



THE TOWN OF LANCASTER DISCRIMINATORY HARASSMENT POLICY

I. Introduction

It is the goal of the Town of Lancaster to promote a workplace that is free of discriminatory harassment ("Harassment") of any type, including sexual harassment. Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal or physical, that is based on a characteristic protected by law, such as gender, race, color, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, genetic information, gender identity, sexual orientation, military or veteran status or participation in discrimination-complaint-related activities. The Town of Lancaster will not tolerate harassing conduct that affects employment conditions, that interferes unreasonably with an individual's performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

The Town of Lancaster prohibits any conduct towards its employees that could be Harassment, to the extent that conduct occurs in the workplace, in connection with work-related travel, and/or at work-sponsored events. Further, the Town of Lancaster prohibits retaliation against any individual who reported or complained about Harassment or assisted or cooperated with an investigation of potential Harassment.

Because the Town of Lancaster takes allegations of Harassment and retaliation seriously, we will respond promptly to reports and complaints of workplace Harassment or retaliation. Where it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly in a manner that is designed to eliminate the conduct, including corrective and/or disciplinary action as the Town of Lancaster determines is appropriate.

Please note that while this policy sets forth our goals of promoting a workplace that is free of Harassment, the policy is not designed or intended to limit our authority to discipline or take remedial action for workplace conduct which we deem unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of harassment. This means that the Town of Lancaster will take responsive action, including corrective or disciplinary action, where there is conduct that could contribute to Harassment in the workplace, without regard to whether the conduct rises to the level of "unlawful harassment."

II. Definitions

Sexual Harassment

In Massachusetts, the legal definition for sexual harassment is this: "sexual harassment" means sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- a. submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or as a basis for employment decisions; or
- b. such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work environment.

Direct or implied requests by a supervisor for sexual favors in exchange for actual or promised job benefits such as favorable reviews, salary increases, promotions, increased benefits, or continued employment is prohibited.

The definition of sexual harassment is broad. In addition to the above examples, other sexually oriented conduct, whether intended or not, that has the effect of creating a work environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating or humiliating to either male or female workers could rise to the level of unlawful harassment and is therefore prohibited.

Hostile Work Environment

The legal definition of harassment other than sexual harassment is conduct based on a legally-protected category that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive work environment.

For purposes of this policy, "Harassing Conduct" means any conduct, whether verbal or physical, that is sexual in nature or based on a characteristic protected by law, without regard to the welcomeness, severity or pervasiveness of the conduct. In order to maintain an environment free of Harassment, the Town of Lancaster prohibits Harassing Conduct in any work-related context. While it is not possible to list all those circumstances that may constitute Harassment, the following are some examples of prohibited conduct; in particular contexts, this conduct could rise to the level of unlawful harassment:

- Display or circulation of written materials or pictures that are sexual or degrading based on a legally-protected category.
- Verbal abuse, slurs, derogatory comments, or insults about a legally-protected category
- Unwelcome sexual advances-whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life; comment on an individual's body, comment about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;

- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons;
- Unwelcoming leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;
- Inquiries into one's sexual experiences; and,
- Discussion of one's sexual activities.

All employees should take special note that, as stated above, retaliation against an individual who has complained about Harassment, and retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a report of possible Harassment is prohibited and will be investigated and addressed.

III. Reporting Procedures

All employees, managers, and supervisors of the Town of Lancaster share responsibility for avoiding, discouraging and reporting any form of Harassing Conduct and/or Harassment. The primary responsibility for ensuring proper investigation and resolution of harassment complaints rests with the Town of Lancaster's EEO or Civil Rights officer or his/her designee, who will administer the policy and procedures described herein.

If any of our employees have observed or been subject to conduct that could be Harassing Conduct, the employee has the right to file a report with our organization. This may be done in writing or orally. In addition, residents, visitors, applicants, vendors, contractors, their agents and employees, or other third parties who believe they have been subjected to Harassing Conduct or Harassment by a Town employee may file a report with our organization using the procedures described herein. Furthermore, employees may also file a complaint if they have been observed or been subject to Harassing Conduct or Harassment by residents, visitors, applicants, vendors, contractors, their agents and employees, or any other third parties in the workplace, while performing work-related duties, or during other work-related activities.

Prompt reporting of Harassing Conduct is in the best interest of our organization and is essential to a fair, timely, and thorough investigation. Accordingly, reports should be filed as soon as possible following the incident(s) at issue. If you would like to file a report you may do so by contacting Orlando Pacheco, Town Administrator, Prescott Building, 701 Main Street, Suite 1, Lancaster, MA 01523, telephone number (978) 365-3326 ext. 1302 or xxxxxxxx, telephone number 978-365-3326. These individuals also are available to discuss any questions or concerns you may have and to provide information to you about our policy on harassment and our complaint process.

IV. Investigation

When we receive a report, we promptly investigate the issues in a fair and expeditious manner to determine whether there has been a violation of our policy. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances. Our investigation will usually include private interviews with the person filing the report and with witnesses whose information would be helpful to a determination of what happened. We will usually interview the person alleged to have violated the policy. Everyone is required to cooperate with all aspects of an investigation. When we have completed our investigation, we will, to the extent appropriate, inform the reporter and the

person alleged to have violated the policy of the outcome and, if appropriate, the responsive action, while maintaining privacy as appropriate on the details of specific employee information.

Notwithstanding any provision of this policy, we reserve the right to investigate and take action on our own initiative in response to behavior or conduct which may violate this policy, regardless of whether an actual report or complaint is made.

V. Disciplinary Action

If after an investigation, the Town determines that one of our employees has violated this policy, we will take responsive action as we deem appropriate under the circumstances. Such action may range from counseling or training to corrective or disciplinary action, which may include termination from employment.

VI. State and Federal Remedies

In addition to the above, if you believe you have been subjected to sexual or other discriminatory harassment or retaliation, you may file a formal complaint with either or both of the government agencies set forth below. Using our complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies. Each of the agencies requires that claims be filed within 300 days from the alleged incident or when the complainant became aware of the incident.

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC")
One Congress Street, 10th Floor
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 565-3200

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination ("MCAD") Boston Office:
One Ashburton Place, Room 601
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 727-3900

Springfield Office:
424 Dwight Street, Room 220
Springfield, MA 01103
(413) 739-2145

Worcester Office:
22 Front Street, 5th Floor
P.O. Box 8038 Worcester, MA 01641
(508) 799-6379