



PUBLIC TRUST POLICY

In effect:

Authorized by:

## PT-5: Harassment Policy

### I. Purpose

One of the guiding principles of Sam Bass Fire Department is that we will do whatever we need to do to **maintain the public's trust** in us as their primary emergency responders. Vital to that guiding principle is the need to protect our trust of each other as fellow members of a common mission: to preserve life and property. For that reason, we will make every attempt to avoid any distraction to our mission that might be caused by harassment.

### II. Policy

Sexual harassment, which is any unwelcome sexual conduct, which occurs under one or more of the following conditions is prohibited and shall not be tolerated. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature will be considered harassment when:

- A. Submission to such conduct is made either openly or by implication a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- B. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting that person; or
- C. Such conduct unreasonably interferes with the individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Sexually oriented jokes, remarks, gestures, or pictures may be offensive to other employees and will not be tolerated. If the content of television programming or movies viewed at any fire station is sexually explicit or offensive to any viewers, the programming or movie shall not be shown.

The EEOC also has issued guidelines defining illegal harassment, which is based on an individual's gender, but is not sexual in nature. This type of harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion towards an individual because of his/her gender. Harassing conduct of this kind includes, but is not limited to, the following:



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A. Epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts, that relate to an individual's gender,

B. Written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual group because of gender, and that is placed on walls, bulletin boards, or elsewhere on employer's premises, or circulated in the workplace.

C. Personnel shall not use gender-oriented language, which they know causes affront to another person. Nicknames, pet names, or gender slang shall be avoided.

Any manager, supervisor, or employee who engages in such objectionable conduct is subject to immediate discipline up to and including termination.

### **III. Procedure**

#### A. Reporting Violations

Members of SBFD who experience sexual harassment or become aware of a threatening situation as described in this policy should immediately report it to their Company Officer. If this is not a suitable avenue for addressing their complaint, employees are advised to contact any of the following:

- Department Fire Chief
- Department Assistant Chief
- Department President
- Department Administrative Assistant

The Sexual Harassment Policy is applicable to both uniformed and non-uniformed personnel of the Sam Bass Fire Department. Complaints shall be referred to the Fire Chief for investigation and/or action.

If a member is aware of a threat of imminent physical harm to him/herself, another department member, or member of the public, the member should attempt to remove him/herself from the dangerous situation and immediately notify appropriate emergency personnel by calling "911." The member should report this emergency call to his/her Company Officer or the Fire Chief immediately. Criminal activity shall be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

#### B. Retaliation Prohibited

No member of SBFD shall be discriminated against, harassed, intimidated, nor suffer any reprisal as a result of reporting violations of this policy in good faith. Any member who experiences discrimination, harassment, intimidation,



or any form of reprisal as the result of having reported sexual harassment should immediately report such action to any of the parties named in Section-A above.

## C. Departmental Culture

The Command Staff will encourage its officers to lead by example, and will foster a culture of eliminating negative behaviors. All officers will be accountable for their supervised personnel, and are expected to take action in accordance with Department policy when violations occur or when complaints are made. Any Department personnel participating in retaliation, hazing, or further harassment of individuals who have sought to change standards or practices, or initiated a complaint, shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

## D. Investigation

The Fire Chief shall investigate complaints of sexual harassment. The complainant shall be entitled to meet with the Fire Chief for a briefing on the course and outcome of the investigation, but shall not be entitled to information from statements or the final action taken unless formal disciplinary action is taken. The subject of any complaint is entitled to this same briefing upon request. The investigative process shall be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law and Department policy.