

# WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS! TAKE RESPONSIBILITY!

### ELIMINATING WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

The United States Postal Service™ is committed to providing a work environment free of harassment based upon race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender stereotyping), national origin, age (40+), mental or physical disability, or in retaliation for prior Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) activity and other inappropriate conduct.

The Postal Service workplace must be one in which all employees are treated with dignity and respect by supervisors, subordinates, and coworkers. There is no place in the Postal Service for intimidating, threatening, or coercive behavior.

### STOPPING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Although not every instance of inappropriate behavior may meet the legal definition of harassment, such behavior in the workplace undermines morale and violates the Postal Service's policies and standards of conduct. Disciplinary action may result even if the conduct does not rise to the level of harassment as defined under the law, as such conduct nonetheless violates Postal Service policy and will not be tolerated. The Postal Service owes its employees a safe, productive, and inclusive workplace and will tolerate nothing less.

### WORKPLACE HARASSMENT IS AGAINST THE LAW

Under federal antidiscrimination laws, harassment is defined as unwelcome verbal or physical conduct that demeans or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group of individuals. Employees will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including removal, for engaging in harassing behavior such as, but not limited to:

- Making offensive or derogatory comments, nicknames, or slurs.
- Engaging in physically threatening, intimidating, or humiliating actions.
- 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.
- 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.

### OBLIGATION TO REACT PROMPTLY

Postal Service employees who believe that they are the victims of workplace harassment or inappropriate conduct, or who have witnessed such

harassment, should bring the situation to the attention of any one of the following:

- Your immediate supervisor or manager.
- Any supervisor or manager.
- The manager of Human Resources.
- A union representative or coworker to speak to a manager on your behalf.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

The Postal Service, to the extent possible, protects the confidentiality of an employee's workplace harassment complaint.

### WHAT USPS REQUIRES OF MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

Any manager or supervisor who receives a complaint must act to stop any inappropriate behavior, ensure that a prompt and thorough investigation is conducted, and ensure that harassing or inappropriate conduct does not recur—even if the behavior does not rise to the legal definition of harassment.

### MANAGEMENT INQUIRY

All managers and supervisors should follow the Management Inquiry Process materials available in Publication 552 when a complaint is brought to their attention. If workplace harassment or inappropriate conduct is found, managers must take prompt and appropriate remedial action.

### ADDITIONAL RELIEF

In addition, employees can seek relief through the EEO complaint process, grievance arbitration procedures established through the collective bargaining agreements with the unions, and the nonbargaining grievance procedures described in the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual* (ELM), 650. Employees pursuing an EEO complaint must contact the EEO Centralized Intake Center within 45 days of the act or acts giving rise to the claim in order to preserve their rights under federal law.

### CRIMINAL ASSAULT

Report all possible criminal misconduct, sexual or otherwise, to local law enforcement, Postal Management, and the Postal Inspection Service.

### RETALIATION IS ILLEGAL

Retaliation against employees who raise a claim of workplace harassment, report inappropriate conduct, or provide evidence in any investigation is illegal and can result in disciplinary action.

### ZERO TOLERANCE

The Postal Service will not tolerate any workplace harassment based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender stereotyping), national origin, age (40+), mental or physical disability, or in retaliation for prior EEO activity, or other inappropriate conduct in the workplace.

