



ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

Number	924
Responsible Department	The Office of City Manager
Established/Effective Date	July 30, 2023
Latest Revision Date	July 30, 2023
Next Review & Reauthorization Date	July 30, 2025

SUBJECT: A Respectful Workplace Policy

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to promote and maintain a safe and respectful workplace where every individual is treated with civility, dignity and respect.
 - 1.1. This policy supplements and is in addition to the City's Code of Ethics and current policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment and retaliation (AR 922) and workplace violence (AR 923).
 - 1.2. All City employees and City officers play a role in contributing to a truly welcoming, safe, and inclusive working environment that encourages mutual respect and promotes civil and collaborative relationships.
 - 1.3. The City is committed to maintaining orderly administrative processes and keeping City facilities free from disruptions; it is equally important that City service delivery, public meetings, and events function smoothly and without disruption. Other benefits of a respectful workplace include:
 - Improved communication between people
 - Increased teamwork
 - Reduced stress
 - Increased productivity
 - Improved knowledge sharing
 - Increased employee engagement
 - Increased sense of fairness
 - 1.4. To promote and sustain a workplace where everyone is treated with respect and dignity, each City employee is expected to abide by the values and standards in the City's Code of Ethics and in this policy as they apply to interpersonal behavior, communication, and professionalism.
 - 1.5. This policy is not intended to deprive any person of his or her right to freedom of expression, but only to maintain, to the extent possible and reasonable, a safe, productive and harassment-free workplace for City staff and a safe and non-threatening environment for visitors and customers.



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2. **Authority:**

- Section 401 of the Huntington Beach City Charter
- City of Huntington Beach Code of Ethics
- Administrative Regulation 922 -- Anti-Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation Policy
- Administrative Regulation 923 – Workplace Violence Policy

3. **Application:** This policy applies to all officials, officers and employees of the City of Huntington Beach, as well as City volunteers and vendors or contractors. The City also seeks public cooperation with this policy.

4. **Definitions:**

4.1. **Disrespectful Behavior** is defined as discourteous, rude, impolite, or offensive words, gestures and/or other behavior that may devalue and undermine a person and their dignity or self-esteem and/or creates an intimidating, hostile, abusive or offensive environment. Examples of Disrespectful Behavior can include, but are not limited to, the following:

4.1.1. **Bullying:** bullying is a pattern of repeated behavior that a reasonable person would find hostile, offensive, intimidating, oppressive, subjugating, threatening, and unrelated to the City's legitimate business interests.

Bullying behavior may take many forms including physical, verbal, or written acts or behaviors. Workplace bullying often involves repeated abuse or misuse of power. A single physical, verbal, or written act or behavior generally will not constitute bullying unless especially severe and egregious but could nonetheless violate this Civility Policy.

4.1.2. **Hostility:** yelling, interpersonal hostility or spiteful conduct, that is deliberate or repeated and/or causes harm to the targeted person's or persons' mental or physical wellbeing, safety, or economic status. This includes physical intimidation, unwanted touching, or isolation.

4.1.3. **Belittling conduct:** name calling; playing "pranks" on a person; making fun of someone or telling jokes at their expense; taking, vandalizing, or otherwise damaging a person's personal or work property; and spreading false information or rumors about someone; seeking submission or misuse of power, authority, rank, status, or other privilege.

4.1.4. **Microaggressions:** statements, actions, or incidents regarded as indirect or subtle invalidation, insult, irritant, disregard, prejudice, and/or discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as those having actual or perceived



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unequal power across economic, political, social and cultural dimensions. Microaggressions can harm someone or unfairly advantage others.

4.1.5. **Intimidation:** using threatening or abusive language, profanity or language that is intended to be, or is perceived by others to be, demeaning, berating, belittling, rude, threatening, intimidating, coercive, hostile or offensive.

4.1.6. **Violence:** throwing tools, office equipment, or other objects as an expression of frustration or anger or implying that one will act with violence as a method of influencing the actions of others.

4.1.7. **Sabotage:** intentionally interfering with a process of work or otherwise undermining a person's work.

4.1.8. **Invasive use of technology:** using social media or other technology to harass or bully, using statements, photographs, video, or audio that could reasonably be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating.

Communication is nuanced and Interpersonal conflict is a normal part of work and life. Maintaining a respectful workplace relies on effective and respectful communication, patience, professionalism and understanding. Behavior need not violate state or federal laws to constitute a violation of this policy.

5. **Policy:**

The City of Huntington Beach is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment where people are treated with dignity, respect, and civility.

The City seeks to intervene at the earliest sign or stage of Disrespectful Behavior to correct that misconduct and prevent its reoccurrence.

5.1. **Encouraging Respectful Behavior**

The City encourages professional, respectful, and courteous behavior and communication and will not tolerate Disrespectful Behavior including hostile, intimidating, or otherwise disruptive actions.

