

Administrative Regulation

AR 4119.11 4219.11,4319.11

Personnel

Sexual Harassment

Definitions

Note: In *Oncale v. Sundowner Offshore Services, Inc.*, the Supreme Court held that same-sex sexual harassment could be actionable under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 USC 2000e-2000e-17).

Prohibited sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, unwanted requests for sexual favors, or other unwanted verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature made against another person of the same or opposite sex in the work or educational setting when: (Education Code 212.5; 5 CCR 4916)

1. Submission to the conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the individual's employment.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by the individual is used as the basis for an employment decision affecting him/her.
3. The conduct has the purpose or effect of having a negative impact upon the individual's work or has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. The conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent, pervasive, or objectively offensive so as to create a hostile or abusive working environment or to limit the individual's ability to participate in or benefit from an education program or activity.
4. Submission to or rejection of the conduct by the other individual is used as the basis for any decision affecting him/her regarding benefits, services, honors, programs, or activities available at or through the district.

Note: Pursuant to Government Code 12940, an employer may be held liable for sexual harassment committed against employees by clients, customers, or other third parties if the employer knew, or should have known, of the harassment and failed to take immediate and appropriate corrective action to stop the harassment. The following paragraph clarifies that sexual harassment may include acts by supervisors, co-workers, or other parties and should be modified to reflect district practice.

Other examples of actions that might constitute sexual harassment, whether committed by a supervisor, a co-worker, or a non-employee, in the work or educational setting, include, but are not limited to:

1. Unwelcome verbal conduct such as sexual flirtations or propositions; graphic comments about an individual's body; overly personal conversations or pressure for sexual activity; sexual jokes or stories; unwelcome sexual slurs, epithets, threats, innuendoes, derogatory comments, sexually degrading descriptions, or the spreading of sexual rumors

2. Unwelcome visual conduct such as drawings, pictures, graffiti, or gestures; sexually explicit emails; displaying sexually suggestive objects

3. Unwelcome physical conduct such as massaging, grabbing, fondling, stroking, or brushing the body; touching an individual's body or clothes in a sexual way; cornering, blocking, leaning over, or impeding normal movements

Prohibited sexual harassment may also include any act of retaliation against an individual who reports a violation of the district's sexual harassment policy or who participates in the investigation of a sexual harassment complaint.

Training

Note: Government Code 12950.1 requires any district with 50 or more employees to provide two hours of sexual harassment training and education to supervisory employees once every two years. All newly hired supervisors or employees promoted to a supervisory position must receive the training within six months of their hire or assumption of the supervisory position. Compliance with this law does not insulate the district from any liability for harassment.

Note: Pursuant to 2 CCR 7288.0, as added by Register 2007, No. 29, the definition of "supervisor" in Government Code 12926 is applicable to this training requirement. Government Code 12926 defines "supervisor" broadly as any individual having the authority to hire, transfer, suspend, lay off, promote, discharge, assign, reward, or discipline other employees or to effectively recommend that action if the exercise of that authority is not merely routine or clerical in nature. Governing Board members, as elected officials, are not usually considered "supervisors"; however, since Board members have the authority to hire, reward, or discipline the Superintendent and other employees, Board members may also be required to receive sexual harassment training. Districts should consult with legal counsel to ensure that the appropriate individuals receive training.

Note: The following section is for use by districts with 50 or more employees. Although the law does not require districts with fewer than 50 employees to provide sexual harassment training to supervisors, court decisions have held that providing training may help mitigate damages in sexual harassment suits. Districts with fewer than 50 employees may delete or modify the following section to reflect district practice.

Every two years, the Superintendent or designee shall ensure that supervisory employees receive at least two hours of classroom or other effective interactive training and education regarding sexual harassment. All newly hired or promoted supervisory employees shall receive training within six months of their assumption of the supervisory position. (Government Code 12950.1)

Note: Government Code 12950.1 and 2 CCR 7288.0, as added by Register 2007, No. 29, require that the training contain specified components and be presented by trainers or educators with knowledge and expertise in the prevention of harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. Pursuant to 2 CCR 7288.0, employers may offer computer-based training, but such training must be interactive and provide a link as to how to contact a trainer who shall be able to answer any questions within two business days.

The district's training and education program for supervisory employees shall include information and practical guidance regarding the federal and state laws on the prohibition against and the prevention and correction of sexual harassment, and the remedies available to the victims of sexual harassment in employment. The training shall also include all of the content specified in 2 CCR 7288.0 and practical examples aimed at instructing supervisors in the prevention of harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. (Government Code 12950.1; 2 CCR 7288.0)

Note: Although the law does not require districts with 50 or more employees to provide training to non-supervisory employees or districts with less than 50 employees to train any employee, it is recommended that all districts provide training to each employee because court decisions have held that providing training may help mitigate damages in sexual harassment lawsuits. In Department of Health Services v. Superior Court (McGinnis), the California Supreme Court held that employers that have taken reasonable steps to prevent and correct workplace sexual harassment may be able to reduce damages in the event of a lawsuit. Such steps may include establishing antiharassment policies and communicating those policies to employees. The following optional paragraph is consistent with the court's guidance and should be modified to reflect district practice.

In addition, the Superintendent or designee shall ensure that all employees receive periodic training regarding the district's sexual harassment policy, particularly the procedures for filing complaints and employees' duty to use the district's complaint procedures.

Notifications

Note: Education Code 231.5 requires that the district provide copies of its policy on sexual harassment to staff, as specified below. In addition, 2 CCR 7288.0, as added by Register 2007, No. 29, requires that supervisory employees undergoing mandatory training receive a copy of the district's policy and acknowledge receipt of the policy.

A copy of the Board policy and this administrative regulation shall: (Education Code 231.5)

1. Be displayed in a prominent location in the main administrative building, district office, or other area of the school where notices of district rules, regulations, procedures, and standards of conduct are posted
2. Be provided to each faculty member, all members of the administrative staff, and all members of the support staff at the beginning of the first quarter or semester of the school year or whenever a new employee is hired

(cf. 4112.9/4212.9/4312.9 - Employee Notifications)

3. Appear in any school or district publication that sets forth the school's or district's comprehensive rules, regulations, procedures, and standards of conduct

Note: Government Code 12950 requires the Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) to develop posters and information sheets on employment discrimination and the illegality of sexual harassment. These documents are available on DFEH's web site.

All employees shall receive either a copy of information sheets prepared by the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) or a copy of district information sheets that contain, at a minimum, components on: (Government Code 12950)

1. The illegality of sexual harassment
2. The definition of sexual harassment under applicable state and federal law
3. A description of sexual harassment, with examples
4. The district's complaint process available to the employee

(cf. 4031 - Complaints Concerning Discrimination in Employment)

5. The legal remedies and complaint process available through DFEH and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
6. Directions on how to contact DFEH and the EEOC
7. The protection against retaliation provided by 2 CCR 7287.8 for opposing harassment prohibited by law or for filing a complaint with or otherwise participating in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing conducted by DFEH and the EEOC

In addition, the district shall post, in a prominent and accessible location, DFEH's poster

on discrimination in employment and the illegality of sexual harassment. (Government Code 12950)

Adopted: July 9, 2008

**Gravenstein Union School District
Sebastopol, California**