



# Washington State Conservation Commission

<b>Policy Name and #</b>	<b>Respectful Work Environment Policy# 23-04</b>  This policy replaces: 13-17 Workplace Safety & 13-06 Workplace & Domestic Violence
<b>Applies to:</b>	This policy applies to all Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) employees, applicants, contractors, and volunteers.
<b>Effective Date:</b>	March 16, 2023
<b>Approved By:</b>	Conservation Commission Board by Motion.

## **Applies to:**

This policy applies to all Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) employees, applicants, contractors, and volunteers.

**Governance:** Listed below are some, but not all, applicable governing requirements. Note: Laws and rules may change over time and such changes may take precedence over this policy.

- [Executive Order 17-01: Reaffirming Washington's Commitment to Tolerance, Diversity, and Inclusiveness](#)
- [Executive Order 13-01: Veterans Transition Support](#)
- [Executive Order 13-02: Improving Employment Opportunities and Outcomes for People with Disabilities in State Government](#)
- [Directive of the Governor 16-11: LGBTQ Inclusion and Safe Place Initiative](#)
- [State Human Resources Directive 20-02](#)
- [State Human Resources Directive 20-03](#)
- [Governor Inslee's Memo to State Agencies - Inclusive and Respectful Work Environments](#)

## Reason for Policy

This policy makes it clear that:

- Inclusion is necessary to create a work environment anchored to respect, dignity, equity, and civility.
- SCC is strongly committed to a positive, healthy, and professional work environment.

- All people, regardless of their position, will be treated with respect, dignity, equity, and civility.

## Definitions

Disrespectful behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Offensive or inappropriate remarks, jokes, gestures, material (electronic or otherwise), or behavior,
- Yelling,
- Belittling,
- Reprimanding in the presence of others,
- Aggressive or patronizing behavior,
- Behavior that embarrasses or humiliates another,
- Micro-aggressions,
- Discrimination,
- Sexual Harassment,
- Intimidation and/or coercion,
- Gossip or spreading rumors,
- Bullying,
- Inappropriate physical contact,
- Creating processes or a work environment that do not support the ability to express respect, dignity, equity, civility, and inclusion.

Respectful behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Engaging others with an open, collaborative and cooperative approach,
- Valuing the diversity and the human rights of others regardless of their race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, veteran status, body shape/size, or any physical or mental disability,
- Recognizing the dignity of a person through courteous conduct,
- Committing to learn and develop an understanding of differing social and cultural norms,
- Taking responsibility for one's actions, displaying humility with one's own mistakes and offering others grace and forgiveness for theirs,
- Emphasizing positivity and commonality rather than opposition or negativity,
- Finding ways to be constructive in providing feedback to others.

## Policy Statement

Each person at the SCC is responsible for setting positive examples and behaving in a manner that will not intentionally offend, embarrass, or humiliate others. Sometimes our actions and behaviors, can unintentionally offend others, and in these situations, it is important that we own our behavior and work to build trust and respect in our relationships.

Everyone at SCC must treat others with dignity, civility, and respect and will address situations where this does not happen. Because of this, SCC expects employees to speak up and report disrespectful behavior. SCC embraces an approach of direct communication independently to resolve issues respectfully, in recognition of SCC's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy, while providing a safe environment for those who are uncomfortable or discouraged from communication to report disrespectful behavior.

## **Related policy**

This policy is used with and incorporates by reference other agency policies, specifically the following:

- Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Policy;
- Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy,
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy, and the,
- Reasonable Accommodation Policy.

## **Failure to follow policy**

The requirements of this policy are not optional. Through education of employees and enforcement of this policy, SCC will actively seek to prevent, correct, and discipline behavior that violates this policy.

Employees violating this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under chapter [357-40 WAC \(Discipline\)](#). See the agency's discipline policy.

- SCC will take appropriate and swift action up to and including dismissal to address any violation of this policy; and
- Any employee who initiates or participates in retaliation, against individuals making a complaint pursuant to this policy, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal.

## **Procedures**

Click here for [Process for Reporting a Complaint](#). Written process is also listed at the end of this policy.

