

2.11 HARASSMENT POLICY

Burnet County is committed to a workplace free of harassment. Harassment is strictly prohibited by Burnet County whether committed by an elected official, appointed official, department head, co-worker or non-employee with whom the County does business. It shall be the policy of Burnet County to provide a work place free from sexual harassment for all employees and to take active steps to eliminate any sexual harassment of which the County becomes aware. All harassment shall be reported immediately.

A. General Harassment

Harassment includes unlawful, unwelcome words, acts or displays based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation, transgender status, or pregnancy), national origin, older age (beginning at age 40), disability, or genetic information (including family medical history). Such conduct becomes harassment when (1) the submission to the conduct is made a condition of employment; (2) the submission to, or rejection of, the conduct creates an offensive, intimidating or hostile working environment or interferes with work performance.

B. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment shall include, but not be limited to, unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which includes slurs, jokes, statements, gestures, touching, pictures, emails or cartoons where: (1) the submission to such conduct is either an expressed or implied condition of employment; or (2) the submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for an employment decision affecting the harassed person; or (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an affected person's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

C. Reporting

Every person that has been harassed as described in this policy has a duty to report the behavior to his or her elected official, supervisor or other appropriate authority. Witnesses to harassment must report the behavior to the appropriate authority.

Employees who feel they have been sexually harassed should immediately report the situation to the elected or appointed official who is responsible for the department in which they work. If, for any reason, the employee feels that reporting the harassment to the department head may not be the best course of action, the employee may report the harassment to the County Judge, the County Attorney or the Human Resources Director.

Employees who feel they have been subjected to harassment should immediately report the situation to the elected official, appointed official or

department head who is responsible for the department where the behavior occurred 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 Use the following procedures so that your complaint may be resolved quickly and fairly.

1. When practical, confront the harasser and ask them to stop the unwanted behavior.
2. Record the time, place and specifics of each incident, including any witnesses.
3. Report continuing sexual harassment to the elected official or appointed official who is responsible for your department or to the County Judge or the County Attorney.
4. If a thorough investigation reveals that unlawful sexual harassment has occurred, Burnet County will take effective remedial action in accordance with the circumstances, up to and including termination.

D. Investigation

Every reported complaint will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. All claims of sexual harassment shall be taken seriously and investigated promptly and thoroughly. All claims of sexual harassment will be handled with discretion. While there can be no assurance of full confidentiality, every effort will be made to protect personal information.

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

E. Retaliation Prohibited

Retaliation against an employee who reports harassment or sexual harassment or who cooperates as a witness in the investigation is prohibited by law as well as this policy.

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F. Action and Discipline

Employees engaging in harassment and/or sexual harassment shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. If an investigation reveals that an elected official has committed harassment or sexual harassment then the investigation report will be submitted to appropriate oversight entities.

G. Training Requirements

All County Employees, Elected Officials, and Appointed Officials shall complete mandatory sexual harassment prevention training once every two years. This

requirement applies to all individuals regardless of position or tenure with the County. Newly hired employees, newly elected officials, and appointed officials shall sign acknowledgement of this policy at intake or within 30 days of start date whichever is sooner.

BURNET COUNTY HARASSMENT POLICY

I understand that I am responsible for reading and understanding the issues covered in the attached **Harassment Policy** section of the Employee Handbook/Personnel Policies for the County of Burnet.

Employee Signature

Date