

**REMINDER OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT POLICY AND  
PROHIBITION AGAINST HARASSMENT**

**Background:** Members of the Commission, as well as members of the Commission's committees, are reminded that the Commission supports the American Dental Association's policy on professional conduct and prohibition against harassment (**Appendix 1**).

**Recommendation:** The report is informational in nature and no action is required.

## POLICY ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND PROHIBITION AGAINST HARASSMENT

All staff members and volunteers must treat each other and all others with whom we work on behalf of the ADA<sup>1</sup> with integrity, courtesy and professionalism. It is ADA policy that all staff members and volunteers are responsible for assuring that the work place is free from improper harassment. With this policy, the ADA prohibits not only unlawful harassment, but also other unprofessional and discourteous actions. For example, rude, insulting, disrespectful, disruptive, uncivil and unprofessional comments or conduct will also not be tolerated.

### **To Report a Potential Incident**

If you believe you have experienced or have become aware of an incident of harassment or a violation of our professional conduct policy, report it as soon as possible to your supervisor and/or Human Resources at (312) 440-2005.

Workplace harassment isn't limited to sexual harassment, and doesn't preclude same-gender harassment; it can occur between any two people - co-workers, managers, or even non-employees like clients, contractors, or vendors.

The ADA absolutely prohibits sexual harassment and harassment on the basis of one's status as a member of a legally-protected class, such as race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth and related medical conditions), gender, gender identify, national origin, age (40 or older), disability (mental or physical), sexual orientation, military status, genetic information, and marital status. These types of discriminatory harassment are prohibited by state and federal laws and may subject the ADA and/or the individual harasser to liability for any such unlawful conduct.

Offensive conduct may include, but is not limited to, offensive jokes, slurs, epithets or name calling, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, offensive objects or pictures, unwelcome sexual advances, unwanted physical contact (including touching), and all other verbal, or physical conduct directed at an individual because of their status as a member of a protected class that is unwelcome and interferes with work performance. Such conduct constitutes unlawful harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a condition of the individual's employment;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting an individual's employment; or
- Such conduct is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of employment and to create a hostile or abusive working environment.

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of these HR protocols 'the ADA' collectively refers to the American Dental Association and its two affiliated organizations, the for-profit company ADA Business Enterprises, Inc. (ADABEI) and the not-for-profit educational and research focused ADA Foundation (ADAF).

Each staff member and volunteer must exercise his or her own good judgment to avoid engaging in conduct that may be perceived by others as harassment. As an ADA staff member or volunteer, you are responsible for keeping our work environment free of all such harassment. If you believe that you have been harassed, or if you become aware of an incident of harassment, whether by an employee, a member, or a non-employee or non-member, you should report it as soon as possible to your supervisor, a volunteer leader, and/or to the Human Resources, (312-440-2005).

If the incident is reported to an employee's supervisor or a volunteer leader, the supervisor or volunteer leader must then report the incident to the head of ADA Human Resources. Do not allow an inappropriate situation to continue by not reporting it, regardless of who is creating that situation.

No staff member or volunteer in this organization is exempt from this policy. This policy applies to the immediate work place as well as to ADA related activity outside the ordinary work place, such as travel on ADA business, meetings outside the ADA building, email and telephone communications, and ADA-sponsored social or recreational events.

In response to every complaint, the ADA will take prompt investigatory actions and corrective and preventative actions where necessary. A staff member who brings such a complaint to the ADA in good faith will not be adversely affected as a result of reporting the harassment or objectionable conduct. All staff members should be aware that the privacy of the charging party and the person accused of the harassment will be protected to the extent consistent with effective enforcement of this policy.

**\*\* Reminder to Supervisors and Volunteer Leaders\*\***

If you witness or are informed of a potential incident of harassment or violation of our professional conduct policy, you **MUST** report it to Human Resources at (312) 440-2005.

The ADA will retain confidential documentation of all allegations and investigations. Any staff member or volunteer found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge from employment with the ADA or removal from a volunteer position. Any memoranda regarding a determination that a violation of the Professional Conduct Policy and Prohibition against Harassment has occurred shall be placed in a staff member's personnel file. Effective: January 1, 2015

*Procedures Applicable to Professional Conduct Policy and Prohibition against Harassment*

- a. If you believe that there has been a violation of the ADA's Professional Conduct Policy and Prohibition against Harassment (ADA's Policy) immediately contact your supervisor, or Human Resources.
- b. If an incident is reported to a supervisor or volunteer leader, the supervisor or volunteer leader must then notify Human Resources of the incident.
- c. In a timely and confidential manner, the ADA will conduct an investigation of any complaint that is made pursuant to the ADA's Policy. Human Resources will conduct an

investigation, which includes interviewing witnesses with potential knowledge of the objectionable conduct.

- d. It is the obligation of each staff member and volunteer to cooperate in these investigations by providing truthful, thorough information.
- e. The alleged harasser is given an opportunity to relate his/her version of the events and to provide any information that the ADA should consider before it finalizes its investigation. If the alleged harasser refuses to participate, the ADA will base its decision on the other information gathered during the investigation, the inferences drawn from that evidence and the alleged harasser's unwillingness to cooperate in the interview.
- f. Information obtained pursuant to the investigation is confidential and will be reported to those within the ADA on a "need to know" basis. The privacy of the complaining party and the person accused of the harassment will be protected to the extent consistent with effective enforcement of this Policy.
- g. Attempting to influence the investigation or to disclose confidential information by discussing it with others can be cause for disciplinary action, up to and including discharge, except to the extent such disclosure may be legally permissible.
- h. Human Resources, in consultation with legal counsel, will make a recommendation to the Executive Director as to whether there has been a violation of the ADA's Policy and whether corrective action, if any, should be taken.
- i. Any staff member found to have violated the Professional Conduct Policy and Prohibition against Harassment will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Any memoranda regarding violation of the Professional Conduct Policy and Prohibition against Harassment will be placed in the staff member's personnel file.

The ADA prohibits managers and supervisors from taking adverse job consequences against staff who engage in protected activities such as :1) lodging a discrimination complaint or concern, 2) participating in an investigation of such a discrimination complaint or concern or 3) opposing employment practices that an employee reasonably believes discriminate against the employee or another staff member.

The ADA prohibits any form of retaliation against any staff member for making a bona fide complaint under this policy or for assisting in a complaint investigation. Any individual, however, whose complaint is determined to be false or made in bad faith, or supported by false information, may be subject to disciplinary action.

The ADA specifically reserves its right to change, modify or eliminate any of the provisions of its Procedures Applicable to the Professional Conduct Policy and Prohibition against Harassment Policy at any time with or without notice. Effective: January 1, 2015

Revised: 8/15; 8/14; 7/09, 1/03, 7/97; Reaffirmed: 8/18; 8/13; 8/10; CODA: 01/95:11