5.2. **Retaliation Prohibited**

The City prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports/files a complaint, participates in an investigation or proceeding related to a potential violation of this policy, or serves as an investigator of the complaint. No tangible hardship, loss, or penalty may be imposed on such individual (Refer to AR 922 for more details).

5.3. **Violation of this Policy**



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Any employee or officer who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including termination. Violations by others covered by this policy will be addressed according to the Enforcement Protocols in Section 7 below.

6. Responsibilities:

It is the shared responsibility of all parties to contribute to and foster a respectful workplace.

6.1. The City Manager's Office and Human Resources Department are responsible for enforcing these policies by detailing consequences for inappropriate behavior, and for working with Department Heads to ensure awareness and understanding of this policy among City officials, employees, volunteers, contractors/vendors, customers, constituents and other members of the public.

6.2. To support a respectful workplace, all City staff and officials should:

- Complete mandatory training on prevention of harassment, discrimination and retaliation, along with training in other relevant subjects, such as conflict resolution.
- Adhere to City standards for appropriate conduct in the workplace at all times.
- Incorporate civility and respect in all communication – oral, written or nonverbal – and maintain the highest levels of civility and respect for the intended audience.
- Manage conflicts in a timely and effective manner by bringing concerns to the attention of a direct supervisor, manager or to the Human Resources (HR) Department.
- Work toward constructive solutions to conflicts and manage expectations for all parties involved.
- Promote and reinforce the City's commitment to providing a respectful, safe and healthy workplace.
- Continuously model appropriate behavior and recognize those that embody the tenets of dignity, respect and civility.

6.3. To support a respectful workplace, all City staff and officials, as well as volunteers, vendors or contractors, customers and participants in City functions, events or meetings should:

- Build positive morale through acknowledgement and courtesy by saying "hello," valuing others' time, and giving full attention to interactions.
- Use simple words like "please" and "thank you" to show respect.
- Be aware of surroundings and be considerate when making jokes, comments or gestures that may not be appropriate.



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- 6.4. Knowingly and intentionally making false accusations of violations of this policy is prohibited.

7. Reporting and Enforcement

- 7.1 Employees shall immediately notify the Huntington Beach Police Department via 911 for any situation that constitutes an emergency.
- 7.2 Anyone who experiences or witnesses behavior prohibited by this policy shall notify a supervisor, Department Head, the City Manager, or a HR staff member of the alleged behavior.
- 7.3 If the complaint is related to any elected officials or appointed members of boards, commissions, or committees, the City Manager or their designee shall be notified.
- 7.4 HR staff will coordinate with the appropriate Department's manager(s) and supervisor(s) to address the issue and take appropriate corrective steps regarding complaints made under this policy; the Huntington Beach Police Department and City Attorney's Office may be consulted as necessary.
- 7.5 Violations of this policy by City employees may be addressed by means ranging from an apology, individual counseling or conflict resolution intervention to termination from employment.
- 7.6 Any citizen, visitor or guest present on City property or participating in a City event, meeting or other function and failing to adhere to this policy may be addressed as follows:
- 7.6.1 *Official Warning:* Supervisory staff may advise the individual of this Respectful Workplace Policy and provide that person with a copy of this policy unless the behavior of the member of the public requires a more severe response. Any warning will clearly identify both the offending behavior and potential consequences that will arise if such behavior persists, and will provide the member of the public with an opportunity to improve their behavior before the City takes more serious action, such as removal from the premises.
- 7.6.2 *Suspension from the Government Building:* If a member of the public does not improve their behavior in response to an official warning, the City may request the individual leave the premises for a short period of time. This temporary suspension from City property should be initiated by a manager, Department Head, or other person with supervisory authority. The action is intended to provide the member of the public with an opportunity to "cool down" and reflect on their conduct.
- 7.6.3 *Cease and Desist Letter:* If a member of the public does not improve their behavior in response to an official warning or brief suspension, the City may respond by sending a "cease-and-desist" letter. The letter will identify both the prohibited conduct and the City's potential remedies. A "cease-and-desist" letter will put the member of the public on notice of the potentially serious consequences of his or her conduct.



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7.7 The City reserves the right to take additional measures as necessary, including establishing a separate protocol for interactions between City staff and a member of the public.

Distribution:

All employees may access the Administrative Regulations via the SurfNet or City website:

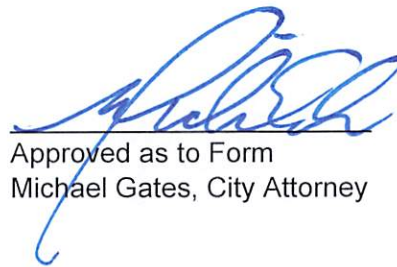
www.huntingtonbeachca.gov/AR



Travis Hopkins
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Approved as to Form
Michael Gates, City Attorney

Review Schedule

REVIEW DATE	DEPT. HEAD INITIAL	CITY MANAGER SIGNATURE