

VERMILION PARISH SHERIFF'S OFFICE

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

In Compliance with Louisiana Revised Statutes 42:341-345

Revised: December 15, 2025

I. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Vermilion Parish Sheriff's Office to provide all employees with a workplace that is free from sexual harassment. **Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, physical, or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when such conduct 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. Such conduct shall not be tolerated.**

This policy applies to all employees, deputies, and appointees of the Vermilion Parish Sheriff's Office, regardless of rank or position. This policy covers sexual harassment by either sex toward the other and sexual harassment between members of the same sex.

The Vermilion Parish Sheriff's Office complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding sexual harassment, including but not limited to: Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000e-2), the Louisiana Employment Discrimination Law (R.S. 23:301-303 and 332), and the Louisiana Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law (R.S. 42:341-345).

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide uniform guidance and procedures regarding sexual harassment in conformity with applicable federal, state, and local laws.
- Demonstrate the Sheriff's commitment to compliance with the law concerning sexual harassment.
- Establish an effective process for handling sexual harassment complaints.
- Respond to the potential impact of sexual harassment on absenteeism, productivity, and turnover.
- Ensure compliance with mandatory training and reporting requirements under R.S. 42:343-344

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

Vermilion Parish Sheriff's Office

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly by term or condition of an individual's employment.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

B. Types of Sexual Harassment

Quid Pro Quo Harassment: Occurs when submission to sexual conduct is made either an explicit or implicit term or condition of an individual's employment, or when submission to or rejection of the conduct by the individual is used for employment decisions such as performance appraisal, compensation, promotion, work assignments, or similar matters.

Hostile Work Environment Harassment: Occurs when sexual conduct, whether committed by a supervisor or non-supervisor, has the effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

IV. EXAMPLES OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances or propositions
- Requests or demands for sexual favors.
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, including sexual innuendos, suggestive comments, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, or threats.
- Sexually oriented comments about an individual's body, sexual activity, or sexual attractiveness
- Unwanted physical contact, including touching, pinching, brushing, or patting.
- Displaying or distributing sexually suggestive pictures, objects, cartoons, or posters in the workplace
- Sending sexually explicit emails, text messages, or other electronic communications
- Staring, leering, or making sexual gestures.
- Offensive remarks about a person's sex, including offensive comments about men or women in general.
- Conditioning any aspect of employment (raises, promotions, assignments) on sexual favors.
- Retaliating against an employee for refusing sexual advances or for reporting sexual harassment

Both the victim and the harasser can be either a woman or a man. The victim does not have to be of the opposite sex. The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee, such as a client, vendor, or inmate.

V. COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

A. Who May File a Complaint

Any employee, deputy, or appointee of the Vermilion Parish Sheriff's Office who believes they have been subjected to sexual harassment may file a complaint. Witnesses to sexual harassment may also file a complaint on behalf of the victim with the victim's consent.

B. To Whom Complaints May Be Made

Complaints of sexual harassment may be made to any of the following designees:

- **Primary Designee:** Immediate Supervisor
- **First Alternate:** Any Captain or higher-ranking officer
- **Second Alternate:** Chief Deputy
- **Third Alternate:** Sheriff

If the immediate supervisor is the person directly or indirectly responsible for the harassment, or if the employee is uncomfortable reporting to their supervisor for any reason, the employee should report the complaint to one of the alternate designees listed above.

C. How to File a Complaint

1. Employees who believe they have been sexually harassed should, if comfortable doing so, tell the person or persons harassing them that their behavior is offensive and must stop.
2. The complaint should be reported immediately to one of the designated persons listed above.
3. Complaints may be made verbally or in writing. Written complaints are encouraged to ensure accuracy and documentation.
4. **All complaints and actions taken shall be documented.**

VI. INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

A. General Process

All complaints of sexual harassment will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, and impartially. The investigation will generally include the following steps:

4. **Receipt and Documentation:** Upon receipt of a complaint, the designated receiver shall document the complaint and immediately notify the Chief Deputy or Sheriff.
5. **Assignment of Investigator:** An investigator will be assigned who has received appropriate training in sexual harassment investigations.
6. **Interview of Complainant:** The investigator shall interview the complainant to obtain a detailed account of the allegations.
7. **Interview of Alleged Harasser:** The alleged harasser shall be interviewed and given an opportunity to respond to the allegations. **Both the complainant and the alleged harasser are required to participate in the investigation.**
8. **Interview of Witnesses:** All relevant witnesses shall be interviewed.
9. **Evidence Collection:** All relevant documents, electronic communications, and other evidence shall be collected and preserved.

