



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Fish and Game

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
Headquarters Office

1255 West 8th Street
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526
Main: 907.465.6136
Fax: 907.465.2332

Date: September 12, 2023

To: Alaska Department of Fish and Game Employees


The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) is committed to providing a positive and professionally fulfilling work environment. To clearly communicate and outline expectations of behavior for all ADF&G employees, the following serves as a baseline for working together and creating a respectful workplace.

- Conduct yourself in a respectful, appropriate, courteous, and professional manner at all times.
- Maintain a professional demeanor with all staff and members of the public.
- Avoid inappropriate statements, comments, or actions, including any that may be perceived as disrespectful, intimidating, argumentative, or accusative.
- Refrain from engaging in office gossip.
- Do not discuss, disclose, or cause disclosure of confidential information to anyone who does not have a business need and a legal right to know the information.
- Follow the chain of command and address any workplace concerns you may have regarding workflow, other staff, or policies and procedures with your supervisor.
- Practice how you expect to be treated and model that same behavior with others. If you disagree with someone, discuss the issue in the most respectful way.
- Maintain positive and professional communications with coworkers and clients, and always keep lines of communication open and solution orientated.
- Conduct your behavior in the workplace in a positive manner and be productive.
- Promote a respectful workplace and work towards creating a team environment.
- Be patient, and remember we are all here working toward the same goal, as employees for ADF&G.

Additionally, the Department will not tolerate harassment or bullying. Please contact your direct supervisor, indirect supervisor, Human Resources, or report on Talk to Spot, with concerns or issues.

You have been, and continue to be, an important member of the ADF&G team. These expectations are being provided to help ensure your success in your position and to promote an inclusive and respectful working environment for all our employees. If you have any questions regarding these instructions, please contact your direct supervisor at any time.

Thank you for your work and dedication. The Department of Fish and Game values you as an employee.

STATE OF ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE	NO ii-041	PAGE 1 of 6
	ISSUED 4/16/2024	EFFECTIVE 4/16/2024
SUBJECT RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE CODE OF CONDUCT	APPROVED BY: Bonnie Jensen, ADF&G, DAS Director	
CHAPTER ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES		

PURPOSE:

This policy shall be known as the *Respectful Workplace Code of Conduct*. Its intent is to establish guiding principles and standards of behavioral conduct within the workplace for employees of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), and to provide procedures for addressing violations. The department aspires to have a diverse and inclusive workforce where safety and well-being are paramount and employees at all levels promote a culture where everyone is valued, treated equitably and respectfully.

DISTRIBUTION:

All ADF&G employees.

POLICY:

Guiding Principles:

- A. Employment:** Acceptance of employment with ADF&G is an affirmation of acceptance on the part of the employee that the rights and obligations established in the *Respectful Workplace Code of Conduct* are necessary for both the employee and the department. (Additionally, see ADF&G Standard Operating Procedure [SOP] II-040, *Standards of Professional Conduct*.)
 1. The people of Alaska place a high degree of trust in the employees of the department to carry out the mission to “protect, maintain, and improve the fish, game, and aquatic plant resources of the state...” This high degree of public trust bolsters an obligation to maintain high standards of professional conduct.
 2. All employees, regardless of position, title, or authority, are expected to treat each other and the public respectfully, and to perform the duties outlined in their position descriptions.
- B. Respectful Work Environment:** Feeling at ease in the workplace, whether that be in the office or in the field, is important to promoting productivity, job satisfaction, and employee retention and recruitment.
 1. Create and maintain a positive work environment where others feel included, heard, respected, and valued. Doing so fosters accomplishments, positive self-esteem, and team building.
 2. Foster a supportive work environment, free from harassment, intimidation, bias, and unlawful discrimination.
 3. Be aware of and sensitive to the experiences that you and others may be going through. Give yourself and others some grace. Offer and be willing to receive assistance.

4. Strive to improve your professional skills and seek out growth, development, and learning opportunities. Support and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

C. Communication: Communicate openly, honestly, regularly, and respectfully in a timely manner with colleagues, ensuring clarity and understanding, whether in the office or field.

