

Harassment

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Mountaineers that harassment shall not be tolerated.

Application

1. The Mountaineers is committed to maintaining an environment within our organization and during our sponsored activities that is free of verbal, physical and visual forms of harassment so that everyone can enjoy our club activities in a productive, respectful and dynamic environment.
 - The Mountaineers does not allow harassment of any kind by one member towards another including harassment based on gender, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, or marital or veteran status.
 - The Mountaineers does not tolerate harassment by one member towards another whether the member is a leader, volunteer, trustee, or officer.
2. Members who violate this policy may have their membership privileges restricted, up to and including expulsion.
3. The Mountaineers wants to prevent harassment from occurring and will take immediate and appropriate action when we know that harassment has occurred. To do this, however, we need the cooperation of all members at all levels as described in “Responsibilities.”
4. The Mountaineers will promptly and thoroughly investigate claims of harassment.
 - The Executive Director will use his or her judgment to determine how to accomplish a timely, fair and effective investigation.
 - Complaints of harassment will be handled with sensitivity, discretion and confidentiality to the extent allowed by the circumstances. Generally this means that allegations of harassment are shared by the investigator with those who have a need to know (such as witnesses or members of certain board committees, such as the Executive Committee so that The Mountaineers can conduct an effective investigation and take appropriate remedial action.
 - The complaining member is usually requested to provide as many details as possible, such as the dates(s), location(s), names(s) of witnesses, or information about the alleged offender(s).
 - If The Mountaineers determines that a person may have helpful and relevant information, the person will be interviewed.
 - During the investigation, steps may be taken, when appropriate, to minimize contact between the complaining member and the alleged offender.
 - After the investigation is completed, The Mountaineers will share its findings with the complaining member, the alleged offender, and, if appropriate, others directly concerned with the incident or the investigation.

5. If The Mountaineers concludes that harassment occurred, prompt and effective remedial action will be taken.
 - This may include limiting the membership activities of the harasser and other actions to remedy the effects of the harassment and prevent further harassment.
 - If expulsion is recommended, such action will be referred to the board as described in the bylaws.
6. No action will be taken against any member, who in good faith files a complaint of harassment or assists in the investigation of such a complaint, solely because the member filed a complaint or assisted in an investigation.
 - Members who believe they have been retaliated against for having reported harassment or participated in an investigation must promptly report any concerns about retaliation either to the person(s) who are conducting the investigation, or if the investigation is concluded, to the Executive Director.
 - Concerns about retaliation will be investigated.
 - Appropriate corrective measures will be taken if allegations of retaliation are substantiated.

Responsibilities

Each member is responsible for supporting and adhering to this policy.

- Members should never tolerate inappropriate behavior. They should make their feelings known to the offending person. In many cases if a member makes his or her feelings known to offending persons, tells them the conduct is not appropriate, and asks them to stop, this may take care of the situation.
- However, if any member is not comfortable doing this, or has tried doing this but the offending behavior has continued, then the member must promptly report any offending behavior, whether such behavior is directed towards them personally or to other member, to The Mountaineers' Executive Director. Reports of offending behavior must be made as soon as practical.
- Members are strongly encouraged to report concerns about harassment before offensive behaviors become severe or pervasive, as The Mountaineers prefers to stop harassment before it escalates. Group leaders, volunteers, board members or officers who know or receive reports or complaints of offending behavior must promptly notify the Executive Director so that appropriate action can be taken.

The Executive Director is responsible for administering this policy.

*** Examples of Harassment**

In general terms, harassment is a knowing and willful course of conduct directed by one member towards another that under the circumstances seriously alarms, annoys, harasses or embarrasses the person towards whom the conduct was directed. However, constructive criticism, offered appropriately during activities or courses, though it may be embarrassing, is not harassment.

Examples of harassment based on gender, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, religion, age or disability can include, but are not limited to:

- Cartoons or other visual displays, like objects, pictures or posters, that depict these groups in a derogatory way; or
- Verbal conduct, including making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs and jokes about racial or religious groups, the disabled, or a person's ethnic or national origin

Sexual harassment is generally defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other visual, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of participating in a club activity;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct affects course enrollment, graduation, on-going participation; or
- This type of conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for club activities.

Sexual harassment includes harassment based on another person's gender or harassment based upon pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. It also includes harassment of another member of the same gender as the harasser.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, the following types of behavior:

- Unwelcome sexual advances, like propositions for sexual favors;
- Excessive, one-sided, romantic attention in the form of requests for dates, love letters, telephone calls, emails or gifts;
- Making or threatening reprisals, after a member has turned down a sexual advance;
- Visual or physical conduct, like leering, making sexual gestures, or sharing pornography or other sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons, calendars or posters;
- Verbal conduct, like making or using sexually derogatory comments, epithets, teasing or dirty jokes of a sexual nature;
- Graphic verbal or written comments (including emails or other electronic documents) about an individual's sex life or body;
- Sexually degrading words used to describe an individual;
- Suggestive or obscene letters, emails, notes or invitations; and
- Unwelcome physical contact, including pats, hugs, brushes, touches, shoulder rubs, assaults, or impeding or blocking movements.

Note: Members from time to time may experience other problematic behavior that is not harassment, but that nevertheless intrudes on the enjoyment or safety of others. Such problem behaviors are addressed by the board policy called "Problem Behaviors."