



# HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE PERSONNEL POLICY

Jeffrey R. Gahler,  
Sheriff

## Workplace Harassment/Discrimination/Sexual Harassment

<b>Distribution:</b>	<b>All Employees</b>	<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>PER 0301</b>		
<b>Responsible Unit:</b>	<b>Human Resources</b>	<b>Rescinds:</b>	<b>MAN5700 dated 04/02/12</b>		
<b>Original Issued Date:</b>	<b>07/19/19</b>	<b>Revision #:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Latest Revision Date:</b>	<b>08/04/23</b>
<b>Required 3-year Review Completed:</b>	<b>05/01/26</b>	<b>Next Required 3-Year Review Due:</b>	<b>05/31/29</b>		

### 1. Purpose

The Harford County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) will provide all Agency members with a workplace free from sexual harassment and discrimination and will maintain zero tolerance in dealing with any forms of sexual harassment, workplace harassment, or discrimination.

### 2. Policy

The HCSO strives to maintain and foster a work environment in which all employees are treated with decency and respect.

The HCSO prohibits, and will not tolerate, discrimination and/or harassment of its members in the workplace, based upon sex, race, color, age, disability (mental or physical), religion, marital status, sexual orientation, ancestry or national origin, or any other attribute protected by law.

### 3. Definitions

**HARASSMENT:** the unwelcome conduct toward an individual because of sex, race, color, age, disability (mental or physical), religion, marital status, sexual orientation, ancestry or national origin, or any other attribute protected by law.

### 4. Procedures

#### A. Prohibited Actions

1. Members will not transmit any verbal or written communications (including those in electronic format or through a messaging system) that contain offensive name calling, jokes, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threats.
2. Members will not transmit comments or jokes that target individuals in any groups outlined within this policy.
3. Members will not engage in unwelcome sexual advances and/or solicit requests for sexual acts, favors, or actions.

4. Members will refrain from verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that insinuates either explicitly or implicitly that an Agency member's submission to or rejection of sexual advances will in any way influence any personnel decision regarding the Agency member's job, wages, performance evaluation, advancement, assigned duties, shifts, eligibility for training or any other condition of employment or career development.
5. Members will refrain from leering.
6. Members will refrain from giving inappropriate gifts.
7. Members will refrain from touching someone in an unwanted manner.
8. Members will not transmit, display, or send any images, such as derogatory or offensive pictures, cartoons, drawings, or gestures, including those in hard copy or electronic format, whether physically present in the workplace or accessed over the internet or email system.
9. Retaliation against an Agency member for reporting discrimination, harassment, or cooperation in a discrimination/harassment complaint is strictly prohibited and will constitute a violation of this policy.
10. Any intentional false accusations or statements will result in disciplinary action against the individual providing false information.

#### B. Complaint Processing

1. Agency members will report workplace harassment and/or discrimination by completing the Complaint Against Personnel (IA-028).
2. For purposes of this policy, Complaint Against Personnel (IA-028) is exempt from the chain of command and may be forwarded directly to the Office of Professional Standards (OPS).
3. Any information received alleging that the Sheriff is the accused will be forwarded by the OPS to the Chief Deputy.
4. If the complaint is against the Sheriff, the Chief Deputy will:
  - a. Request the assistance of an outside law enforcement agency to conduct the investigation;
  - b. Serve as the primary point of contact with the investigating agency; and
  - c. Ensure the complete cooperation of the Sheriff's Office during the investigation.
5. Any information received will be handled with confidentiality.

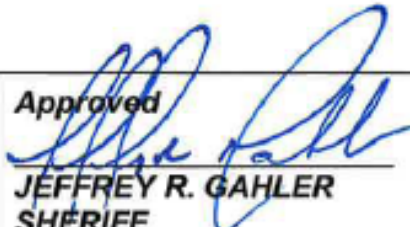
#### C. Office of Professional Standards (OPS)

1. The OPS, in consultation with the Investigative Services Bureau Chief, will determine if the complaint will be investigated as an allegation of discrimination or harassment versus some other form of misconduct.

2. The OPS investigators will:
  - a. Fully investigate all cases of alleged complaints of harassment and/or discrimination;
  - b. Ensure the investigation is given immediate attention; and
  - c. Respond with sensitivity to the feelings and needs of the complainant.
  
- D. Division Commanders will:
  1. Monitor personnel affected by the investigation to prevent continuation of the conduct in question, or retaliation for actions taken to resolve it, including close observation of the complainant, the accused, witnesses, and other members of the complainant's unit assignment;
  2. Maintain contact with the Office of Professional Standards to determine case progress;
  3. Update the Bureau Commander on progress of the case. NOTE: If the victim's Commander is the accused, the Commander of the accused will assume the above responsibilities. If the accused is the Sheriff, the Chief Deputy will assume the above responsibilities; and
  4. Notify the complainant of the outcome of the investigation.
  
- E. Disposition
  1. Documentation related to the investigation and any subsequent disciplinary action will be maintained in accordance with Agency Policy.

## 5. Summary of Changes

- A. On 7/28/23 a 3-year review was conducted.
  1. Section 4.B.4. - removed: The requirement of the Chief Deputy to notify the Attorney General's Office if the complaint was against the Sheriff.
  2. Section 4.D.4.- added: The Division Commander will notify the complainant of the outcome of the investigation.
  
- B. On 05/01/26 the 3-year Agency review was conducted and no changes were made to this policy.

Approved  
  
JEFFREY R. GAHLER  
SHERIFF  
DATE 8.4.23