



RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE POLICY

I. STATEMENT OF POLICY

Mutual respect between and among employees, including elected officials, temporary employees, contractors and volunteers, is an integral value of Deschutes County. Only when all individuals work together can we create and maintain a culture of belonging and a work environment that is respectful and free from inappropriate workplace behavior.

We recognize the demands of our jobs and challenges in our personal lives can occasionally lead to stress. However, it is never appropriate to vent frustrations by acting in a demeaning, threatening, or verbally abusive manner. Yelling or cursing at others, or engaging in intimidating behaviors are examples of violations of our respectful workplace expectations. Use good judgment and do not act in ways likely to diminish others' sense of safety, inclusion, and respect in the workplace.

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all elected officials, employees, volunteers, contractors, third-party vendors, and others acting on behalf of the County.

III. DEFINITIONS

Professional Workplace Behavior: Supporting the values and mission of Deschutes County and your department, building positive relationships with others, communicating in a respectful manner, holding oneself accountable and pursuing change within the system.

Inappropriate Workplace Behavior: Unwelcome or unwanted conduct or behavior that causes a negative impact or disruption to the workplace or the business of the County, or results in the erosion of employee morale and is not associated with an employee's protected class.

Examples of inappropriate workplace behavior include, but are not limited to, comments, actions or behaviors of an individual or group that bully, embarrass, humiliate, intimidate, disparage, demean, or show disrespect for another employee, a manager, a subordinate, a volunteer, a customer, a contractor or a visitor in the workplace.

Inappropriate workplace behavior does not include actions of performance management such as giving supervisory instructions, setting expectations, giving feedback, administering disciplinary actions, or conducting investigatory meetings.

Inappropriate workplace behavior does not include assigned, requested or unsolicited constructive peer feedback on projects or work.

Inappropriate workplace behavior as defined in this policy is differentiated from harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination as defined in policy HR-10 in that the inappropriate behavior is not determined to be related to one or more “protected class” established by Oregon or federal law.

IV. POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Employees of all types as well as temporary employees and volunteers at every level of the organization must foster an environment that encourages appropriate workplace interactions between employees and discourages disrespectful behavior. All employees, temporary employees, and volunteers must behave respectfully.

Deschutes County is committed to assisting its employees in adhering to appropriate workplace behavior and maintaining a work environment that promotes the following values:

1. Treat all people we encounter with dignity, respect and courtesy.
2. Reflect thoughtful concern in how our words and behaviors impact others.
3. Retain confidentiality with private information.
4. Work to resolve conflict proactively and act with positive intent.
5. Practice healthy work communications by being honest, direct and helpful.
6. Maintain appropriate and respectful relationships with co-workers based on mutual trust and respect.

Addressing Inappropriate Workplace Behavior

- A. Supervisors must address inappropriate behavior they observe or experience and should do so as close to the time of the occurrence as possible and appropriately.
- B. If an employee, temporary employee, or volunteer observes or experiences inappropriate workplace behavior, they may:
 - a. Redirect inappropriate conversations or behavior to workplace business.
 - b. Tell the offending employee, temporary employee, or volunteer their behavior is offensive and ask them to stop.
 - c. Report the observation or experience to a manager, Human Resources, or other designated individuals.

V. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Reporting Inappropriate Workplace Behavior

Any employee aware of or experiencing inappropriate behavior in the workplace should report that information immediately. The report may be made verbally or in writing to the employees’

immediate supervisor, department leadership or Human Resources. All employees are encouraged to document any incidents involving inappropriate workplace behavior as soon as possible.

Inappropriate workplace behavior must be addressed and corrected before it becomes pervasive, causes further workplace disruption or lowers morale.

Retaliation Protections

Deschutes County prohibits retaliation against any employee for filing a complaint regarding conduct in violation of this policy. Deschutes County will not tolerate retaliation against any employee for raising a good faith concern, for providing information related to a concern, or for otherwise cooperating in an investigation of a reported violation of this policy. Any employee who retaliates against anyone involved in an investigation is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Penalties

Deschutes County will not tolerate inappropriate workplace behavior. Any individual found to have engaged in such conduct may face disciplinary action up to, and including, termination of employment. The County may also subject managers and supervisors who fail to take prompt, appropriate corrective action to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Approved by the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners on October XX, 2025.

Nick Lelack
County Administrator