

Tama County is committed to providing annual training for all employees and elected officials regarding our goal to provide a Harassment-Free Workplace for everyone. We believe that this training bulletin will remind you of our training objectives in this area as well as provide you with a review of what you have learned during our in-person training over the prior years. Please discuss any questions you may have with your department head or supervisor.

**HARASSMENT-FREE WORKPLACE TRAINING OBJECTIVES – This training bulletin will:**

- Provide definitions and descriptions of the different types of sexual harassment.
- Help you to understand why it is important to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.

**What is harassment?** There are two Forms of Sexual Harassment - Quid Pro Quo and Hostile Work Environment. The definitions and examples are:

**Quid Pro Quo Harassment is:** Quid pro quo sexual harassment occurs when employment, pay, benefits, promotion, or other opportunities for advancement or training are conditioned on the submission to unwelcome sexual advances.

Examples of quid pro quo harassment include:

- A supervisor that promises an employee a raise, or additional paid time off, if she will go on a date with him.
- A supervisor that tells or infers that an employee he will lose his job if he does not sleep with her.

**Hostile Work Environment Harassment is:**

- Behavior that must be sufficiently frequent or pervasive.
- Behavior that affects a condition of employment – such as hiring, termination, promotion, demotion, etc.
- Behavior that unreasonably interferes with an individual’s work performance.
- Behavior that is unwelcome and offensive to the receiver or individual observing the conduct.

It is important to note that a single incident is generally not considered enough to create a “hostile work environment,” but if it is repeated, or becomes a pattern of behavior, that is generally sufficient to be considered hostile work environment harassment.

Examples of hostile work environment include:

- A co-worker leers at and intentionally brushes up against another employee, at least three times per week.
- A supervisor regularly forwards emails containing sexual jokes to other employees and talks about these jokes during team meetings.

Other Examples of Sex Harassment Include:

- \*sexual advances
- \*sexual or “dirty” jokes
- \*graffiti or drawings sexual in nature
- \*touching or groping
- \*pressure or requests for sex
- \*discussing sexual or related activity
- \*commenting on a person’s body or physical appearance in a sexually suggestive way
- \*displaying or sending sexually explicit drawings, videos or other material

What is not Hostile Work Environment Harassment?

- Petty slights, annoyances, and isolated incidents (unless extremely serious).
- A single incident (unless extremely serious).
- An occasional, socially acceptable compliment about someone’s appearance.
- Sincerely complimenting another employee on her/his new shirt or new pair of shoes.

## Sex Harassment and Technology

- Remember that sex harassment is not limited to physical conduct. Explicit or suggestive emails, texts, or social media posts that interfere with job performance or create an abusive or hostile work environment also constitute sex harassment.
- Examples include:
  - An employee texts sexually suggestive photos, comments, or memes to a co-worker.
  - An employee posts a suggestive comment on a co-worker's Facebook page.

## Sex Harassment and Conduct that Occurs Outside of the Workplace/Working Hours

- Remember that conduct that occurs outside of the workplace and working hours may still qualify as harassment, if it is conduct that would otherwise be harassing and involves co-workers.
- Examples include:
  - An employee frequents the same bar as a co-worker. While at the bar on weekends, the employee repeatedly asks out the co-worker, even after she has told him no multiple times.
  - An employee texts a co-worker suggestive photo of herself late at night, after the co-worker has already asked her to stop texting him.

## Who Can be a Harasser and/or Victim of Sex Harassment?

- Harassment can be perpetuated by a supervisor, a co-worker/peer, a contractor or vendor, a customer or a client. An employer has an obligation to ensure a workplace is free from harassment even if the harasser is not an employee.
- Harassment may occur between individuals of the opposite or the same sex.
- Bystanders or witnesses who observe sexually harassing behavior may also be victims of sex harassment.

## What is Retaliation?

- Retaliating against an employee who reports or participates in an investigation involving sex harassment is prohibited by law.
- Retaliation can include: ostracizing or excluding; failing to offer promotion, training or other opportunities; threatened or actual termination, demotion, loss of pay or benefits, or other adverse actions.

## Why Is Maintaining a Harassment-Free Workplace Important?

- Sexual harassment harms all employees because it lowers morale and productivity and impacts an employer's ability to recruit.
- It is inconsistent with a workplace that ensures all employees are treated with respect and dignity.
- Engaging in, condoning or failing to report sexual harassment generally violates workplace policies prohibiting sex harassment.
- Sexual harassment violates the law.
- Sexual harassment can create county and individual liability and settlements for victims of sexual harassment can be significant.
- In the last several years, multiple sex harassment lawsuits in Iowa have resulted in verdicts in excess of a million dollars.

## IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT HARASSMENT BASED UPON ANY PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS PROHIBIT HARASSMENT BASED UPON:

**\*Race or color \*Religion \*Creed \*National Origin or Ancestry (including citizenship) \*Age (40 and over) \*Mental or Physical Disability \*Genetic Information \*Sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation and gender identity which includes gender expression) \*Other legally protected characteristics mandated by Federal or state law(s)**

**What should I do if I am experiencing workplace harassment (sexual harassment or harassment based on another protected characteristic?)**

- If you feel comfortable facing your harasser, ask that person to stop the behavior immediately. In this case, you should still report the behavior according to your County reporting policy.
  - If the behavior doesn't stop or you don't feel comfortable confronting that person, review the County reporting policy and report the behavior to the appropriate person(s) immediately.
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**County Employees and Elected Officials:**

It is important for you to know and understand Tama County's Harassment-Free Workplace Policy and reporting procedures. We ask that you take some time to review the policy that is included in your employee handbook.

If you have questions about this training bulletin or our County Policy, please speak with your supervisor or department head.

Tama County Board of Supervisors

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**Receipt of Training Bulletin**

I have read the Tama County Harassment-Free Workplace Bulletin and I understand that this signature sheet will be placed in my personnel file for documentation purposes.

Employee Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Human Resources Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_