

## Commitment

Cobb County Government has developed a policy that reflects our commitment to providing employees with a work environment free from harassment, where individuals treat one another with mutual respect and in a cooperative manner. The policy defines harassment; sets out procedures to deal with complaints; and requires immediate discipline for violations.

This brochure is intended to give you general information about the policy and how it can apply to you if you feel you are being harassed or if someone is accusing you of harassment. You can get more information or a copy of the complete policy from your department representative.

## What is Harassment?

Generally, harassment is conduct or comments that a reasonable person would consider to be offensive or unwelcome. Such comments can:

1. Detrimentally affect people within the work environment.
2. Have adverse job related consequences, such as reduced job performance or a negative impact on career advancement.

For the purposes of our policy, harassment includes unwanted, unwelcome, offensive conduct relating to an individual's:

- Race/Color
- Sex
- Religion
- National Origin/Citizenship
- Age
- Veteran Status
- Disability

Harassment may occur during one incident or over a series of incidents. Harassment can take place between individuals of the same or different status; it can involve individuals or groups. In cases of sexual harassment, both men and women can be the subject of harassment by either gender. Harassment could include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal abuse or assault.
- Derogatory or demeaning materials.
- Unwelcome remarks or jokes, including racist or sexist comments.
- Unwanted physical contact.
- Intimidation, threats, bullying, or coercion.
- Sexual advances with actual or implied work-related consequences.
- Actual or threatened physical assault.
- Retaliation against an individual who has made a complaint of harassment.

## If You Are Being Harassed

- **Do** act now.
- **Do** tell the harasser to stop.
- **Do** report to your supervisor/manager.
- **Do** know your rights and options.
- **Don't** ignore the incident or wait until the next time it occurs.
- **Don't** assume the problem will go away.
- **Don't** feel you have to do it alone.
- **Don't** feel guilty.

## If You See Someone Being Harassed

- **Do** act if you witness harassment.
- **Do** support others who are harassed.
- **Do** report it to your chain of command.
- **Do** offer to accompany the individual to make a report.
- **Don't** assume it's none of your business.
- **Don't** blame the victim.
- **Don't** tolerate humiliation, degradation or intimidation.

## If You Are Accused of Harassment

- **Listen.** If you are told that your actions are offensive, intimidating or considered to be harassment, try to be open to the other person's point of view.
- **Be sensitive.** We all have different backgrounds and life experiences. What you consider to be humorous may be offensive to others.
- **Remember** harassment may occur whether you intend it or not. Apologizing for hurting someone and stopping your behavior can help prevent an unpleasant situation.
- **Don't** ignore the complaint.
- **Take action** to resolve the problem.
- **Contact** an advisor, supervisor, manager, or employee relations specialist.
- **Know** the victim's perception counts.

## **Creating a Respectful Work Environment is Everyone's Responsibility**

Every employee has a responsibility to create and maintain a work environment free from all forms of harassment. Every employee plays an active role in stopping harassment. The best way to stop harassment is to address it immediately. Let others know that you will not ignore, participate in or tolerate harassing behavior.

Managers and supervisors have a special responsibility to be proactive by understanding and upholding Cobb County's No Harassment and No Discrimination policy and not engaging in behaviors contrary to the policy.

## **Confidentiality**

Cobb County Government will make every reasonable effort to ensure that employee complaints will be kept confidential. No action will be taken against a person without the complaint being fully discussed with that person.

It is the responsibility of management and investigating parties to protect the confidentiality of information provided and of all individuals involved.

## **How to Prevent Harassment**

- Know and assert your rights.
- Respect the rights of others.
- Conduct yourself professionally.
- Dress professionally.
- Attend Cobb County's mandatory No Harassment and No Discrimination training.
- Know and understand the policy.

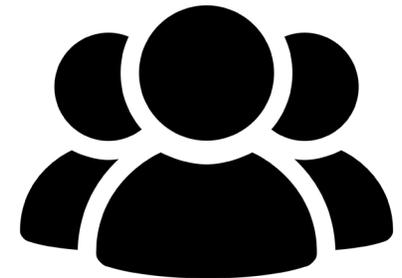
Cobb County values the contributions of each individual in its diverse workforce. You are valued for the skills that you bring to the workplace and the service that you provide our customers. Our commitment to you is to encourage a work environment that is free from harassment, and to protect your rights as an individual. Cobb County does not and will not tolerate harassment of its employees.

Contact your employee relations specialist:

**770-528-1188**

# **RESPECT**

**The Key To  
A Civil  
Workplace**



*Cobb County...Expect the Best!*