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|  |  | **Blue Ridge Fire District**  **Policy and Procedure** | | |  | General Order Number  **E202** | |  |
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|  | Subject:  **Harassment Policy** | | | Effective Date:  **April 1, 2015** | | | Total Pages:  **2** |  |
| Board Approval Date:  **March 21, 2015** | | | Rescinds: |  |
|  | Application:  **All District Personnel** | | *Signed into effect as authorized by the Board of Directors*  John Banning, Fire Chief | | | | |  |
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1. **PURPOSE**

To establish the District’s position prohibiting harassment, to set forth guidelines for handling violations of the policy, and to specify the related complaint handling procedure.

1. **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all employees of the District. Furthermore, the District has established appropriate procedures to insure that non-employees (i.e., vendors, suppliers, customers) doing business on District premises are also made aware of the intent of this policy.

1. **DEFINITION**
2. Sexual Harassment – Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when such conduct:
3. Is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment, or
4. Is used as a basis for employment decisions, or
5. Has the purpose or effect of interfering with work performance or creating an otherwise offensive, hostile, and/or intimidating working environment.
6. Harassment – Unwelcome verbal, physical or visual conduct of a racial, ethnic or other type that impairs an employee’s ability to perform the job or has the purpose or effect of interfering with work performance or creating an otherwise offensive, hostile, and/or intimidating work environment.
7. **POLICY**

The Blue Ridge Fire District does not tolerate harassment in the workplace or during any work-related activity. Harassment, including sexual harassment, is contrary to basic standards of conduct regulations. Any employee who engages in any of the acts or behavior defined above is in violation of District policy.

The District shall take disciplinary action when an employee is determined to have violated this policy. Such action shall include a range of disciplinary measures, up to and including termination.

The District enforces all Federal and State regulations relating to fair and proper treatment of all employees.

Any activity by anyone, male or female employee or non-employee, that makes an employee feel that he or she is being harassed, shall not be tolerated.

When working, employees are expected to exercise good judgment and avoid the creation of situations that could cause another employee to feel threatened or uncomfortable.

Conduct that may be intended as “innocent” may still constitute harassment if it falls within the terms of this policy. If any employee expresses concern that certain conduct or behavior in the workplace may have violated this policy, it is crucial to respect such concerns. While this policy is not intended to interfere with or discourage friendships among employees, all employees must be sensitive to acts or conduct in the workplace that may be considered offensive by others.

In addition, foul and vulgar language is offensive to some people and is not acceptable in the workplace.

Any employee who believes he or she has been subjected to objectionable conduct by another employee or anyone doing business with the District shall bring the matter to the attention of management.

1. **PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING COMPLAINTS OF HARASSMENT**

Complaints of harassment of any type shall be brought to the attention of management via one of the following options:

1. The employee’s immediate supervisor, or
2. Any Officer of the District, or
3. The Fire Chief

The normal use of chain of command is not required to bringing forth a concern of harassment. Regardless of who receives the initial complaint, the Fire Chief shall be notified on the same day by the person receiving the initial complaint.

If the complaint is against the Fire Chief, the employee or applicant also has the option to notify a Board Member.

Investigation and handling of the complaint of alleged harassment shall be handled as a highly sensitive personnel matter. All communications regarding the subject shall be kept in confidence to the greatest extent possible, understanding that the investigative process may require some additional discussion.

Any employee, who, in good faith, brings forth a complaint of harassment, shall be free from any form of retribution or reprisal on the part of management or other employees. Likewise, any employee who participates in good faith in the investigative process shall be free from any form of retribution or reprisal on the part of management or other employees.

If an employee is found to have made a false and pretentious complaint of harassment, or to have deliberately provided false information during the investigative process, the employee shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.