



MARICOPA COUNTY INTERNAL POLICY

Policy Title: EMPLOYEE WORKPLACE CONCERNS	Policy Number:	HR2405
	Current Adoption Date:	03-11-2020
	Current Implementation Date:	03-11-2020
Approved by: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS	Board Agenda Number:	C-31-14-035-6-01
	Original Adoption Date:	07-01-1998

I. PURPOSE

This Policy provides a formal resolution process for employee Workplace Concerns and is intended to supplement, rather than discourage or replace, informal discussions between a supervisor and employee.

II. AUTHORITY

This Policy is authorized by the Board of Supervisors pursuant to A.R.S.§11-251.

III. APPLICATION

This Policy applies to all Maricopa County appointed departments as well as the Flood Control District of Maricopa County, the Maricopa County Library District, and the Maricopa County Stadium District (Special Districts). The Board of Supervisors is authorized to jointly adopt policies applying to the Special Districts under the Intergovernmental Agreement, C-06-18-393-6-00, approved on April 11, 2018.

This policy also applies to employees of County elected offices unless the elected official has implemented a similar policy specific to his or her office.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. Appointing Authority:** An elected official, the single administrative or executive head of a Department/Special District, or the designated representative authorized to act in this capacity.
- A. CARES:** An alternative system for employees to report Workplace Concerns anonymously.
- B. Department Human Resources:** The employee's assigned internal human resources office. If there are no departmental human resources, then it refers to the department's HR Liaison.
- C. Employee Relations:** Maricopa County Human Resources Department Employee Relations Division.
- D. Workplace Concern:** An issue, inquiry, or concern regarding workplace practices or conduct, which cannot be addressed through other specific complaint or appeal procedures. Examples of Workplace Concerns include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Inappropriate, unfair, or inconsistent application of policies or procedures
 - 2. Discourteous treatment of employees or the public
 - 3. Inappropriate workplace relationships
 - 4. Misuse of County property or resources
 - 5. Health and safety hazards

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6. Conflicts of interest
7. Unethical behavior
8. Violations of County Policy

V. POLICY

- A.** Whenever practicable, employees are encouraged to address issues informally within the workplace at the lowest appropriate level.
- B.** Employees may submit unresolved Workplace Concerns to their department supervisors or other management, Department Human Resources, or Employee Relations.
 1. Recipients of Workplace Concerns should provide acknowledgment of receipt.
 2. Recipients should address Workplace Concerns promptly and respond within ten (10) business days. Written responses are not required.
 3. If a resolution will take longer than ten (10) business days, recipients should notify the employee of the status and provide an approximate completion date.
- C.** In accordance with County Policy [HR2416 Code of Conduct](#), supervisors and managers must take appropriate action once they learn of Workplace Concerns regardless of the reporting methods. This includes concerns submitted verbally, anonymously, or via a third party.
- D.** Employees who submit concerns in good faith shall not be subject to adverse action for submitting the concern.

VI. PROCEDURE

- A. Addressing Workplace Concerns:** Employees are encouraged to submit their concerns in writing. Failure of employees to submit written concerns does not relieve recipients of the obligation to take appropriate action.

If employees do not receive a timely response, or they are not satisfied with the response from a step, they may proceed to the next step. Employees should provide an explanation of why they are proceeding to the next step.

Step 1 – Department Supervisor: Employees should report Workplace Concerns to their immediate supervisors as soon as practicable after the concern arises. If a supervisor is the subject of the concern, the employee may submit the concern to the next higher level of supervision.

Step 2 – Department Human Resources: Employees should submit their concerns to Department Human Resources within five (5) business days after receiving a supervisor's response or lack of timely response. Employees may proceed to Step 3 if their Appointing Authority or Department Human Resources is the subject of the concerns.

Step 3 – Employee Relations: Employees should submit their concerns, along with any documentation, to Employee Relations within five (5) business days of receiving a response or lack of timely response. Employee Relations will provide responses to employees, which will be the final decision and resolution of any concerns.

- B. Anonymous Workplace Concerns:** Employees wishing to report concerns anonymously may use the CARES reporting system. Employee Relations will review the concerns and ensure they are provided to

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the appropriate authority. Voice messages submitted to the CARES system will be transcribed before forwarding. If an employee chooses to submit an anonymous concern, the County encourages the employee to provide as much information as possible. Submitting an anonymous concern may limit the scope of an investigation or investigator's ability to gather information.

VII. ISSUES EXCLUDED FROM THIS POLICY

- A. Employees may not use this Policy to request reviews of decisions or actions for which there is already another available internal review procedure. These include, but are not limited to, annual performance reviews and issues that may be appealed to the Merit Commission (dismissal, suspension, or involuntary demotion). Employees also may not use this Policy to challenge a reduction-in-force or a department's decision to use furloughs.
- B. Concerns about potential employment discrimination or harassment based on a characteristic protected by County Policy or state or federal law, or about retaliation for engaging in a protected activity, are addressed in County Policy [HR2406 Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#). Employees should seek assistance from Department Human Resources or Employee Relations if they are not sure whether their concerns fall under this Policy or County Policy [HR2406 Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#).

Revision History

Version	Revision Date	Description of Revision
1	07-01-1998	Initial version. Approved by County Manager.
2	02-2002	Approved by County Manager.
3	09-20-2005	Approved by County Manager.
4	06-25-2014	Updated policy title, updated for consistency with current policy format, expanded definitions, and updated the process for employees to raise workplace. (C-31-14-035-6-00).
5	03-11-2020	Removed outdated language, updated definitions, and rearranged language for consistency. (C-31-14-035-6-01).