



United States Department of Agriculture

Research, Education and Economics
Agricultural Research Service

March 23, 2012

SUBJECT: 2012 PWA Sexual Harassment Policy Statement

TO: All PWA Employees

FROM: Andrew C. Hammond
Area Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew C. Hammond".

With the issuance of Dr. Knipling's 2011 Sexual Harassment Policy Statement, I want to take this opportunity to re-affirm my personal commitment to promoting and creating a work environment that is free from sexual harassment and to addressing and resolving incidents of sexual harassment at the lowest possible level.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Conduct that may not be offensive in a social environment can be offensive at work.

Supervisors, co-workers, or non-employees can be guilty of harassing behavior. Examples of actions that could be defined as sexual harassment include, but are not limited to: sexual innuendoes and remarks about a person's clothing, body, or sexual activities; unwanted sexually-oriented jokes, remarks, or humor; physical contact of a sexual nature such as patting, pinching, grabbing, or other inappropriate touching or feeling; and sending unwanted e-mails, text messages, or posts on social networking sites.

Supervisors and managers must be aware of what constitutes sexual harassment in order to explain the sanctions for violations. Online training is available through AgLearn, and videos are available through the ARS Office of Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity (ODEO). Supervisors and managers who either condone or fail to act promptly to correct harassing conduct brought to their attention will be held accountable, and appropriate corrective action will be taken.

Any employee in the Pacific West Area in need of assistance regarding a sexual harassment issue should contact the ARS Office of Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity at 1-800-340-4289 or 202-720-3410 within 45 days of an alleged incident.

Preventing sexual harassment is the responsibility of each employee. It is important to note that it is not how a person intended his or her actions to be taken, but rather how the actions are perceived. We must do all that we can to ensure that PWA is an environment free from sexual harassment and retaliation.



Pacific West Area - Office of the Director

800 Buchanan Street • Albany, CA 94710-1105
Voice: 510.559.6060 • Fax: 510.559.5779 • E-mail: Andrew.Hammond@ars.usda.gov

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