10. **Findings and Conclusions:** The investigator shall prepare a written report documenting the investigation and findings.

11. **Determination and Action:** Based on the findings, appropriate action will be taken as described in Section VIII.

B. Confidentiality

To the extent possible, consistent with a thorough investigation, the information supplied by the complainant will be held confidential. All witnesses and those interviewed during the investigation will be required to treat the matter as confidential. The purpose of confidentiality is to protect, to the extent practicable, both the complainant and the accused. Nothing herein shall prohibit the Sheriff from exercising discretion in disclosing any material or statements obtained during the investigation to any court, board, or agency, or from waiving any applicable privilege.

C. Interim Measures

When an employee who lodges a complaint puts forward a reasonable claim of fear of physical harm, or when deemed otherwise appropriate, immediate steps will be taken to separate or protect the employee from the alleged harasser. Such measures may include temporary transfer, reassignment, or administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation.

VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST RETALIATION

Retaliation against any individual for filing a complaint of sexual harassment, testifying, or participating in any way in an investigation or other proceeding involving a complaint of sexual harassment is strictly prohibited.

Employees who file a complaint or participate in an investigation shall be protected from any form of retaliation arising out of the filing of the complaint or participation in the investigation. Any employee who retaliates against a complainant or witness, impedes an investigation, or covers up the truth of the matter shall be subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination.

VIII. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

A. Discipline for Sexual Harassment

If, at the completion of the investigation, the complaint appears to be valid and supported by the evidence, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. Possible disciplinary actions include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal warning
- Written reprimand
- Mandatory counseling or training
- Suspension without pay
- Demotion
- Transfer
- Termination

The severity of the discipline will depend on the nature and severity of the harassment, the harasser's prior disciplinary history, and other relevant factors.

B. Discipline for False Claims

Because it is the Sheriff's policy to encourage employees to come forward when they believe they have been sexually harassed, a complainant shall be privileged in having brought the complaint, absent a finding supported by evidence that the complaint is entirely false and motivated by malice. **If it is determined that a claim of sexual harassment was intentionally false and made in bad faith, the employee who made the malicious and false accusation shall be subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination.** Such disciplinary action shall not be considered retaliation for the filing of the complaint.

IX. APPEAL PROCESS

Either the complainant or the accused may submit the findings and decisions reached at the conclusion of an investigation to the personal review of the Sheriff by making a written request within five (5) working days of the date they are informed of the decision. The decision of the Sheriff shall be final.

X. APPLICABLE FEDERAL AND STATE LAW

Sexual harassment is prohibited under the following federal and state laws:

- **Federal:** Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000e-2)
- **State:** Louisiana Employment Discrimination Law (R.S. 23:301-303 and 332)
- **State:** Louisiana Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law (R.S. 42:341-345)

RIGHT TO PURSUE EXTERNAL CLAIMS: Employees retain the right to pursue a claim of sexual harassment under applicable federal or state law, regardless of the outcome of any internal investigation conducted pursuant to this policy. Complaints may be filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or the Louisiana Commission on Human Rights.

XI. HARASSMENT BY NON-EMPLOYEES

A. Harassment by Inmates

Harassment by inmates shall be treated as a disciplinary infraction and shall be subject to investigation and punishment according to the rules and procedures governing inmate behavior and discipline. Personnel who are the subject of or who observe acts of harassment by inmates shall report the infraction according to the disciplinary procedures of the facility.

