United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240

In Reply Refer To:
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Memorandum

To: All FWS Employees

From: Deputy Director

Subject: Zero Tolerance Harassment Policy

It is the policy of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to provide employees with a work environment that is free from harassment. The Service prohibits harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (whether or not of a sexual nature including pregnancy and gender identity), disability, age (40 years or older), reprisal, protected genetic information, or sexual orientation.

Workplace harassment is any form of unwelcome, pervasive, persistent, unsolicited verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct that is so objectively offensive that it alters the victim's terms and conditions of employment, either by culminating in a tangible employment action or by being sufficiently severe or pervasive as to unreasonably interfere with an employee's work performance by creating an intimidating, abusive, offensive, and hostile work environment. The use of derogatory words, phrases, epithets, gestures, pictures, drawings, or cartoons can create an intimidating and hostile work environment and will not be tolerated in the workplace regardless of the means of delivery to include, but not limited to, verbal communication, electronic mail, text messaging, or any other form of written or electronic communication.

Just as we strive to accomplish our mission, we must also strive to maintain the trust and confidence of our employees, conservation partners, and the public. Harassment adversely affects morale, teamwork, and productivity and is strictly prohibited.

Employees are strongly encouraged to report incidents of harassment to their immediate supervisor (allegations involving an immediate supervisor should be reported to a higher level management official). Employees may also contact their servicing Human Resources (HR) Office or Diversity and Civil Rights (DCR) Office, or the Washington D.C. Office of Diversity and Inclusive Workforce Management (ODIWM). Supervisors and managers will take immediate action to conduct an internal inquiry and resolve reports of harassment. If evidence confirms allegations of harassment, the supervisor will take appropriate corrective and disciplinary action. Any employee found to have participated in harassment of any kind will be subject to appropriate administrative or disciplinary action, which may include removal from federal service.

Disciplinary action will also be taken against supervisors who do not carry out their responsibilities under this policy. Any action taken to address and resolve issues of harassment will be confidential and retaliatory action against an employee who raises a claim of harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

The Service's internal inquiry is a management responsibility and is not part of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaint process. Any employee who desires to initiate an EEO Complaint alleging harassment must contact their Regional DCR office or the Washington, D.C. ODIWM within 45 calendar days of the date of the alleged harassment. The Service's inquiry does not have an impact on the EEO time requirement. Therefore, employees may not wait until after an internal inquiry is conducted if they desire to enter into the EEO process.

If you have any questions or require additional information on the Service's policy regarding Harassment and Zero Tolerance, contact your servicing DCR or HR Office, or the Washington, D.C. ODIWM at (703) 358-1724.