

	Employee Workplace Concerns and Complaints Policy	
	Section No: 2.13	
	Category: Workplace Conduct and Compliance Policies	
	Resolution Number: 257-2026	
	Effective Date: September 1, 2026	
	Supersedes: [former Section 10, Resolution 2008-149 – February 19, 2008]	
	Next Review Date: September 1, 2028	
Responsible Office: Human Resources		
Policy Applies to:	☒ All City employees (Full-time, Part-time, LSEs, temps, etc.) ☐ All City and School Employees	☐ Full-Time employees only ☐ Other: _____

Relevant Definitions

N/A

Policy

This policy applies to all employees, including full-time, part-time, temporary, seasonal, contract, and volunteer personnel.

The purpose of this policy is to provide employees with a safe, respectful, and structured process for reporting concerns or complaints related to workplace behavior, working conditions, policy violations, or interpersonal conflicts. The City is committed to addressing complaints promptly, fairly, and without retaliation.

Employees may use this process to report concerns including, but not limited to:

- Violations of organizational policies or procedures
- Harassment, discrimination, or bullying
- Unsafe working conditions or safety hazards
- Unprofessional behavior or misconduct
- Conflicts between employees
- Ethical concerns or improper practices
- Any issue affecting an employee's ability to work safely or effectively

Responsibility of Employees

All employees are responsible for:

- Reporting concerns promptly
- Cooperating in investigations
- Maintaining confidentiality as required
- Contributing to a respectful workplace

Responsibility of Supervisors and Managers

Supervisors must:

- Take all complaints seriously
- Promptly report complaints to Human Resources
- Avoid making assumptions or taking sides
- Maintain confidentiality
- Support a fair and thorough investigation

Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled with sensitivity. To the extent permitted by law, relevant Information will be shared only with individuals who need it to investigate or resolve the issue. Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, but discretion will be maintained.

No Retaliation

Retaliation against any employee who makes a complaint in good faith or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited. Any retaliatory behavior will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

False or Malicious Complaints

Knowingly filing a false or malicious complaint is a serious violation of the City's standards and may result in disciplinary action. However, good-faith complaints that are not substantiated will not result in any disciplinary outcomes.

Consequences of Policy Violation

Failure to comply with the expectations outlined in this policy may result in corrective disciplinary action, depending on the nature and severity of the violation. Violations are considered to be, but are not limited to:

- Failing to report concerns promptly.
- Failing to cooperate in an investigation.
- Knowingly breaching confidentiality.
- Knowingly withholding information, refusing to participate in the investigation process, or engaging in retaliatory behavior.
- Deliberate interference with an investigation.

Related Information or Procedures:

The City encourages the “open door” concept enabling employees to communicate problems or concerns on an informal basis without fear of retribution or retaliation. Employees may communicate with their department head, the Human Resources Director, or the City Manager concerning any job-related purpose, however the following order of communication is preferred:

- The employee’s immediate supervisor,
- The department head or HR Business Partner,
- The Human Resources Director,
- City Manager.

Matters brought forward should provide:

- An opportunity for the employee to present facts and/or materials,
- A review of the problem or concern; and
- A discussion of the results of the review with the employee.

This procedure will provide constructive and informative communication.

If a complaint or concern requires an internal investigation related to the conduct or actions of an employee, the Human Resources Director must be notified promptly and will coordinate or assist with the investigation, as appropriate, to ensure it is conducted in a fair, thorough, and consistent manner and in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and City policies.

Other Provisions:

Please note that this policy is not meant to be a substitute for an employee’s right to file a formal complaint with any federal, state, or other designated enforcement agency based on the rules of those agencies, nor is an employee required to exhaust this procedure before filing a complaint with such agencies.

Nothing in this policy should be construed to conflict with or supersede state or federal law, or as interfering with the constitutional rights of employees.

While the City is committed to the principles embodied in this policy, the policy itself is not intended to state contractual terms and does not constitute a contract between the City and its employees. Furthermore, this statement constitutes ONLY the policy of the City. The finding of a violation of this policy does not mean that the conduct violates state and/or federal laws.

Contacts

The Human Resources Office can address questions regarding this Policy:
phone: (423) 229-9401, HROffice @kingsporttn.gov