



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HUMAN RESOURCES AND ADMINISTRATION  
WASHINGTON DC 20420  
NOV 17 2009

**MEMORANDUM FOR UNDER SECRETARIES, ASSISTANT SECRETARIES, OTHER  
KEY OFFICIALS, AND FIELD FACILITY DIRECTORS**

SUBJECT: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Workplace Harassment Policy  
Information

The VA is committed to ensuring equal employment opportunity (EEO), promoting diversity and inclusion, and resolving workplace conflict constructively in order to maintain a high performing workforce in service to our Nation's Veterans. These are the words that introduced Secretary Eric K. Shinseki's memorandum dated February 27, 2009, to all employees summarizing VA EEO, Diversity, and No FEAR policies. In that policy memorandum, the Secretary clearly articulated his commitment to enforce all applicable Federal laws, Regulations, Executive Orders, and Management Directives to ensure equal opportunity and full protection of all our employees.

I want to take this opportunity to reaffirm that policy and remind employees and managers of their obligations to maintain an environment free from discrimination and harassment. Workplace harassment is defined as any unwelcome, hostile, or offensive conduct taken on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability that interferes with an individual's performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Employees must not engage in harassing behavior and should immediately report such conduct to their supervisor or another appropriate official, as indicated in the policy memorandum. Managers and supervisors bear a special responsibility and legal obligation to promptly investigate allegations of harassment in a thorough and impartial manner and take appropriate and effective corrective action, as necessary. Supervisors are strongly encouraged to seek guidance from their local EEO Manager, the Office of Resolution Management, Office of Labor-Management Relations, or Office of General Counsel on conducting such internal investigations. Additionally, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion provides training and consultation in the area of EEO and Diversity.

As we continue to transform VA into a high performing 21<sup>st</sup> century organization, it is imperative that we cultivate a safe and inclusive work environment that values human diversity in all its aspects to provide the best service to our Nations Veterans. Harassment in any form will not be tolerated. Supervisors and managers bear a special responsibility to be proactive in maintaining a workplace free from discrimination and harassment. I ask for your cooperation in ensuring that all managers and supervisors are fully informed about this and all related policies and procedures focused on preventing discrimination and responding to harassment allegations.

Thank you for your support in this.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John U. Sepúlveda".

John U. Sepúlveda

Related References:

Memorandum on Summary of VA's EEO, Diversity, and No FEAR Policies found in Office of Diversity and Inclusion website <http://www.diversity.hr.va.gov/>  
Executive Order 11478, as amended by Executive Order 13087 on May 28, 1998, providing a uniformed policy in the Federal Government prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation found at <http://www.eeoc.gov/federal/eo11478/eo13087.html>.  
Office of Resolution Management (ORM) website at <http://www.va.gov/orm/>.  
Employee Relations website at <http://vaww1.va.gov/ohrm/EmployeeRelations/ERhome.htm>.