

### **703 *SEXUAL AND OTHER UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL ABUSE***

The GNOEC is committed to providing a work environment that is free from all forms of unlawful discrimination, including sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and harassment because of an individual's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ancestry, disability, political affiliation or belief or activity, or any other legally protected characteristic.

Sexual harassment (both overt and subtle) is a form of employee misconduct that is demeaning to another person, undermines the integrity of the employment relationship, and creates a hostile work environment for another person because of his or her gender. Some examples of what may constitute sexual harassment include making threats or taking adverse employment actions if sexual favors are not granted; demanding sexual favors in exchange for favorable or preferential treatment; inappropriate physical conduct or actions, unwelcome flirtations, propositions, or advances; leering, whistling, and improper gestures or derogatory remarks, including sexually explicit jokes or offensive language; and the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures in the workplace. The GNOEC does not tolerate and expressly prohibits sexual harassment by any means that creates a hostile or intolerable working environment for any employee, applicant, customer, vendor, or contractor because of his or her gender.

Sexual abuse is unwanted sexual contact or interaction, with offenders using force, making threats or taking advantage of victims not able to give consent. Sexual abuse includes sexual assault, exploitation, molestation, or injury. "Red flags" that could suggest a person is being sexually abused are generally physical or behavioral. Some examples of physical evidence include stained or torn clothing, difficulty walking, or report of sexually transmitted diseases.

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Behavioral signals suggestive of sexual abuse might include recoiling from physical touch, wearing excessive clothing, or fear or reluctance of being left alone with another individual.

Other prohibited workplace harassment is either verbal or physical conduct that disparages or displays dislike or aggression to another individual because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ancestry, disability, political affiliation or belief or activity, or any other legally protected characteristic. It is conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment and may unreasonably interfere with an individual's work performance.

Some examples of what may constitute other prohibited workplace harassment include the use of slurs or epithets, threatening or intimidating behavior that focuses on a protected characteristic, including unwelcome jokes or pranks; or circulating materials in the workplace that are of a written or graphic nature and denigrates an individual or group in a protected class.

In order to make this "zero tolerance" policy clear to all GNOEC employees, the GNOEC has adopted mandatory procedures that all GNOEC staff must follow when they learn of or witness any form of harassment or abuse.

Employees who learn of incidences of sexual or other unlawful harassment or abuse must immediately report it to his or her immediate supervisor. If the supervisor is unavailable or the employee believes it would be inappropriate to contact that person, the employee should immediately contact the Human Resources Director or any other member of management.

Any supervisor or manager who becomes aware of possible sexual or other unlawful

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harassment or abuse, receives a report of harassment or abuse, or believes he/she has witnessed harassment or abuse should promptly advise the Human Resources Director or any other member of management who will handle the matter in a timely and confidential manner. Failure to act may subject the manager or supervisor to discipline, up to and including termination.

The GNOEC takes allegations of harassment and abuse seriously. If an allegation is reported against an employee, the GNOEC will promptly, thoroughly, and impartially initiate an investigation to determine whether there is a reasonable basis to believe that harassment or abuse has occurred. The GNOEC reserves the right to place the subject of the investigation on an involuntary leave of absence or reassignment to a position that does not involve personal contact with the complainant. If the investigation substantiates the allegation, the individual engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment or abuse will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

The GNOEC prohibits retaliation against any individual who in good faith reports harassment or sexual abuse or participates in any investigation of harassment or abuse. Anyone who retaliates against an individual who has made a good faith allegation of harassment or abuse, or intentionally provides false information to that effect, will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.