1. Create positive working relationships with coworkers by communicating effectively. Communicate in such a way that people *hear* you and understand your intention correctly; listen and observe and inquire to confirm understanding.
2. Keep lines of communication open, be solutions-oriented, and settle on a resolution.
3. Address concerns or conflicts in a direct, honest, and professional manner.
4. Initiate timely conversations and follow up as needed.
5. During discussions, refrain from engaging in gossip.
6. Refrain from using offensive, disrespectful, intimidating, argumentative, accusative, or inappropriate language/terminology in any form of communication (e.g., written emails, verbal communication in meetings, informal discussions, virtual interactions, body language or gestures).
7. Give positive acknowledgments to colleagues as a source of encouragement and support.
8. Be sensitive and compassionate when giving critical feedback. Turn constructive feedback, whether giving or receiving, into a growth opportunity.

D. Interactions with Colleagues: Be courteous, kind, reasonable, empathetic, and considerate.

1. Treat others as they would like to be treated; ask questions to find out how they would like to be treated if you are unsure.
2. Treat all individuals, regardless of position, respectfully, fairly, and compassionately.
3. Do not engage in bullying behavior, including contributing to a hostile environment through threats, yelling, intimidation, insults, condescension, and actions that embarrass or ridicule others.
4. Do not accept inappropriate behavior towards yourself or others.
5. Support those who are experiencing inappropriate treatment from others and respectfully intervene/mitigate when it is safe to do so.
6. In group settings, do not assume that everyone is comfortable with a situation, or will speak up in front of others; offer colleagues an opportunity to provide feedback privately, if they wish.

E. Interactions with the Public: As a workforce, ADF&G employees will strive for positive interactions with the public and diligently assist one another when negative interactions occur.

1. Lead by example and use language and tone that reflect respect for others.
2. Staff will not accept hostile, inappropriate, or otherwise poor behavior from the public and will attempt to respectfully intervene/mitigate when experiencing or observing challenging situations.
3. If a member of the public is acting in a hostile or inappropriate manner and does not comply with requests to behave appropriately, employees may ask the member of the public to leave. Employees should terminate the conversation immediately if a member of the public is violent, makes threatening remarks, refuses to leave, or engages in harassment. Law enforcement should be promptly notified of any current or ongoing safety concerns or illegal activity.

- F. Conflict Resolution:** Resolve conflicts or disagreements in a constructive, timely, and professional manner. Once Department policy decisions are made, it is expected that those policies will be implemented. Policy decisions are vested to those in appointed positions. Disagreement over policy is not a reason for conflict.
1. Attempt to resolve the conflict directly. Understand your boundaries while considering the boundaries of others. If you are uncomfortable speaking directly with the person or people involved, seek assistance from your supervisor or human resources (HR), without fear of reprisal.
 2. Use good judgment in knowing when to address conflicts or when to allow space and revisit at an appropriate time.
- G. Work-Life Balance:** Promote a healthy work-life balance by respecting colleagues' personal time and boundaries. Avoid unnecessary intrusion into personal lives.
1. If you have concerns about your work-life balance, talk to your supervisor or indirect supervisor, and remember to refer to your collective bargaining agreement.
- H. Health and Safety:** Prioritize the health and safety of colleagues and visitors. All employees are expected to follow established guidelines and SOPs.
1. Report any potential hazards or incidents promptly and take appropriate actions to mitigate risks (SOP III-700). Know the safety procedures in your office building (i.e., fire exits, fire extinguisher/AED locations). Familiarize yourself with the safety SOPs related to your position.

This *Respectful Workplace Code of Conduct* encourages addressing concerns directly and respectfully, but if a remedy can't be achieved, there will be a procedure for managing/addressing alleged violations.

PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING ALLEGED CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS:

- A. Reporting allegations**
1. Employees may notify their direct supervisor verbally or in writing when they experience or observe a violation. Violations may not rise to the level of being illegal, but inappropriate behavior is not acceptable in a respectful workplace and should be reported.
 2. If for any reason an individual does not wish to inform their supervisor directly, or if such communication does not resolve the concerns, the individual is directed to report the concern to a higher-level supervisor, ADF&G's Human Resource Business Partner (HRBP), or to ADF&G's Employee Relations Human Resource Consultant (ERHRC).
 3. Employees may also report violations with the online tool, *Spot*, a confidential and anonymous reporting system: <https://app.talktopspot.com/flows>.
 4. An ADF&G supervisor/manager who receives a report of a violation of the Code of Conduct shall immediately consult HRBP or ERHRC with the information to determine the best course of action.
 5. ADF&G does not impose a timeframe or deadline for reporting violations; however, failure to make a prompt report may make it difficult to investigate or confirm the allegations.
- B. Unwelcome conduct that is based on a protected class that interferes with an individual's work or health is discriminatory and illegal under state and federal laws. Under Administrative Order 81, employees who engage in and supervisors that knowingly permit such conduct shall**

be subject to disciplinary action.

1. The following are classes protected under AS 18.80.220: race, religion, color, national origin, physical or mental disability, sex, marital status, changes in marital status, pregnancy, and parenthood.
2. Complaints of discrimination may be made with a direct or higher-level supervisor, ADF&G's HRBP, ADF&G's ERHRC, or the Equal Employment Opportunity Program (EEOP) within the Department of Administration.
 - a. Jurisdictional complaints filed with the EEOP shall be investigated in accordance with AS 39.28, *Equal Employment Opportunity Program*.
 - b. Complaints to the EEOP should be filed within 90 days of the date of the most recent alleged harm.
3. Complaints of discrimination may also be filed externally with the proper Fair Employment Practices Agencies: the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights and/or the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. These independent agencies have their own filing procedures and deadlines.

C. What to expect when you report a complaint to any supervisor:

1. Your concerns and complaints are taken seriously. You feel heard and not judged. Appropriate measures are taken to ensure your safety and well-being.
2. Information is provided on additional reporting options.
3. Confidentiality is respected.
4. The behaviors you describe are documented.
5. You are informed of the departmental complaint process.
6. Organization policies and procedures are followed.
7. An update from the HRBP or ERHRC will be given within 30 days.
8. Zero tolerance for retaliation.

D. Supervisory responsibility

1. Thank the employee. Listen with empathy and without judgement. Take the concern seriously and be impartial, do not take sides.
2. Prioritize the employee's safety and well-being. Ensure confidentiality.
3. Provide the employee with additional reporting options. Make sure the employee is aware of the anonymous reporting system (*Spot*).
4. Ask questions (who, what, when, where) and document the report.
5. Get HR involved early (even if it seems relatively minor).
6. Contact HR immediately if there are signs of retaliation.
7. When a complaint is received, supervisors and/or leadership will not do the following:
 - a. Evaluate the severity of the complaint or behavior.
 - b. Attempt to attribute or justify the behavior.
 - c. Mitigate the situation without consultation from HRBP or ERHRC.
 - d. Speculate on the validity or severity of the report.
 - e. Speculate on the outcome of the complaint.

E. Investigations of Code of Conduct allegations

1. Allegations of violations of the Code of Conduct brought to the attention of ADF&G will be promptly investigated.
2. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process, to the

extent practical and appropriate under the circumstances. The supervisor will be involved in the process, unless there is a conflict.

3. Interfering with, obstructing, or refusing to cooperate in an investigation is prohibited. Employees who do so may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

F. HR will conduct a fair and thorough investigation.

1. An individual under investigation will be informed of the allegation(s) made against them if disciplinary action is potentially warranted. In consultation with HR, the investigative interviewer will request information, as appropriate, to persons who have the ability to respond to, corroborate, or deny any allegation. An employee under investigation has a right to union representation.
2. Investigation conclusions.
 - a. Complaint confirmed: If HR concludes that the allegation has been substantiated, in whole or part, the disciplinary process is initiated.
 - i. HR staff will work with management and the supervisor(s) during the disciplinary process, who are responsible for issuing the disciplinary or corrective action and make sure it is properly enacted.
 - b. Complaint unconfirmed: If HR concludes that the allegation has not been substantiated or that a policy violation did not occur, the appropriate parties shall be notified.
 - c. Unfounded complaint: If the investigation results in a finding that the complainant wrongly accused another employee, the complainant may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
 - d. Inconclusive investigation: If HR is unable to make a determination during the investigation, the matter shall be referred to and coordinated by the State Personnel Director in the Department of Administration to determine the appropriate course of action.
3. At the close of an investigation, the HRBP will notify the involved parties of the conclusion. Corrective actions are confidential and include a variety of options other than dismissal. Corrective action(s) taken between HR and the infracting employee are confidential and you may not be privy to actions taken.

