, including hints or blatant statements that indicate...submission to sexual overtures will affect employment"

There are *gray areas* here, too. Comments about "someone's body or dress" or "personal characteristics" -- even if intended as innocent compliments -- **may** be considered harassment under some circumstances. (For example, if such "compliments" continue after the individual has indicated these remarks are unwelcome, it would probably be considered harassment.)

Other Sexual Harassment

Examples of *other* unacceptable behavior/situations:

1. "Displaying sexually oriented materials or sexist cartoons, magazines, or calendars"
2. "Obscene gestures"
3. "Displaying obscene photographs and literature"

One of these *gray areas*: some consider "insults about women in general" to be a form of sexual harassment; others do not.

REPORTING

No staff member is required to take sexual harassment from anyone, be it patron, fellow employee, supervisor, or administrative personnel. Using the following **chain of command**, inform a superior:

1. Person in charge for the day
2. Your regularly assigned supervisor
3. The Human Resources Coordinator
4. The Director
5. Any Library Board member
6. Any Policy Jury member
7. The District Attorney

HARASSMENT INVOLVING PATRONS

Remember, any person who you feel is violating these rights must be **immediately** informed of the violation. Please do so in a calm and professional manner. If service must be refused, **DO NOT** engage in a verbal or physical altercation with the person. If necessary, leave the floor and/or inform the supervisor in charge. If, after assessing the situation, the ranking staff member feels it necessary, the police may be called and asked to remove the person from the premises.

Any staff member may ask to be relieved from serving any patron for just cause. Any staff member who feels they are being personally targeted by a patron for a negative encounter may ask to leave the floor when the person is in the area.

Each staff member is entitled, within reasonable limits, to determine the amount of space needed to perform a given task efficiently. A patron may be informed that in order to receive service, it is necessary for him/her to remain outside of this area. If the patron will not comply, service may be refused on that occasion. This action must be **DOCUMENTED**, complete with **DATE**. If a pattern of **DOCUMENTED** events emerges, the patron may be informed that staff members will no longer perform that service.

No staff member is required to engage in personal conversation with any patron. Politely and professionally refuse. It is your prerogative whether or not to give a patron your last name. Each patron should be rendered service in accordance with his or her behavior in the library. As much as possible, personal knowledge of outside activities should not be a factor in the services rendered to a patron, unless such activities **DIRECTLY** involve the library or staff member.

Our goal is to render outstanding service to each person. In return, we expect the public to treat us with dignity and respect. Do not accept anything less from yourself or the public.

HARASSMENT INVOLVING CO-WORKERS

Unreasonably interfering with a coworker in the performance of his/her job for any reason is also considered inappropriate behavior and will not be tolerated.

If an employee experiences or witnesses sexual or other unlawful harassment at work, report it immediately to your supervisor. If your supervisor is unavailable or you believe it would be inappropriate to discuss it with your supervisor, you should immediately contact the Human Resources Coordinator, the Director, or any other member of management. There will not be punishment or reprisal against an individual for filing a complaint or testifying or participating in any way in an investigation or other proceeding involving a complaint of sexual harassment.

The employee **must** follow-up with a written description of the alleged harassment. To the extent possible, your confidentiality and the confidentiality of any witnesses and the alleged harasser will be protected against unnecessary disclosure. When the investigation is completed, you will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

Upon receipt of a written description, all allegations of harassment will be quickly and discreetly investigated. The person who allegedly engaged in the harassment will be contacted and allowed to respond.

Any supervisor or manager who becomes aware of possible harassment must immediately advise the Human Resources Coordinator, the Director, or any member of management so it can be investigated in a timely and confidential manner.

Disciplinary action will be taken if appropriate. Depending on the type and extent of alleged harassment--and the degree to which it is clearly *established* in the investigation--the employee responsible may receive:

1. Warning
2. Official reprimand
3. Suspension/probation
4. Termination
5. Other (depending on circumstances)

The administrator investigating the allegation will schedule a follow-up conference with the employee who was being harassed to determine whether the alleged behavior has ceased.

All employees of the Green Gold Library Consortium are required to complete annual sexual harassment training. Failure to do so and provide a completion certificate can result in suspension or termination.