

# East Lake Tarpon Special Fire Control District



## *SOG 233 Harassment Policy*

**Implementation  
Date: 11/2000**

**Revision Date(s): 06/25/2013**

**Reviewed Date(s): 02/18/2019**

**Forms or Attachments: None**

### **233.1 Harassment Policy: All Employees**

- A. East Lake Tarpon Special Fire Control District shares a common belief that each of us should be able to work in an environment free of discrimination, as well as any form of harassment based on race, color, religion, age, sex, pregnancy, national origin, handicap/disability or marital status. In addition, these categories are protected by Federal Law.

To help ensure that none of us ever feel we are being subjected to harassment, and in order to create such a comfortable work environment, East Lake Tarpon Special Fire Control District, prohibits any physical, written or spoken conduct regarding any of these items, including conduct of a sexual nature. This includes:

1. Unwelcome or unwanted advances, including sexual. This means patting, pinching, brushing up against, hugging, cornering, kissing, fondling, or any other similar physical contact.
2. Unwelcome requests or demands for favors, including sexual favors. This includes subtle or blatant expectations, pressures or requests for any type of favor, including a sexual favor (this includes unwelcome requests for dates) whether or not it is accompanied by an implied or stated promise of preferential treatment or negative consequence concerning employment status.
3. Verbal abuse or kidding that is oriented toward a prohibited form of harassment, including that which is sex-oriented and considered unwelcome. This includes comments about our national origin, race, body, handicap/disability or appearance, where such comments go beyond mere courtesy; telling "dirty jokes" that are unwanted and considered offensive; or any tasteless, sexually oriented comments, innuendos or actions that offend.
4. Visual Harassment: derogatory or demeaning posters, cards, cartoons, graffiti, drawings, gestures, etc.

5. Any type of sexually oriented conduct or other prohibited form of harassment that would unreasonably interfere with our work performance. This includes extending unwanted sexual attentions to someone whether or not it reduced that person's productivity or time available to work at assigned tasks.
6. Creating a work environment that is intimidating, hostile, abusive or offensive because of unwelcome or unwanted conversations, suggestions, requests, demands, physical contacts or attentions, whether sexually oriented or otherwise related to a prohibited form of harassment.

Normal, courteous, mutually respectful, pleasant, non-coercive interactions between employees, including men and women, that are acceptable to both parties are not considered to be harassment.

If any of us believe that he or she is being subjected to any of these forms of harassment, or believes he or she is being discriminated against because other employees are receiving favored treatment in exchange, for example, for sexual favors, he or she must bring this to the attention of District management or the Pinellas county Office of Human Rights as defined below. If the complaint is against the Fire Chief or a Fire Commissioner, the complainant may report to any Fire Commissioner or may take the complaint directly to the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights.

Office of Human Rights  
400 South Ft. Harrison Avenue, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Clearwater, FL 33756  
727-464-4880

A record of the complaint and the findings will become a part of the complaint investigation record and the file will be maintained separately from the employee's personnel file.

It is understood that any person electing to utilize this complaint resolution procedure will be treated courteously, the problem handled swiftly and as confidentially as feasible in light of the need to take appropriate corrective action, and the registering of a complaint will in no way be used against the employee, nor will it have an adverse impact on the individual's employment status.

If the violation is valid and depending upon the severity of the offense, discipline for corrective action will be counseling, written reprimand, suspension, demotion or dismissal.

### **233.2 Supervisory Policy Statement**

Further explaining prohibited harassment including sexual harassment.

In order to avoid any question about possible unlawful harassment of employees, the Department has chosen to prohibit harassment, including sexual harassment, as defined 230 Conduct in the S.O.P.

Normal, courteous, mutually respectful, pleasant, non-coercive interactions between employees, including men and women, that are acceptable to both parties are not considered to be harassment. However, please keep in mind that what may be perceived as normal, courteous, etc., today, while the individuals are on good terms may be perceived in the future in a vastly different way when the individuals no longer are on those same good terms.

The Department will not tolerate prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of its employees by anyone - Chiefs, Lieutenants or Firefighters. Prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, can be an insidious practice. It can demean individuals being treated in such a manner. It can create unacceptable stress for the entire organization. Morale can be adversely affected. Work effectiveness can decline. Significant costs are involved and persons harassing others will be dealt with swiftly and vigorously.

If you are engaged in any conduct which another employee finds offensive, STOP. Consider whether your actions might be improper harassment of some kind. If in doubt, seek assistance from Administration.

If you learn that another employee has made a complaint against you, consider whether their complaint might be justified. Meanwhile, whether the complaint is justified or not, remember three things:

FIRST, do not retaliate in any way against the employee who complained.

SECOND, consider this occasion as a reminder of the problems involved in mixing business and pleasure.

THIRD, review the Department's policy, and be sure you understand it and fully comply with it at all times.

If the violation is valid and depending upon the severity of the offense, discipline for corrective action will be counseling, written reprimand, suspension, demotion or dismissal.

### **233.3 Human Dignity Statement**

As cultural diversity increases among American people, that change is being reflected in the composition of our Nation's fire and emergency services personnel. East Lake Tarpon Special Fire Control District recognizes the uniqueness of each individual and supports human dignity by:

- Ensuring equal opportunity to all firefighters, members, citizens, and community guests;
- Prohibiting all discrimination and harassment;
- Supporting affirmative employment policies and practices on behalf of women and minorities;
- Committing to resolving all human dignity issues;
- Encouraging all members to communicate and behave in a manner which is sensitive to and acknowledges the viewpoints of others;
- Regarding diversity as a resource that enriches the workplace through the sharing of differing perspectives, experiences, and ideas;
- Removing barriers to teamwork through collaboration, problem-solving, and the constructive resolution of conflicts and;
- Continuing to identify and eliminate barriers to training, employment, and advancement of all members.

Department members are expected to treat each other with respect at all times. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.