



County Technical Assistance Service
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE

March 14, 2025

Sample Policy - Sexual Harassment

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the CTAS website (ctas.tennessee.edu). This website is maintained by CTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee county government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with county government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other CTAS website material.

Sincerely,

The University of Tennessee
County Technical Assistance Service
226 Anne Dallas Dudley Boulevard, Suite 400
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
615.532.3555 phone
615.532.3699 fax
www.ctas.tennessee.edu

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Reference Number: CTAS-1141

Sexual harassment, when it was first recognized, was treated somewhat differently than other forms of workplace harassment. As the law has developed over the years, this form of harassment is being treated essentially the same as the other forms of harassment and a separate policy is not necessary. However, counties may wish to adopt a separate policy addressing this issue. Following is an example of such a policy:

One particular kind of harassing behavior is sexual harassment. Sexual harassment, which can consist of a wide range of unwanted and unwelcome sexually directed behavior, is defined as:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

(1) Submitting to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or of obtaining public services; OR

(2) Submitting to or rejecting the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision affecting an individual's employment or public services; OR

(3) Such conduct has the purpose or result of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Neither sexual harassment nor any other form of unlawful harassment will be tolerated in the workplace. Employees are urged to report alleged incidents of unlawful harassment. No adverse personnel action will be taken against any employee who reports such incidents or who assists in an investigation of a complaint. Anyone found to be engaging in harassment in violation of county policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. A finding of a violation of county policy does not, however, amount to a finding of unlawful harassment; in order to further its objective of equal employment opportunities the county may, but shall not be required to, interpret its policy more broadly than federal or state law mandates.

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