G. Confidentiality

1. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process, to the extent practical and appropriate under the circumstances.
2. Individuals who are interviewed should be advised that discussing the interview with others may degrade the integrity of the investigation. Thus, employees are to keep all matters regarding their interview confidential.
3. All confidential and sensitive information will be handled in accordance with state policy and the Alaska Administrative Manual (AAM) 100.060, *General Personnel System Information*.
4. Employee personnel information, to include medical information and records, is confidential under Alaska Statute (AS) 39.25.080, *Personnel Records Confidential; Exceptions*. Unauthorized use or release of such information is prohibited.
5. Misuse of confidential information may constitute a Class A misdemeanor under AS 11.56.860, *Misuse of Confidential Information*.

H. Policy Prohibiting Retaliation.

1. From *Policy on Anti-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity, Policy Prohibiting Retaliation* (EEOP 2022):

The State complies with [Equal Employment Opportunity] EEO laws which make it illegal to retaliate against an individual in any aspect of employment including hiring, promoting, demoting, terminating, layoffs, pay, fringe benefits, job assignments, or any other terms or conditions of employment. State policy prohibits retaliation against any individual for filing a charge of discrimination, complaining about discrimination, or because they participated in an employment discrimination proceeding such as an investigation or lawsuit.

2. Prohibition against retaliation: Retaliation against an individual for reporting or participating in an investigation of allegations is expressly prohibited. Any person found to have engaged in retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Retaliation may take several forms; however, any adverse employment treatment that an individual receives as a direct consequence of reporting violations may be considered retaliation.

REFERENCES:

Alaska Administrative Manual (AAM) 100.060. General Personnel System Information.

<https://doa.alaska.gov/dof/manuals/aam/resource/100.pdf>.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Human Resources (HR). dfg.das.hr@alaska.gov.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). Standard Operating Procedures [SOPs]:

<https://stateofalaska.sharepoint.com/sites/DFG/Pages/SOPs.aspx>.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). Standard Operating Procedure [SOP] II-040. Standards of Professional Conduct. [https://stateofalaska.sharepoint.com/sites/DFG/SOPs/ii-](https://stateofalaska.sharepoint.com/sites/DFG/SOPs/ii-040%20Ethics%20%26%20Standards%20of%20Professional%20Conduct.pdf)

[040%20Ethics%20%26%20Standards%20of%20Professional%20Conduct.pdf](https://stateofalaska.sharepoint.com/sites/DFG/SOPs/ii-040%20Ethics%20%26%20Standards%20of%20Professional%20Conduct.pdf)

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). Standard Operating Procedure [SOP] III-700. Safety Policy and Standards. [https://stateofalaska.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/DFG/SOPs/iii-](https://stateofalaska.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/DFG/SOPs/iii-700%20Safety%20Policy%20and%20Standards.pdf?csf=1&web=1)

[700%20Safety%20Policy%20and%20Standards.pdf?csf=1&web=1](https://stateofalaska.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/DFG/SOPs/iii-700%20Safety%20Policy%20and%20Standards.pdf?csf=1&web=1).

Alaska State Commission for Human Rights. <https://humanrights.alaska.gov/>.

Alaska Statute (AS) 11.56.860. Misuse of confidential information.

<https://www.akleg.gov/basis/statutes.asp#11.56.860>.

Alaska Statute (AS) 18.80.220. Unlawful employment practices; exception.

<https://www.akleg.gov/basis/statutes.asp#18.80.220>.

Alaska Statute (AS) 39.25.080. Personnel records confidential; exceptions.

<https://www.akleg.gov/basis/statutes.asp#39.25.080>.

Alaska Statute (AS) 39.28. Equal Employment Opportunity Program.

<https://www.akleg.gov/basis/statutes.asp#39.28>.

Equal Employment Opportunity Program (EEOP). 2022. State of Alaska policy on anti-discrimination and equal opportunity. https://doa.alaska.gov/dop/fileadmin/Equal_Employment/pdf/EEOP_Policy_Statement.pdf.