

# USPS Updates Policy On Workplace Harassment

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New Memorandum of Policy: Postal Service Policy on Workplace Harassment

Effective October 4, 2010, the Postal Service has issued memorandum of policy (MOP) DD-10-04-2010, Postal Service Policy on Workplace Harassment (see pages 19 and 20). This policy:

- \* Incorporates recent legal developments that make it clear that an employer's anti-harassment policy must prohibit all forms of harassment that violate federal anti-discrimination laws.
- \* Reaffirms the Postal Service's commitment to providing a work environment free of harassment.
- \* Supersedes MOP DD-09-25-2006, Postal Service Policy on Workplace Harassment.

## Prohibited Activities

Harassment is unwelcome verbal or physical conduct, which is so severe or pervasive that it interferes with or changes the conditions of one's employment by creating a hostile, intimidating, or abusive working environment. Examples may include, but are not limited to, making offensive or derogatory comments or engaging in physically threatening, intimidating, or humiliating behavior based upon race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity and gender stereotypes), national origin, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, or in reprisal for an employee or applicant's complaint about or opposition to discrimination or participation in any process or proceeding designed to remedy discrimination. These activities are prohibited by Postal Service policy and may amount to harassment in violation of federal antidiscrimination laws. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. The Postal Service is committed to providing its employees a safe, productive, and inclusive workplace and will tolerate nothing less.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature such as, but not limited to: making or threatening to make employment decisions based on an employee's submission to, or rejection of, sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; deliberate or repeated unsolicited remarks with a sexual connotation or physical contact of a sexual nature that is unwelcome to the recipient; or behavior that creates a sustained hostile or abusive work environment so severe or pervasive that it unreasonably interferes with or changes the conditions of one's employment. Although not every instance of inappropriate behavior may fit the legal definition of harassment, such behavior in the workplace undermines morale and violates the Postal Service's standards of conduct. Disciplinary action may result even if the conduct does not constitute harassment under the law.

Postal Service employees who believe that they are the victims of harassment prohibited under this policy (Le., harassment based on race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity or gender stereotypes), national origin, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, or in reprisal for an employee or applicant's complaint about or opposition to discrimination or participation in any process or proceeding designed to remedy discrimination) or who have witnessed such harassment or inappropriate conduct, which could lead to illegal harassment, should bring the situation to the attention of a supervisor, a manager, or the manager of Human Resources to address most forms of harassment described above. Refer to Publication 553, Employee's Guide to Understanding, Preventing, and Reporting Harassment for further information. In accordance with this policy, supervisors, managers, managers of Human Resources, or the next higher-level manager (HQ and HQfield units) are responsible for ensuring that direct and prompt action is taken to investigate and, where appropriate, remedy such misconduct when brought to their attention. The Postal Service will protect the confidentiality of harassment complainants to the extent possible.

- See more at: <http://www.postalreporternews.net/2010/10/22/usps-updates-policy-on-workplace-harassment/#sthash.AIUyefWd.dpuf>