



# HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE PERSONNEL POLICY

Jeffrey R. Gahler,  
Sheriff

## Domestic Violence and the Workplace

<b>Distribution:</b>	<b>All Employees</b>	<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>PER 0303</b>		
<b>Responsible Unit:</b>	<b>Domestic Violence Unit</b>	<b>Rescinds:</b>	<b>PER 0303 dated 6/03/20</b>		
<b>Original Issued Date:</b>	<b>08/31/21</b>	<b>Revision #:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Latest Revision Date:</b>	<b>08/31/21</b>
<b>Latest Required Review was Completed:</b>	<b>05/31/24</b>	<b>Next Review Due:</b>	<b>05/31/27</b>		

### 1. Purpose

To describe how the Harford County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) creates a supportive workplace environment so employees can report and discuss domestic violence incidents and issues.

### 2. Policy

The HCSO has a zero-tolerance policy for domestic violence incidents and the workplace. The Agency will take appropriate disciplinary action and pursue criminal prosecution against any employee or non-employee who threatens to commit, attempts to commit, or commits an act of domestic violence in county offices, facilities, work sites, vehicles, or while conducting any county business.

### 3. Definitions

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INCIDENT:** abuse, property crimes or a violation of a protective order committed against a person with whom the suspect has had an intimate relationship.

**INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP:** a relationship between partners, sexual or emotional, heterosexual or homosexual, who are married, separated, or divorced, live or have lived together, have children in common; or date or have dated, but do not live or have never lived together. Dating does not require sexual intimacy.

**SUSPECT:** an individual who commits a domestic violence incident.

**VICTIM:** an individual who is subject to a domestic violence incident.

### 4. Procedures

#### A. Confidentiality

To ensure the safety of all employees and to comply with statute, information related to domestic violence or the response to domestic violence by the Agency will only be disclosed on a need to know basis.

#### B. Work Environment

1. All employees will be sensitive and nonjudgmental while supporting victims of domestic violence.
2. An employee will not be disciplined or penalized in the workplace for being a victim of domestic violence.

3. When an employee who is subject to discipline claims that job performance or conduct problems are caused by domestic violence, the employee will be referred to the HCSO Domestic Violence Unit (DVU) and the Harford County Employee Assistance Program (EAP) if appropriate [eap@deeroaks.com](mailto:eap@deeroaks.com) or [www.deeroakseap.com](http://www.deeroakseap.com).

#### C. Disciplinary Procedures for Employees Who Commit Acts of Domestic Violence

1. An employee who commits an act of domestic violence in the workplace may be subject to disciplinary action, up to, and including termination of employment.
2. An employee who uses any county resources (e.g., work time, phones, e-mail) to facilitate an act of domestic violence may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
3. An employee who is the subject of a domestic violence internal investigation may, on a case-by-case basis, be reassigned by the employee's Bureau Commander to other duties during the investigation.

#### D. Employee Responsibilities

1. All employees will:
  - a. Attend Domestic Violence and the Workplace Training as required; and
  - b. Immediately report to a supervisor any threats or incidents of domestic violence which are experienced or witnessed.
2. A supervisor who has knowledge of an employee who is a victim or suspect of domestic violence will immediately inform his Division Commander.

#### E. Division Commander Responsibilities

1. Ensure that each employee is familiar with the provisions of the Domestic Violence and the Workplace Policy in PowerDMS.
2. Make reasonable efforts to maximize the safety of all HCSO employees.
3. Immediately refer any employee, known to be the victim or the suspect of domestic violence, to the DVU and the EAP.
4. Notify the Office of Professional Standards, if appropriate.
5. Designate the appropriate member to complete the reporting requirements.
6. Maintain the confidentiality of all information related to an employee's involvement in a situation relating to domestic violence.
7. The employer is authorized to file a petition for a peace order that alleges the commission of specified acts against the petitioner's employee at the employee's workplace.

- a. The employer must notify the employee before filing for the peace order.
- 8. An employer may not retaliate against an employee who does not provide information for or testify at a peace order proceeding.

F. Victim Responsibilities and Assistance Options

- 1. An employee in immediate danger should call 911.
- 2. An employee who is a victim of domestic violence is encouraged to discuss with his supervisor:
  - a. The possible need to be absent from work and what type of leave can be used;
  - b. Plans to return to work and the appropriate reporting procedures; and
  - c. Safety measures that are in place or can be put in place.
- 3. An employee who is a victim of domestic violence may contact the DVU or County EAP for confidential consultation and resource information.
  - a. Resources may include local domestic violence outreach groups such as Harford County Sexual Assault/Spouse Abuse Research Center (SARC), crisis centers, and the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence Help Line.
  - b. The employee may work with SARC or another service provider to create a safety plan.

G. Domestic Violence Unit Responsibilities

- 1. Participate in Domestic Violence and the Workplace Training.
- 2. Post educational materials on domestic violence in areas and formats accessible to employees.
- 3. Refer all parties to referral resources for counselling services, shelter, abuser intervention programs and legal services, as applicable.
- 4. Maintain up-to-date referral resources on domestic violence hotlines, advocacy groups, shelters, counseling services, and legal services.
- 5. Maintain up-to-date resources for suspects, including abuser intervention programs.
- 6. Maintain the confidentiality of all information related to an employee's involvement in a situation relating to domestic violence.
- 7. Follow-up on each case and maintain documentation in accordance with Agency policy.

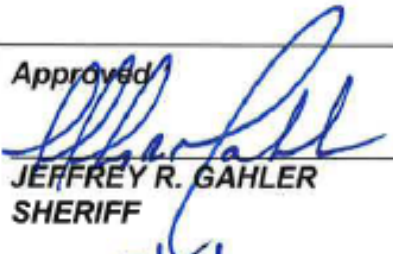
H. Employees who are suspects of domestic violence will:

- 1. Contact the referral services as directed by the DVU;

2. Participate in the recommended programs; and
3. Follow all HCSO orders, policies, rules, and regulations.

## 5. Summary of Changes

- A. On 5/31/24 a 3-year review was conducted by the Domestic Violence Unit and HCSO Legal Affairs with no suggested revisions recommended for this review cycle.

Approved  
  
JEFFREY R. GAHLER  
SHERIFF  
DATE 8/31/2021