

1.10 GENERAL HARASSMENT

Austin County is committed to a workplace free of harassment. Harassment includes unlawful, unwelcomed words, acts or displays based on sex, including lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender status, sexual orientation or gender identity, race, color, religion, national origin, age, genetic information, pregnancy, disability, family or military leave status or veteran's status. Such conduct becomes harassment when (1) the submission to the conduct is made condition of employment; (2) the submission to, or rejection of, the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision; or (3) the conduct creates an offensive, intimidating or hostile working environment or interferes with work performance.

Harassment is strictly prohibited by Austin County whether committed by an Elected Official, Appointed Official, Department Head, co-worker or non-employee with whom the County does business.

Employees who feel they have been harassed should immediately report the situation to the Elected Official, Appointed Official or Department Head who is responsible for the department in which they work. If, for any reason, the employee feels that REPORTING the harassment to the Official or Department Head may not be the best course of action, the report should be made to the County Judge or to the County Attorney.

Every reported complaint will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. While all claims of harassment shall be handled with discretion, there can be no complete assurance of full confidentiality. The Official or Department Head to which a claim has been reported shall be responsible for seeing that prompt action is taken to investigate the claim.

Once the investigation is complete, the employee making the claim shall be notified of the result of the investigation and any actions which are to be taken.

Retaliation against an employee who reports harassment or who cooperated in the investigation is prohibited by law as well as this policy. Employees who feel they have been subjected to illegal retaliation should immediately report the situation to the Elected Official, Appointed Official, or Department Head who is responsible for the department in which they work. If, for any reason, the employee feels that REPORTING the retaliation to the Official or Department Head may not be the best course of action, the report should be made to the County Judge or County Attorney.

Remedial action will be taken in accordance with the circumstances when the County determines unlawful harassment or retaliation has occurred, up to and including termination