



# Vernon Parish Police Jury

## Harassment Policy

This represents the corporate policy of the VERNON PARISH POLICE JURY concerning harassment - both general and sexual. Any questions concerning the context of this policy should be discussed with the Human Resources Manager.

It is the VERNON PARISH POLICE JURY's belief that its employees are the primary means by which the goals and objectives of the organization will be met. All employees of the VERNON PARISH POLICE JURY must understand its position on harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, physical, or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature when the conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment or the holding of office, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment..

The VERNON PARISH POLICE JURY strongly disapproves of activity which falls within the definitions of unlawful harassment and will take appropriate action to end said harassment and/or prevent the recurrence of any such misconduct. Sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace are prohibited by federal law through the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and by state law through La. R.S. 23:301 et seq. Any form of harassment or discrimination that violates federal, state or local law, including but not limited to that which is related to an individual's race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, pregnancy, age, disability, or other traits, characteristics, or activities that are protected by law, is a violation of this policy and will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

The procedure for reporting and dealing with these very sensitive issues is as follows:

1. If a person's behavior makes an employee uncomfortable, the employee should feel free to immediately advise the person that, in the employee's opinion, the behavior is inappropriate and that the employee would like it stopped.
2. If the employee is not comfortable discussing the issue with the person, or if the person fails to respect an employee's request, the employee should report the incident to his or her supervisor. If, for whatever reason, the employee does not feel that the supervisor is a suitable person to whom to report the incident, the employee should contact the Human Resources Manager or his designee at (337) 238-0324.

More specifically as to the issue of Sexual Harassment, it may be defined as unsolicited, offensive behavior that inappropriately asserts sexuality over employees including but not limited to the following:

1. *Verbal*: Sexual innuendos, suggestive comments, threats, sexual humor;
2. *Non-Verbal*: Leering, whistling, obscene gestures, showing inappropriate images; and
3. *Physical*: Touching, brushing the body, coerced sexual activity, assault, impeding egress or passage.

Whether or not a particular incident is sexual harassment requires a complete factual investigation, and the VERNON PARISH POLICE JURY will conduct such investigations on all complaints in a manner so as not to cause any serious effect on innocent employees who either file a complaint and/or may be the subject of a filed complaint. In all instances, a prompt and thorough investigation will take place, giving careful consideration to protect the rights and dignity of all persons involved. It is mandatory that all parties to an allegation of sexual harassment participate in the investigation of the incident, and cooperation in the investigation of claims of harassment is an express element of each employee's employment with the VERNON PARISH POLICE JURY. The VERNON PARISH POLICE JURY will take those steps it feels necessary to resolve the problem, which may include verbal or written reprimand, suspension or termination.

It must be understood also that the VERNON PARISH POLICE JURY will investigate by gathering information, in as confidential manner as possible, given the need to investigate the complaint, from all concerned parties, and will not retaliate against any employee as a result of reports of alleged harassment or cooperation with any investigation. The VERNON PARISH POLICE JURY may consult its legal representative for assistance in determining whether conduct which has occurred does in fact constitute sexual harassment. Regardless of the outcome of the investigation by the VERNON PARISH POLICE JURY, a complainant may pursue a claim under state and /or federal law. The VERNON PARISH POLICE JURY may also make subsequent inquiries from time to time to ensure offensive conduct does not resume and/or that the subject of such harassment has not suffered any retaliation. No retaliation of any kind will be tolerated because an employee in good faith reports an incident of suspected harassment. The supervisor, or other person to whom the complaint was made, will work to establish mutually agreed upon safeguards against retaliation while attempting to mediate any sexual harassment complaint.

Any employee who believes he or she has been subjected to unlawful harassment, sexual harassment, or retaliated against for reporting such activities or assisting in a related investigation of such activities must report the alleged act immediately or as soon as possible to the employee's immediate supervisor or to the Human Resources Manager. It is not necessary to complain to an offending supervisor in order to report sexual harassment.

Any employee, manager, or supervisor found by The VERNON PARISH POLICE JURY to have unlawfully harassed, sexually harassed otherwise unlawfully discriminated against, or unlawfully retaliated against another employee will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including termination.

**NOTE:** The VERNON PARISH POLICE JURY is required to maintain proof of each individual who has completed harassment training.