

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

In the Matter of Adopting )  
the Columbia County Respectful ) ORDER NO. 53-2024  
Workplace Conduct Policy )

WHEREAS, in SB 851 (2023), the Oregon Legislature tasked the Bureau of Labor and Industries with providing employers with a model respectful workplace policy; and

WHEREAS, a respectful workplace policy is important to prevent conduct that could escalate to unlawful harassment and discrimination as well as promote professional workplace behavior and a safer workspace overall; and

WHEREAS, Columbia County desires to promote a respectful workplace to retain and recruit employees and volunteers, and to fulfill its mission of Service, Engagement, Collaboration and Innovation; and

WHEREAS, the County is committed to preventing workplace bullying; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the County to update the County's workplace bullying policy;

NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. The Respectful Workplace Policy which is attached hereto as Exhibit "1" is hereby adopted.
2. The adopted Respectful Workplace Policy shall supersede Section 17.3 of the County Personnel Rules.

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- 3. Every County employee and elected official shall undergo mandatory "Red Light, Green Light, Yellow Light" training when offered by the Columbia County Human Resources Director. Other appropriate training shall be coordinated by the Columbia County Human Resources Director on a regular basis.

DATED this 27 day of November, 2024.

Approved as to for  
By: [Signature]  
Office of County Counsel

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By: Not Present  
Casey Garrett, Chair

By: [Signature]  
Kellie Jo Smith, Commissioner

By: [Signature]  
Margaret Magruder, Commissioner

## EXHIBIT "1"

**COLUMBIA COUNTY RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE POLICY****POLICY STATEMENT:**

Mutual respect between and among managers, employees, contractors and volunteers is an integral value of Columbia County. Only when all individuals work together can we create and maintain a work environment that is respectful, professional, and free from inappropriate workplace behavior. Workplace bullying is strictly prohibited. The hallmarks of bullying include serious or repeated behavior that is unreasonable or unwarranted under the circumstances and that is intended to be harmful or reasonably should be known to be harmful to the physical or mental wellbeing of others.

Inappropriate Workplace Behavior and Bullying includes unwelcome or unwanted conduct or behavior that causes a negative impact or disruption to the workplace or results in the erosion of employee morale. Inappropriate workplace behavior may also rise to the level of unlawful harassment or discrimination when in conjunction with an employee's protected class status such as race, gender, or disability (See Columbia County's Personnel Rules 14 and 15 on Workplace Harassment and Discrimination Policy).

Examples of inappropriate workplace behavior included, but are not limited to, comments, actions or behaviors of an individual or group, that are wholly disconnected from concerted or other protected activity, that purposefully humiliate, intimidate, disparage, demean, or show disrespect for another employee, a manager, a subordinate, a volunteer, a customer, a contractor, or a visitor in the workplace.

Inappropriate workplace behavior does not include actions taken to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives, and to engage in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection.

Inappropriate workplace behavior generally does not include actions of performance management such as giving supervisory instructions, setting expectations, giving feedback, administering disciplinary actions, or conducting investigatory meetings.

Inappropriate workplace behavior generally does not include assigned, requested, or unsolicited constructive peer feedback on projects or work.

Inappropriate workplace behavior generally does include yelling, shouting, cursing (verbal abuse), work interference which prevents work from getting done (sabotage), intimidation, threats of physical harm, other threats, and humiliation. It can include teasing, spreading rumors, taunting, making insulting or offensive remarks, coercion, and repetitive, unwanted aggression occurring in the context of a power imbalance, ultimately leading to fear.

**POLICY:**

Employees of all types, elected officials, and volunteers at every level of the organization must foster an environment that encourages professionalism and discourages disrespectful behavior.

All employees, elected officials and volunteers must behave respectfully and professionally and refrain from engaging in inappropriate workplace behavior.

#### **ADDRESSING INAPPROPRIATE WORKPLACE BEHAVIOR:**

1. Supervisors must address inappropriate behavior they observe or experience and should do so as close to the time of the occurrence as possible and appropriate.
2. If an employee, elected official, or volunteer observes or experiences inappropriate workplace behavior, they may:
  - a. Redirect inappropriate conversations or behavior to workplace business.
  - b. Tell the offending employee, elected official, or volunteer their behavior is offensive and ask them to stop.
  - c. Report the observation or experience to a manager, human resources, or other designated individuals.

#### **REPORTING INAPPROPRIATE WORKPLACE BEHAVIOR:**

Any employee, elected official, or volunteer aware of or experiencing bullying or inappropriate behavior in the workplace should report that information immediately to a supervisor. Specifically, they may make the report verbally or in writing to their immediate supervisor or higher management, if preferred. As an alternative, they may report the experience to the Human Resources Director or County Counsel. They may report to any of the persons listed above, regardless of any particular chain of command. Documentation of any incidents involving bullying or inappropriate workplace behavior as soon as possible is encouraged.

#### **RETALIATION PROTECTIONS:**

Columbia County prohibits retaliation against any employee for filing a complaint regarding conduct in violation of this Policy. The County will not tolerate retaliation against any employee, elected official, or volunteer for raising a good faith concern, for providing information related to a concern, or for otherwise cooperating in an investigation of a reported violation of this Policy. Any employee who retaliates against anyone involved in an investigation is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

#### **ELECTED OFFICIAL CONDUCT:**

Due to the power differential of elected officials over employees and volunteers and furthermore due to the lack of supervisory authority over elected officials, the following process will be followed upon receipt of a complaint of inappropriate workplace behavior/bullying made against an elected official.

1. The complaint will be forwarded to the Human Resources Director as soon as possible.
2. The Human Resources Director will make an initial review of the complaint. If the complaint appears to have merit:
  - a. If the complaint is of minor inappropriate workplace behavior such as a single off-hand comment that does not rise to the level of bullying behavior, the Human Resources Director shall issue written findings. The findings will be provided to the offending elected official and to the Board of County Commissioners. The findings shall include corrective action, which may include making an apology, further additional training on appropriate workplace conduct, and/or other appropriate corrective action.

- b. If the complaint is of persistent or significant inappropriate workplace behavior that rises to the level of bullying behavior, the Human Resources Director will forward the complaint to a third-party investigator for investigation and findings. The results of the investigation/findings will be provided to the offending Elected Official and Board of County Commissioners. If, upon investigation, a complaint is substantiated, the Elected Official shall be directed by the Board of County Commissioners to undergo additional workplace harassment/bullying training commiserate with the conduct and any other appropriate corrective action.

**TRAINING:**

Training for all County employees, elected officials and volunteers will be conducted at least bi-annually. The training will clearly identify acceptable and unacceptable behavior, as well as how to report concerns confidentially and/or anonymously.