

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the American Hose Company No.1, Inc. (AH) to prohibit the harassment of any member by any other member on account of that person's sex. The AH does not condone and will not tolerate sexual harassment by its members or the sexual harassment of its members by anyone; including any officer, member, vendor, or guest.

Every member is expected to abide by this policy. Any member who violates this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action as prescribed by the By-Laws of the AH.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

There are two categories of unlawful sexual harassment:

1. "Quid Pro Quo" or "This For That" Harassment
 - a) Submission to sexual conduct is made either as an explicit or implicit condition of an individual's membership;
 - b) Submission to or rejection of sexual conduct is used as a basis for a membership decision which might either positively or adversely affect the member within the AH, including as regards assignment and other membership conditions;
2. "Hostile Work Environment" Harassment
 - a) The harassment is severe or pervasive enough to unreasonably interfere with a member's work performance or to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive workplace.

Sexual harassment can be communicated in any fashion. For example: unwanted physical contact, foul language, sexually oriented propositions, jokes or remarks, obscene gestures or the display of sexually explicit pictures, cartoons or other materials; may create one of the two types of sexual harassment.

Officers of the AH may also take steps to control conduct before it becomes unlawful sexual harassment. Therefore, conduct within the Company, workplace or during any official function shall be done in a professional manner and free of sexual conduct, gestures, photographs or other methods of communication that might be considered offensive to another member.

Responsibility of Officers

All officers are responsible to reasonably supervise the members that report to them. They are not expected to be "mind readers", but must take steps to prevent sexual harassment by being aware of the behavior and work conditions that take place under their supervision.

Some Examples of Sexually Harassing Behavior

1. Visual harassment: such as posters, magazines, calendars, cartoons or caricatures.
2. Verbal harassment: such as repeated requests for dates, lewd comments, sexually explicit jokes or whistling.
3. Written harassment: such as love letters, poems or graffiti.
4. Non-verbal harassment: such as obscene or suggestive gestures or motions.
5. Subtle pressure or sexual activities.
6. Unnecessary touching, patting, pinching, rubbing or kissing.
7. Leering or ogling: for example, men who look only at a woman's breast or women who are "crotch watchers".
8. Frequent intentional brushing up against another person's body.
9. Promise of a promotion or favorable assignment or advancement opportunities in return for sexual favors.
10. Demand of sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats regarding such matters as termination, negative evaluations, denial of membership benefits or opportunities.
11. Physical assaults or attempted assaults of a sexual nature for a sexual purpose.

Complaint Procedure

Any member who feels that he or she has been sexually harassed should immediately report the matter to the Captain or Trustees of the AH. Similarly, any member who believes that he or she has witnessed sexual harassment or who has reason to believe that sexual harassment is taking place should do likewise. If the Captain or Trustees are unavailable to receive the complaint or if the member believes that it would be inappropriate to contact the Captain or Trustees due to the fact that he or she may be involved in the incident, then the member should immediately contact the Fire Chief or President of the AH.

The AH will handle all allegations of sexual harassment in a lawful manner to ensure that any such conduct does not continue. As a matter of routine, the AH will investigate complaints of sexual harassment, but may reject anonymous complaints. Such investigations will be conducted as discreetly and as confidential as circumstances allow. Informal discussion and resolution will be the preferred method of handling complaints. In any event, the AH will not permit any person to be adversely affected in employment or membership with the AH as a result of his or her having brought a complaint of sexual harassment so long as such complaint was made in good faith.

Standard for Evaluating Harassment

Determining the existence of "Quid Pro Quo" or "This For That" harassment is not particularly difficult. However, determining whether unwelcome sexual conduct rises to the level of the second category of unlawful harassment - "hostile work environment" harassment, is more difficult.

In order to determine whether "hostile work environment" harassment has occurred, the AH may consider the following factors:

1. Whether the conduct was verbal or physical, or both;
2. How frequently was it repeated;
3. Whether the conduct was hostile and patently offensive;
4. The rank and authority of the alleged harasser;
5. Whether others joined in perpetrating the alleged harassment;
6. Whether the alleged harassment was directed at more than one individual.

After considering the above factors, the AH will decide whether the conduct "unreasonably interferes with the individual's work performance" or creates "an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment". In determining whether the harassment is sufficiently severe or pervasive to create a hostile work environment, the harasser's conduct will be evaluated from the perspective of a "reasonable person" of the same gender as the member who has brought the complaint.

The "reasonable person" standard will consider the victim's perspective and not what may or may not have been acceptable in the past. For example, the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission believes that a workplace in which sexual slurs, displays of "girlie" pictures and other offensive conduct abounds, can constitute a hostile work environment even if members believe it to be insignificant or harmless.

Isolate sexual conduct or remarks generally do not create an unlawful environment. However, the AH may still choose to intervene before unlawful harassment occurs. A hostile work environment claim will require showing a pattern of offensive conduct. A single, unusually severe incident of harassment, however, may be sufficient to constitute a Title VII violation; the more severe the harassment, the less need to show a repetitive series of incidents. This is particularly true when the harassment is physical.

Discipline

In the event that the AH investigation determines that a member has committed sexual harassment, that individual may be subject to the prescribed penalties of the By-Laws of the AH; which may be reprimand, suspension or dismissal depending upon the magnitude and seriousness of the offense, as well as previous offenses, if any.

Prevention of Sexual Harassment

The AH prefers to emphasize the prevention of sexual harassment, to the investigation and discipline that results after harassment has occurred. All members are encouraged to:

1. Conduct themselves in a businesslike manner at all times.
2. Know the AH policy on sexual harassment.
3. Be aware of your attitudes regarding the opposite sex in general and sexual harassment in particular.
4. Never ignore instances of sexual harassment or conditions giving rise to sexual harassment.
5. Set a positive example by treating everyone with respect and letting others know that you demand the same degree of respect from them.
6. Do not assume that sexually explicit jokes, cartoons or pictures, "friendly" gestures and so forth are harmless and inoffensive.
7. Refrain from making jokes at someone else's expense and from seeking to embarrass, humiliate, offend or threaten others.
8. Carefully consider whether or not personal comments or questions are appropriate to the relationship and / or workplace before speaking.
9. Do not "go along with the crowd" or as an individual to accept the inappropriate behavior of others.
10. Be supportive of people who are being harassed or who have been sexually harassed.
11. Do not hesitate to seek help in preventing or remedying a situation of sexual harassment.
12. Weigh your options in dealing with sexual harassment carefully, since obvious "fixes" such as remaining silent, transferring or resigning are rarely the best solution to the problem.
13. Do not use negative behavior to bring attention to yourself in an effort to bring attention to the problem.
14. Immediately stop any behavior that you believe, even as a remote possibility, might be interpreted as sexual harassment.
15. Consider whether you would object to having your remarks recorded or your actions videotaped and later played back to your spouse, parents, friends or acquaintances. If you would have a problem with such an arrangement, reconsider the appropriateness of your workplace behavior.
16. Communicate. If another member's conduct is offensive, tell them so.
17. Communicate. If you believe that your conduct may be offensive to someone, ask him or her if it is. Be prepared to respect their answer.

Sexual Harassment Prevention Training

General Insurance Agency Inc has provided through their parent organization, McNeil and Company, an online training program: E-Learning and Training Management System.

The web site is: <http://www.mcneilandcompany.com>

Click on the E-Learning block, this will put you on the training site. You will need to register to take the classes. Register as a student. The AH access code is **4105100**. Please take the 'Sexual Harassment' course.

All courses are available for your use.