

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Policy Number	Responsible Department	Effective Date	Approval
#HR-03.01	Human Resources	December 2024 Supersedes June, 2022	CEO

I. PURPOSE

The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority ("RIPTA" or the "Authority") is committed to providing a workplace environment that is free from any type of harassment, including such that is deemed sexual in nature. The workplace is defined as any RIPTA owned building, property or place where RIPTA conducts official business including, but not limited to all RIPTA vehicles. RIPTA will not tolerate sexual harassment in the workplace.

When RIPTA determines an allegation of sexual harassment is credible, it will take prompt and appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary action as warranted by the offense.

The purpose of this policy is to define the meaning of sexual harassment, to educate employees on their responsibilities with reporting sexual harassment and to outline procedures for filing complaints, investigating claims, and issuing appropriate disciplinary measures when sexual harassment is identified.

II. SEXUAL HARASSMENT DEFINED

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. An employment decision affecting that individual is made because the individual submitted to or rejected the unwelcome conduct; or
2. Unwelcome conduct, regardless of intent and has the effect of restricting or interfering with an employee's work performance and/or individual's enjoyment or access to services provided by RIPTA, is strictly prohibited.

Any unwelcomed behavior may meet the definition of sexual harassment and may contribute to a hostile workplace environment. Unwelcomed behaviors are not considered workplace appropriate and as such should be avoided, such as, but not limited to the following:

- Sexual pranks, or repeated sexual teasing, jokes or innuendo, in person or via written communication, which may be handwritten or electronic;
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
- Touching or grabbing of another individual;
- Giving gifts or leaving objects that may be construed as sexually suggestive.
- Repeatedly making sexually suggestive gestures;

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- Making, leaving, or posting sexually demeaning or offensive pictures, cartoons or other materials in the workplace; including electronic or otherwise, e.g., faxes, email, social media, or texts;
- Off-duty, unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that affects the work environment.
- Making sexually suggestive comments about a coworker, passengers, or any other person in the workplace.

Please note that in view of the complexity and detail associated with various types of inappropriate conduct, it is impractical to list every type of infraction or harassment covered by this policy.

A victim of sexual harassment can be any gender and can be any person or persons in the workplace, including other employees, passengers, vendors, or individuals associated with RIPTA. The victim can be of the same or different gender as the harasser.

The harasser can be any gender and can be any person or persons in the workplace, including other employees, passengers, vendors, or individuals associated with RIPTA. The harasser can be of the same or different gender as the victim.

In the event that a RIPTA employee is a victim of sexual harassment from a non-employee such as a passenger, customer, vendor, or other individual, they should refer to Section III of this policy entitled *Filing a Complaint* for guidance on pursuing a complaint.

Any information obtained during the course of business by an Employee that is used to make unsolicited or unwelcome contact and/or communication with coworkers, passengers, or other individuals will be considered a violation of this policy and subject to discipline as detailed in Section VI of this policy entitled *Disciplinary Action*.

III. FILING A COMPLAINT

Any employee who believes they have been the target of sexual harassment should report such harassment immediately to their department head, and/or the Chief of Human Resources and/or the Executive Director of Federal Programs and Compliance. The Chief of Human Resources is in the Administrative Offices Human Resources Suite at 705 Elmwood Avenue, phone number (401) 784-9500 (ex. 1156). The Executive Director of Federal Programs and Compliance is located in the Administrative Offices Chief Executive Officer Suite at 705 Elmwood Avenue, phone number is (401) 784-9500 (ex. 1244).

The RIPTA will seek to protect the identities of the alleged victim and harasser, except as reasonably necessary (for example, to complete an investigation successfully). RIPTA will also take the necessary steps to protect any employee from retaliation who in

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good faith report incidents of potential sexual harassment. It is against the law and a violation of policy to retaliate against someone who reports possible sexual harassment or who has cooperated in the investigation of a sexual harassment complaint. Violators may be subject to discipline.

In addition to filing an internal RIPTA complaint as provided above, an employee may also file a complaint with:

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
John F. Kennedy Federal Building
475 Government Center
Boston, MA 02203
(800) 669-4000

and/or with:

State of Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights
180 Westminster St # 3
Providence, RI 02903-1918
(401) 222-2662

IV. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Supervisors and other responsible RIPTA officials who observe, hear of, or reasonably suspect incidents of possible sexual harassment should report such harassment immediately to their department head, and/or the Chief of Human Resources and/or the EEO/Civil Legal Compliance Officer. The Chief of Human Resources is located in the Administrative Offices at 705 Elmwood Avenue, phone number (401) 784-9500 (ex. 1156). The EEO/Civil Rights Legal Compliance Officer is located in the Administrative Offices at 705 Elmwood Avenue, phone number is (401) 784-9500 (ex. 1244).

Failure to report such incidents are a violation of this policy and may result in disciplinary action.

V. VIOLATION OF POLICY

If RIPTA receives an allegation of sexual harassment, or has reason to believe sexual harassment is occurring, it will take the necessary steps to promptly investigate and address the alleged action. If the allegation is determined to be credible, RIPTA will take immediate and effective measures to end the unwelcome behavior. RIPTA is

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committed to taking action if it learns of possible sexual harassment, even if the individual does not wish to file a formal complaint. RIPTA will work with all appropriate law enforcement officials to assist in the investigation and prosecution of anyone who commits a violent act or is accused of harassment in the workplace.

Claims involving non-employees harassing RIPTA Employees will be investigated by RIPTA to the fullest extent possible and every effort will be made in order to ensure the workplace remains safe and free from all types of harassment for all Employees. RIPTA will work with all appropriate law enforcement officials to assist in the investigation and prosecution of anyone who is accused of sexual harassment in the workplace.

VI. CORRECTIVE MEASURES

Employees, who violate this policy will be subject to discipline or other appropriate corrective action measures whether such behavior meets the legal definition of sexual harassment or not. Imposed discipline may range from a verbal warning up to and including termination depending on the circumstances of each case.

VII. INTENT TO COMPLY

RIPTA intends to fully comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations concerning harassment, violence, intimidation, and/or threats to the personal safety of RIPTA employees, vendors, and the public.