The SCC has put in place a process to make sure protection and relief is available from any form of discrimination or sexual harassment. Protection and relief is available to all State Conservation Commission employees, applicants, contractors, and volunteers.

## **Responsibilities**

### **All employees**

- Show care and respect for each other and create a safe space;
- Attend training on respect, civility, and dignity in the workplace within one year of date of hire or within one year of the effective date of this policy;
- Ask your supervisor for advice or support if you are not sure whether you are following this policy.
- Strive to independently resolve issues respectfully, in accordance with SCC's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy.
- Report unresolved disrespectful behavior immediately.

### **Supervisors, managers, and leaders**

- Advise employees on how to uphold the values described in this policy and support training opportunities;

- Lead by example; create and maintain a workplace that demonstrates respect and professionalism;
- Listen to employees when issues are raised; do not excuse, condone, or ignore violations of this policy;
- Address behaviors and incidents that violate this policy quickly and at the lowest appropriate level.

### **Executive leaders including department heads**

- Jointly review this policy once a year in order to determine the success of this policy in alignment with measurable objectives developed by the DEI steering committee and agency leadership;
- In cooperation with the SCC's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion steering committee and Human Resources:
  - Develop and put in place measurable objectives;
  - Establish a purposeful, cyclical review process in order to measure progress.

### History

First Effective: March 16, 2023

Amended

# Harassment, Discrimination, or Retaliation Complaint Process

We are committed to promoting an inclusive, respectful and safe culture. Because of this, we will respond to all complaints related to harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. To help make sure this happens, we have put in place a complaint reporting process to make sure protection and relief is available from any form of discrimination or sexual harassment. No complaint is insignificant if it means an employee doesn't feel emotionally or physically safe in the workplace

## About the complaint reporting process

This complaint process supports and is used together with these agency policies:

- Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Policy
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy
- Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy
- Reasonable Accommodation Policy
- Respectful Workplace Policy

There are occasions that must inform employees that we are under a legal obligation to respond to allegations of behaviors covered by this policy. We are committed to responding because we want to promote an inclusive, respectful and safe culture.

## Who can file a complaint?

Anyone who works, volunteers, interns, or does contracting work for the small agency can report or file a complaint. If you are a represented employee, this process will not conflict with a formal grievance process. Please refer to the [appropriate bargaining agreement](#) regarding complaints and grievances.

## Should I submit a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, discontent, or unhappiness with an action, decision, or omission within the control or responsibility of the agency and includes an unresolvable problem or dispute. Use this process if the issue cannot be resolved informally at the supervisor level or falls into one of the categories below, a complaint should be submitted.

Use this process for:

- Unlawful discrimination (racial, sexual orientation, disability, religious, age, etc.)
- Personal harassment (inappropriate comments, offensive jokes, intimidation, ostracizing behavior, etc.)

- Physical harassment (hostile behavior, intimidation by destruction of property, direct threats, etc.)
- Sexual harassment
- Quid pro quo sexual harassment
- Third-party harassment (an individual outside of the organization)
- Bullying
- Cyberbullying
- Retaliation

We encourage everyone to raise issues that are of concern as soon as possible. We follow a transparent, fair, and timely process for addressing complaints and problems so that:

- Everyone involved is treated equitably.
- That no one who reports a complaint is penalized or disadvantaged.
- SCC will do our best to preserve confidentiality, handle all issues with discretion and preserve a space of respect.

#### How do I submit a complaint?

Complaints may be made in writing or verbally. Depending on the situation and your level of comfort, you can report the issue directly to your supervisor for resolution or schedule a conversation with your [assigned HR Business Partner \(HRBP\)](#).

We encourage you to use the [Personnel Incident form](#) when making a written complaint. If you choose to submit a complaint form to a trusted supervisor, manager, member of the leadership team, or to your HRBP, follow the directions on the form.

#### What happens once HR receives my complaint?

The assigned HRBP will review your complaint to determine next steps based on the issue described in the complaint. In all situations, we will make sure you are kept informed of the status of your complaint. Depending on the situation, you may be asked to provide additional supporting information for your complaint – requests for more information, if needed, may come in a variety of forms.