


<p>RABUN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</p>  <p>General Order Number: 2.01</p>	<p>Date of Issue</p> <p>2/23/2016</p>	<p>Effective Date</p> <p>2/23/2016</p>	<p>Revision Date</p>
<p>Subject: EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY</p>	<p>Amends:</p>	<p>Rescinds:</p>	
<p>Index as: Discrimination; Equal Employment Opportunity; Harassment; Sexual Harassment</p>	<p>State Certification Standards: 2.7, 3.1</p>		

PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to express the Rabun County Sheriff's Office continuing practice of Equal Employment Opportunity.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office to offer equal opportunities to all employees and applicants without regard to race, color, religion, gender, marital status, age, national origin, handicap, or veteran status.

DISCUSSION

Rabun County Sheriff's Office employees have the right to work in an environment free of all forms of harassment. The Rabun County Sheriff's Office **will not tolerate, condone or allow** any form of unlawful employee harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, marital status, age, national origin, handicap, sexual orientation or veteran status.

The Rabun County Sheriff's Office shall take direct and immediate action to prevent such behavior and to remedy all reported instances of harassment and discrimination.

DEFINITIONS

PROHIBITED CONDUCT — Harassment, discrimination and/or improper conduct consists of misconduct that includes unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical or visual that is based upon a person's protected status, such as sex, color, race religion, national origin, age, disability or other protected groups status or activity or activity (e.g. opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in the statutory complaint process) as provided for by law. Rabun County will not tolerate conduct that affects tangible job benefits, that interferes unreasonably with an individual's work performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. No supervisor or County employee has authority to engage in such conduct. If you feel you have been subject to the type of conduct prohibited by this policy, you must report this conduct. If you make a complaint to your supervisor and no action is taken, you are directed to report it to the next ranking official in your chain of command. You should report any improper conduct before it becomes severe or pervasive and do not have to wait until it rises to the level of unlawful action.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT — Sexual harassment deserves special mention. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other physical, verbal or visual conduct based on sex constitute sexual harassment when: (1) submission to the conduct is an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment; (2) submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision; or (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment. Sexual harassment may include explicit sexual propositions, sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, sexually oriented "kidding" or "teasing," "practical jokes," jokes about gender-specific traits, foul or obscene language or gestures, displays of foul or obscene printed or visual material, and physical contact, such as patting, pinching, or brushing against another's body.

I. GENERAL

The Rabun County Sheriff's Office is an Equal Opportunity Employer and will not tolerate discrimination against any employee or applicant because race, color, religion, gender, marital status, age, national origin, handicap, or veteran status.

- A. This policy applies to all terms, conditions and privileges of employment, including: recruitment, hiring, probationary periods, training and development, job assignments, supervision, promotion, rates of pay or benefits, terminations and retirement.
- B. Personnel actions including, but not limited to, assignments, compensation, benefits, transfers, layoffs, returns from layoffs, training and recruitment will be applied equally without regard to race, color, national origin, political affiliation or veteran status.

II. DISSEMINATION

- A. The Rabun County Sheriff's Office will disseminate its policy of Equal Employment Opportunity internally by conducting meetings, as necessary, with Sheriff's Office personnel to explain the intent of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office Equal Employment Opportunity Plan, in addition to their continuing responsibility to implement Equal Employment Opportunity.

- B. The Rabun County Sheriff's Office externally disseminates its policy of Equal Employment Opportunity by including in all newspaper or oral recruitment advertisements a statement identifying the Rabun County Sheriff's as an Equal Opportunity Employer.

III. COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

All employees are responsible for helping to assure that we avoid any form of unlawful treatment. If you feel that you have experienced or witnessed harassment, discrimination or unlawful treatment, you are to report it.

A. Victim Responsibilities

1. The first step when encountering harassment is to tell the person their actions are unwelcome and offensive and to request they stop such behavior.
2. If the offensive and unwelcome behavior continues or the employee does not want to directly confront the harasser, the victim should immediately report the incident(s) to the supervisor so that steps can be taken to stop the offensive behavior and to protect the employee from further harassment.
3. Should the victim not wish to report the matter to his/her immediate supervisor, the report may be made to the supervisor in the next highest authority within the chain of command, the Office of Professional Standards, Chief Deputy or Sheriff.
4. There shall be no retaliation against any employee for filing a harassment complaint, or assisting, testifying, or participating in the investigation of such a complaint.

Supervisor Responsibilities

1. The supervisor to whom a complaint is given shall meet with the employee and assist the employee in completing a Harassment/Discrimination Form, detailing the incident.
2. The supervisor shall then submit a confidential memorandum documenting the complaint to the Sheriff or his designee.
3. If the complaint contains evidence of criminal activity, such as battery, rape, or attempted rape, the investigation will be referred to the Internal Affairs Officer, and a criminal investigation will be conducted. Some cases may be turned over to the GBI for investigation.

B. Investigative Responsibilities

1. The first step in the investigation is for the investigating deputy to meet with the victim and document the incidents complained of, the dates on which they occurred, the individuals doing or participating in the harassment, names of any possible witnesses and a list of all person the incident was reported
2. Whenever possible, the information provided and the identities of the parties involved will be kept confidential. It is imperative that the reputations of both the victim and alleged harasser be protected.

3. The investigation shall include a determination whether other employees are being harassed by the person, and whether other agency members participated in or encouraged the harassment.
4. Once the investigation is concluded, the Investigating Deputy will prepare a written report for the Sheriff. Based upon the information in the report, the Sheriff will inform the parties involved of the outcome of the investigation and will take appropriate administrative or disciplinary action against those who are determined to be the offenders.
5. The Office of Professional Standards will maintain all reports of harassment, follow-up investigations, and their final disposition.

C. False Accusations

1. Rabun County recognizes that intentional or malicious false accusations of misconduct can have a serious effect on innocent men and women.
2. Individuals falsely accusing another of misconduct will be disciplined in accordance with the nature and extent of his or her false accusation.

Note: Each employee should be aware they have the right to file a charge of discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or other state agency as provided by law. According to the EEOC, the deadline for filing any such charge runs from the last date of unlawful harassment, not from the date that the complaint to Rabun County is resolved.



By Order of the Sheriff: **Chad K. Nichols**
Sheriff, Rabun County