

4.3 Equal Employment Opportunity, Discrimination, and Sexual Harassment

The purpose of this directive is to guide supervisors and employees in maintaining an effective work environment free from:

- discriminatory or preferential practices based on sex, age, race, color, national origin, religion, marital status, political affiliation, disability, or sexual preference;
- unwanted sexual pressure or attention; and
- to provide references for the appropriate redress of complaints regarding discrimination and/or sexual harassment.

4.3.1 Policy

Discrimination on all levels and in all aspects of employment, on the basis of sex, age, race, color, national origin, religion, marital status, political affiliation, disability, sexual preference, physical or mental disability, physical appearance, and membership or non-membership in a labor organization are prohibited by county, state, and federal law. Sexual harassment is considered a form of discrimination under the same laws. The Anne Arundel County Sheriff's Office strictly prohibits any form of discrimination.

Employees shall not use any derogatory, demeaning, or insulting language that could be inciting or harassing in nature, directed toward or within listening distance of any person in custody, member of the public, or employee of this Office. No member shall take or contribute to any reprisal or adverse action against any individual or group of individuals having opposed discriminatory practices or having participated or assisted in a charge, investigation, or proceeding brought under this Office, or any county, state, or Federal organization.

4.3.2 Definitions

Discrimination is defined as any practice or procedure which limits or adversely affects employment opportunities or working conditions on the basis of sex, age, race, color, national origin, religion, marital status, political affiliation, disability, or sexual preference. This includes advertising, recruitment, referrals, testing,

hiring, assignment, transfer, promotion, training, apprenticeship, disciplinary action, layoff and recall, termination, compensation, benefits, and all other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.

Sexual harassment is defined by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as “Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (1) submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of reasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.”

4.3.3 Supervisory and Management Responsibility

It is incumbent upon all supervisory and managerial personnel to conduct a prompt, thorough, and unbiased inquiry into any instance of alleged discrimination or harassment which comes to their attention. Employees should be made aware that any complaints or statements regarding such instances will require immediate action by a supervisor. All information regarding such allegations will be documented and forwarded to the Chief Deputy via chain of command.

Any reprisal or adverse action taken against any individual or group having opposed discriminatory practices, or having participated in any way in a charge, investigation, or proceeding under law is strictly prohibited and subject to criminal prosecution.

4.3.4 Filing Complaints

Any employee or potential employee who feels that they have not been afforded equal opportunity for promotion, transfer, or other term or condition of employment, or who has been subjected to any form of sexual harassment, is entitled to register complaints and seek remedies without fear of retaliation.

Absent extenuating circumstances, incidents of unjust treatment should be reported within 30 days of the most recent event to the lowest uninvolved member in the complainant’s chain-of-command. It is important that someone in the chain-of-command report back to the complainant promptly regarding a course of action and anticipated results.

Complaints of equal employment opportunity violations, discriminatory practices, or sexual harassment may also be filed with the following individuals or organizations:

- A. A. Co. Sheriff's Office Human Resources Coordinator
- A. A. Co. Department of Personnel
- A. A. County Human Relations Commission
- Maryland State Human Relations Commission
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Employees who wish to file a complaint of discrimination or sexual harassment may do so at any of the levels listed above. Employees should consider first filing locally, and then proceed on to the higher levels.