

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Sexual harassment is a form of sexual discrimination which is prohibited by Federal and State Law. It is the policy of the Bienville Parish Police Jury to maintain a working environment that is free from sexual harassment.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any employee, non-employee volunteer, or Jury Member of the Bienville Parish Police Jury to harass an employee or non-employee volunteer through conduct or communication of a sexual nature as defined by this policy.

The Police Jury, through the Secretary-Treasurer or designee, shall investigate all complaints, either formal or informal, verbal or written, of sexual harassment and discipline any employee or non-employee volunteer who sexually harasses an employee, or non-employee volunteer of the Police Jury.

DEFINITION

- A. Sexual harassment shall include, but not be limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
1. Submission to such conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of obtaining or retaining employment, or promotion; or
 2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct or communication is used as a factor in decisions affecting the individual's employment or promotion including any benefits, services or treatment; or
 3. Such conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.
- B. Sexual harassment may include but is not limited to:
1. Verbal harassment or abuse;
 2. Uninvited letters, telephone calls, or materials of a sexual nature;
 3. Inappropriate and uninvited leaning over, cornering, patting, or pinching.
 4. Uninvited sexually suggestive looks or gestures;
 5. Intentional brushing against an employee's body;
 6. Uninvited pressure for dates;
 7. Demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied overt threats concerning an individual's employment or promotion;
 8. Uninvited sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions;
 9. Demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment with regard to an individual's employment or promotion;
 10. Any sexually motivated unwelcome touching; or
 11. Attempted or actual rape or sexual assault.

NOTE

This policy in no way supersedes Federal or State Law and is only a specific reference on the policies listed.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

Early reporting of sexually inappropriate behavior enhances the credibility of the complainant and facilitates the investigative process. The Bienville Parish Police Jury does not require a fixed reporting time or deadline—the sooner the better is preferred and immediately reporting is ideal. The initial report need only convey the occurrence of words or actions that are offensive and need not provide detailed information. This report can be verbal (in person or via telephone) or in writing (letter, memo, email, text) and need not utilize a specific form.

Any employee experiencing, witnessing or having knowledge, directly or indirectly, of sexually inappropriate behavior by anyone or towards anyone associated with the Police Jury or on the Police Jury premises, including the police jurors, any administrator, manager, supervisor, co-worker, vendor, client or visitor, should immediately report the occurrence. Any such complaint may be made verbally or in writing. Under most circumstances, complaints should be made by the employee to his/her supervisor. If the complaint involves the employee's supervisor or someone within the direct line of supervision, or if the employee, for any reason, is uncomfortable reporting such behavior to a supervisor, he/she may report the incident to another supervisor or manager, or directly contact the Secretary/Treasurer (318) 263-2019.

VI. INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINT

- A) **All** reports of sexually inappropriate behavior will ultimately be reported to the Personnel Committee of the Bienville Parish Police Jury who generally will direct the investigative process. Management personnel in a need to know capacity will be apprised of the complaint.
- B) The Secretary/Treasurer will investigate **all** complaints except for those which allege sexually inappropriate behavior by the Secretary/Treasurer. "Informal" complaints or requests to withhold investigation (unless or until a future occurrence) will be treated the same as a formal complaint and investigated immediately. A report which alleges sexually inappropriate behavior by the Secretary/Treasurer will be referred by the Personnel Committee to the Bienville Parish Police Jury.
- C) To prevent further occurrences or to preserve the integrity of the investigation, temporary reassignment, transfers, forced leave or other personnel actions may be utilized.
- D) The investigation will be thorough and include interviews with the complainant, the accused, witnesses and other individuals possessing relevant information. Records, logs, reports, photos, or other documentation pertinent to the complaint will be reviewed.

- E) The investigative process will be memorialized, thus requiring that all involved prepare written statements or provide verbal statements that will be recorded.
- F) Persons called upon to participate in the investigation are required to answer all questions truthfully and cooperatively. Employees do not have the option of remaining silent or declining to be involved.
- G) The investigative process will be conducted expeditiously and professionally, with appropriate emphasis on the rights of all involved.
- H) To the extent allowed by law, the investigative process will be conducted in a confidential manner, with only those in a need-to-know position involved. Employees who are called on to participate will be instructed that the complaint and all information provided during the investigation are to remain confidential.
- I) Upon completion of an investigation conducted by the Secretary/Treasurer, the Secretary/Treasurer will apprise the Personnel Committee of the outcome. The Personnel Committee will then offer the Secretary/Treasurer recommendations for resolution.
- J) Upon completion of an investigation conducted by the Bienville Parish Police Jury relating to a complaint alleging sexually inappropriate behavior by the Secretary/Treasurer, the Bienville Parish Police Jury shall render a decision that is consistent with the investigative findings.

VII. COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

- A) Any employee found, after appropriate investigation, to have engaged in sexually inappropriate behavior will be disciplined in accordance with applicable law. Such action may include counseling, reprimand, suspension, demotion, reduction in pay or termination.
- B) In addition to corrective action, other appropriate measures, including follow-up inquiries and re-training, will be utilized to ensure that the inappropriate behavior does not reoccur.
- C) Regardless of the outcome, the complainant has the option of pursuing a claim under state or federal law. Initiation of such a claim is not dependent upon the outcome or completion of the Bienville Parish Police Jury's administrative investigation.

VIII. NON-RETALIATION

- A) Any employee making a good faith complaint of sexually inappropriate behavior will be protected from retaliation, reprisal and harassment. Likewise, any employee providing information or otherwise participating in the investigation of such a complaint will be protected from retaliation, reprisal and harassment.

- B) If a complaint is made and the investigation reveals that retaliation, reprisal or harassment has occurred against a complaining employee or anyone participating in the investigative process, severe disciplinary action will be taken, including the possibility of termination.