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Fields Human Capital Division

Dr. Cassi L. Fields
4795 Meadow Wood Lane
Suite 110
Chantilly, VA 97070

Dear CP3 Participant:

Thank you for attending CP3, [Taking] Command of Persistent People Problems. I look forward to having you again in the future. Here are some best practices for inhibiting and prohibiting sexual harassment I gathered during that webcast:

- 1) Your department must have a zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual harassment and the Fire Chief must embody and demonstrate this belief system.
- 2) Sexual harassment may result from potential victims trying to fit into the fire/rescue system and behaving inappropriately. They act in a manner that they believe others want them to act. This may send the wrong signal to potential offenders giving them license, in their mind, to behave inappropriately and/or harass them. Leaders can help inhibit this behavior by offering inclusive Department programs that occur onsite and that require teamwork. These programs would be designed to prevent potential victims from trying to fit in, and it may steer potential offenders away from behaving inappropriately.
- 3) Victims have a process that they must go through if they feel harassed:
 - a) clearly indicating that the behavior of another makes them uncomfortable;
 - b) avoidance of problematic situations;
 - c) making a formal complaint; and/or
 - d) requesting a formal investigation. These steps are NOT NECESSARILY SEQUENTIAL. We want to make one point clear: if a person is harassed, they do not have to wait to submit a complaint but, while doing so, they must try to avoid placing themselves in situations that harm them.
- 4) In order to ensure that a formal complaint and investigation are successful, all parts of the complaint and investigative process must be confidential.

ESCI Corporate Office

4795 Meadow Wood Ln, Suite 110
Chantilly, VA 20151
Voice: 703.506.9400
Voice: 1.800.757.3724

Western Regional Office

25030 SW Parkway Ave, Suite 330
Wilsonville, OR 97070-9616
Voice: 503.570.7778
Office Email: Info@esci.us

Central Regional Office

PO Box 641
Argyle, TX 76226
Voice: 1.800.757.3724

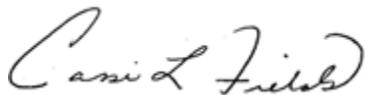
Eastern Regional Office

4795 Meadow Wood Ln, Suite 110
Chantilly, VA 20151
Voice: 352.572.5190

- 5) If Leadership is successful in creating a zero-tolerance organization, then bystanders will be more likely to assist victims or at least bring the issue to light.
- 6) Victims' and bystanders' information must be kept confidential. Zero-tolerance extends to retaliation—none can be allowed.
- 7) Alleged offenders must also remain protected until such time as the charge is sustained. If sustained, appropriate discipline must be administered up to and including termination to ensure all members of the Department understand the consequences of harassment.
- 8) All members can be taught awareness of harassment and learn about behaviors, non-verbal communication and innuendo that occur on-the-job that are inappropriate.
- 9) While members can be taught about inappropriate behavior, they may not necessarily have the emotional intelligence or recognition of the feedback that they receive so they know when their actions have “stepped over the line.” The best way to address this is with the type of training discussed above. Role playing is another good method to teach members how to recognize subtle or not subtle negative feedback.
- 10) On-the-job attractions between men and women are typical. Policies about these relationships often differ but one thing is clear: If one person pursues a romantic relationship with another and that feeling is not reciprocated, the pursuer must discontinue pursuit immediately.
- 11) In today's world, we are facing more complaints about sexual harassment and the #metoo Movement is prevalent. Male-female relationships on-the-job can be perfectly productive if both genders avoid all jokes, innuendos, behaviors, touching, etc., that are related to intimate interactions or that have sexual connotations. Some might think “this ruins the fun.” However, the clear message is “fire/rescue is a business so that type of fun must be eliminated.”

Please email me if you would like help with any of the above.

Sincerely,



Cassi L. Fields, PhD, Vice President
ESCI—Fields Human Capital Division
4795 Meadow Wood Lane, Suite 110
Chantilly, VA 20151
Telephone: 703-506-9400
cassi.fields@esci.us