



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
1315 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910  
THE DIRECTOR

January 30, 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR: ALL NOAA FISHERIES EMPLOYEES AND CONTRACTORS

FROM: Janet Coit  
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries

SUBJECT: Anti-Harassment Policy Statement

NOAA Fisheries Anti-Harassment Policy Statement reaffirms our commitment to prohibiting any form of harassment, sexual or otherwise, in the workplace. Unlawful Harassment is any **unwelcome** conduct that is based on race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, transgender status, and pregnancy), national origin, age (40 and over), genetic information (including family medical history) or disability (physical or mental). It includes behaviors that not only affect the overall work environment, but can produce a toxic work environment that impacts an employee's health and well-being. Such conduct may include, but is not limited to slurs, derogatory or disrespectful remarks, jokes, obscenities, intimidating acts, insinuating or expressing threats, threatening assault and/or hitting, insulting gestures, epithets, stereotyping, obscenities, and the circulation of written or graphic material that shows hostility toward individuals because of their protected status. It should be noted that conduct prohibited by this policy statement **includes** work-related settings outside the workplace, such as during business trips, business meetings, and business-related social events.

If you feel you have been subjected to harassment, pursuant to Departmental Administrative Order (DAO) 202-955: Allegations of Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law, commonly referred to as the **955 Process**, you may report your allegation(s) to NOAA's Office of Human Capital Services (OHCS) Workforce Relations Division (WRD) 955 Program Office via email at [DAO-955.OHCS@noaa.gov](mailto:DAO-955.OHCS@noaa.gov). This reporting mechanism provides employees with a direct way to report harassment and offers an expedited process for reviewing allegations, terminating actual incidents of harassment and taking disciplinary actions as appropriate. Although harassment is a form of discrimination, this process is separate and distinct from the EEO complaint process. Reporting an allegation of harassment under the 955 process will not initiate an EEO complaint. To encourage reporting and afford protection to employees who report allegations, anyone who initiates a discrimination complaint, serves as a witness, or otherwise opposes harassment is protected against retaliation under the law.

It should be noted that pursuant to DAO 202-955, all managers and supervisors are required to immediately report any allegation(s) of harassment they receive, or are made aware of, to the OHCS 955 Program Office in writing (an email to the address provided above will suffice). In addition, managers and supervisors are responsible for taking measures to proactively prevent harassment, and when an allegation is/are raised documenting events and working to promptly correct the harassing conduct in the workplace. The OHCS Workforce Relations Division, Employee Relations Branch is available to assist with guidance and encourages managers and supervisors to contact their Employee Relations Specialist to assist. Additional guidance on this matter can be found in [Departmental Administrative Order \(DAO\) 202-955: Allegations of Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law](#).

Any NOAA Fisheries employee, affiliate, or contractor who experiences sexual assault or sexual harassment (SASH) is encouraged to reach out to the NOAA Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Program (WVPR). The WVPR program provides comprehensive services for individuals

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who have experienced a (SASH) incident. Additional guidance on this topic can be found in [NOAA Administrative order \(NAO\) 202-1106: NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy](#). Additionally a WVPR staff member can provide information regarding SASH reporting options, victim advocacy services, and available resources. Federal employees, contractors, and NOAA Affiliates are encouraged to contact a WVPR Regional Coordinator at [noaa.victimservices@noaa.gov](mailto:noaa.victimservices@noaa.gov) for confidential consultation or to initiate a restricted report of SASH. Support services are also available via the SASH 24/7 Helpline (operated by RAINN) at 1-866-288-6558 or <http://NOAASASHHelpline.org>.

It is important to note that SASH allegation(s) are handled through the same process as described above and any inquiry into a reported SASH allegation(s) will be conducted by the OHCS 955 Program Office. The services provided by WVPR are separate from that process. If you elect not to take advantage of the services offered by WVPR, you can report your allegation directly to the OHCS 955 Program Office as detailed above.

If you have any questions regarding this policy please feel free to contact Natalie Huff, our National Program Director for EEO and Diversity, at 301-427-8025.

cc: Dr. Ngozi Butler-Guerrier, Director of NOAA's Office of Inclusion and Civil Rights  
Marie Herndon, Director, Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Program  
Hakeem Basheerud-Deen, Director of NOAA's Office of Human Capital Service