

HARASSMENT-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

RUTLAND FREE LIBRARY

PURPOSE

It is the policy of Rutland Free Library to provide all employees a work environment of professionalism and respect. Harassment, in any form, by any employee will not be tolerated.

DEFINITIONS

Harassment may be defined as unwelcome comments, actions, or behavior from an employee toward another employee in relation to their inclusion in a protected class as defined by Vermont's Fair Employment Practices Act (FEPA), such as race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, veteran's status, crime victim status, health insurance status, or sexual orientation.

Harassment also may be defined as repeated infliction of verbal abuse such as derogatory remarks, insults, and epithets; verbal or physical conduct that a reasonable person would find threatening, intimidating, hostile, or humiliating; or the sabotage or malicious undermining of a person's work performance.

Sexual harassment may be defined as verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature. Examples of sexual harassment include: unwelcome physical contact; unwelcome invitations to socialize outside of work hours; unwelcome sexual attention of any kind such as comments, notes, pictures, emails, nicknames, jokes, and explicit language use; and derogatory remarks or acts regarding sex or sexual orientation.

PROCEDURE

The employer is required by law to take action if it learns of potential harassment, even if the aggrieved person does not wish to formally file a complaint. A person need not be the subject of harassment to report the harassment.

Any employee who feels they are the target of harassment is encouraged to first directly inform the offending person/s that such conduct is offensive and must stop. If the person does not wish to communicate directly with the alleged harasser or if direct communication has been ineffective, the person with the complaint is then encouraged to contact the Director. The employee should report in writing such harassment to the Director. In the event that a complaint is lodged against the Director, the Board President will be the investigating party; the complaint should be made in writing to the Board President. The email addresses of both individuals are made available to staff for this purpose.

The Director or Board President will promptly and discreetly investigate. All employees are expected to cooperate with any investigation. Should the allegation of harassment be found credible, the Director or Board President will take the appropriate level of corrective action ranging from a verbal warning up to and including dismissal to ensure that the harassment will cease, and that no retaliation will occur. The complainant will be met with to discuss the outcome though confidential personnel action taken may not be specifically revealed. In all cases, the severity, nature, and frequency of the conduct will be weighed. A single act normally will not constitute harassment, but an especially severe and egregious act may meet this standard. Any retaliation to a complaint or complainant will not be tolerated and is cause for disciplinary action ranging in scope from verbal warning up to and including dismissal.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the employer's action, or is so inclined, they may file the harassment complaint by writing or calling the state or federal agencies listed below. Although individuals are encouraged to report harassment through the employer's procedure, an individual is not required to report to the employer before filing a charge with these agencies. Each of these agencies may conduct impartial investigations, facilitate conciliation, or pursue a civil action in state or federal court.

Vermont Attorney General's Office, Civil Rights Unit, 109 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05609, ago.civilrights@vermont.gov, tel: (888)745-9195 (toll free VT) or (802-) 828-3657 (voice / TDD). Complaints should be filed within 360 days of the adverse action.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, John F. Kennedy Federal Building, 475 Government Center, Boston, MA 02203, <https://www.eeoc.gov/employees/charge.cfm>, tel: 1-800-669-4000 (voice), 1-800-669-6820 (TDD). Complaints must be filed within 300 days of the adverse action.

The library director is responsible for communicating this policy to all employees.