B. Harassment by Third Parties

Harassment by third parties such as vendors, visitors, contractors, or others who are neither employees nor inmates will not be tolerated and shall be subject to investigation and appropriate corrective measures. Personnel who are subjected to or who observe acts of harassment committed by third persons shall report the incident(s) to the Chief Deputy or other ranking officer.

XII. MANDATORY TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with R.S. 42:343, the following training requirements apply:

- **Annual Training:** Each employee, deputy, and appointee shall receive a minimum of one (1) hour of education and training on preventing sexual harassment during each full calendar year of employment. Training must be completed by December 31st of each year.
- **Supervisor Training:** Supervisors and any persons designated to accept or investigate complaints of sexual harassment shall receive additional education and training beyond the one-hour annual requirement.
- **Training Format:** Training may be received either in person or via the internet through training and education materials approved by the Sheriff.
- **New Employees:** New employees shall receive a copy of this policy during their initial orientation and shall complete sexual harassment training within thirty (30) days of hire.
- **Training Records:** The Sheriff or designee shall maintain records of each employee's compliance with the mandatory training requirement. Each employee's record of compliance shall be a public record available to the public in accordance with the Public Records Law.

XIII. ANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with R.S. 42:344, the Sheriff shall compile an annual report by February 1st of each year containing information from the previous calendar year regarding compliance with the requirements of this policy, including:

- The number and percentage of employees who have completed the mandatory sexual harassment training.
- The number of sexual harassment complaints received.
- The number of complaints which resulted in a finding that sexual harassment occurred.
- The number of complaints in which the finding of sexual harassment resulted in discipline or corrective action.
- The amount of time it took to resolve each complaint.

These reports shall be public record and available to the public in the manner provided by the Public Records Law.

XIV. POLICY POSTING AND DISTRIBUTION

In accordance with R.S. 42:343(D):

- This policy and the complaint procedure shall be prominently posted on the Vermilion Parish Sheriff's Office website.
- A notice on how to obtain this information shall be posted in a conspicuous location in each of the Sheriff's Office facilities.
- Every employee shall personally receive a copy of this policy and sign an acknowledgment of receipt.
- This policy shall be re-disseminated whenever it is changed and not less often than once per year.

XV. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. All Employees

All employees are responsible for: complying with this policy; making a conscious effort to avoid any speech or conduct that may be perceived as sexual harassment; reporting any observed sexual harassment; supporting victims; documenting observations; and cooperating fully in any investigation.

B. Supervisors and Ranking Officers

All supervisors and officers with the rank of Captain and higher are assigned responsibility for: implementing this policy; ensuring compliance with and knowledge of its terms; taking immediate and appropriate corrective action where warranted; maintaining open communication channels to permit employees to raise concerns without fear of retaliation; stopping any observed sexual harassment; treating sexual harassment matters with sensitivity, confidentiality, and objectiveness; and completing additional supervisory training. Failure to carry out these responsibilities may be reflected in performance reviews, salary adjustments, or may result in discipline or termination.

C. Chief Deputy

The Chief Deputy is assigned responsibility for: administration of the complaint procedure; ensuring timely and thorough investigations; receiving reports of complaints and investigation results; providing training programs to educate and sensitize all personnel; auditing all investigations for consistency and effectiveness; and maintaining required records and reports.

XVI. MODIFICATIONS

The Sheriff reserves the right to alter, modify, or amend this policy at any time at his sole discretion, with or without individual notice to employees, to ensure continued compliance with applicable federal and state law.

Sheriff, Vermilion Parish

Date: _____

EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Sexual Harassment Policy

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Vermilion Parish Sheriff's Office Sexual Harassment Policy. I understand that:

12. It is my responsibility to read and understand this policy.
13. Sexual harassment in any form is strictly prohibited.
14. I have the right to report any incident of sexual harassment without fear of retaliation.
15. I am required to complete annual sexual harassment training by December 31st of each calendar year.
16. I retain the right to pursue a claim under state or federal law regardless of the outcome of any internal investigation.
17. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employee Printed Name

Employee Signature

Date

Witness Signature

Date