

The agency strongly enforces the Sexual Harassment Policy. Disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, will be taken against employees who violate this policy.

The South Carolina Department of Social Services' goal is to ensure all employees work in an environment free of harassment and discrimination. Our agency's commitment is to provide a workplace free of tensions involving matters that do not relate to agency business. Conduct which involves sexual harassment does not belong in the workplace, or in any other place while engaging in work-related business.

The agency strongly enforces the Sexual Harassment Policy. Disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, will be taken against employees who violate this policy. This pamphlet is provided to explain generally SCDSS Sexual Harassment Policy and the steps the agency will take to enforce the policy. Please refer, also, to your SCDSS Personnel Manual, Chapter 1, which details our policy more specifically.

DSS Brochure 1436 (JUL 04)
Edition of FEB 01 is obsolete.

South Carolina
Department of
Social Services

Sexual Harassment Policy

THE LANGUAGE USED IN THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT CREATE AN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT BETWEEN THE EMPLOYEE AND THE AGENCY. THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT CREATE ANY CONTRACTUAL RIGHTS OR ENTITLEMENTS. THE AGENCY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVISE THE CONTENT OF THIS DOCUMENT, IN WHOLE OR IN PART. NO PROMISES OR ASSURANCES, WHETHER WRITTEN OR ORAL, WHICH ARE CONTRARY TO OR INCONSISTENT WITH THE TERMS OF THIS PARAGRAPH CREATE ANY CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT.

South Carolina
Department of
Social Services does not
tolerate any forms of
sexual harassment by
volunteer workers, clients,
agency employees –
including supervisors,
managers or co-workers,
or non-agency employees
toward any SCDSS
employee.

DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission defines sexual harassment to be unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- 1) submission to such conduct is made implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of employment;
- 2) submission or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting an individual's work performance; or
- 3) such conduct interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment may consist of the following, but is not limited to: unwelcome sexually oriented jokes, comments, gestures, noises, remarks directed at any employee, or made in the presence of an employee who has made it clear that the action is unwelcome; threats or intimidation of sexual relations or conduct; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; and/or threats or insinuations that one's work conditions will change by not submitting to the sexual advances.

HANDLING REPORTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

All employees are urged to report, either to a supervisor or to the Human Resource Management Director, any suspected sexual harassment by another employee. If your supervisor, or someone else upward in the chain of command is the alleged harasser, please contact the agency's Human Resource Management Director at (803) 898-7315, or an

Investigator with the Office of Investigations at (803) 898-7673. Reports of sexual harassment can be made verbally, or in writing by completing and submitting to Human Resource Management, DSS Form 1401, Sexual Harassment Complaint Form. The agency is committed to acting on its own initiative against known harassers rather than waiting for formal complaints.

All reports of sexual harassment are investigated by the Office of Investigations, and all investigations are handled confidentially, to the extent possible. All parties involved are advised to maintain strict confidentiality.

CONSEQUENCES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

Prompt remedial action will be taken by the agency in all cases where there has been a determination that sexual harassment occurred. Disciplinary action will be taken, based on the severity of the facts, on a case-by-case basis, up to and including termination for a first offense.

PROTECTION AFTER MAKING A COMPLAINT:

The agency will not tolerate retaliatory action against complainants or witnesses, during or after an investigation. Retaliation by any agency employee is a serious violation of the agency's Sexual Harassment Policy and should be reported immediately. The Agency's Human Resource Management Office will follow up on all sexual harassment situations to ensure that all harassment has ended.

If you have any questions about Sexual Harassment,
please feel free to contact the Human Resource Management Division at (803) 898-7315.