



**Missouri Department of  
Natural Resources  
Administrative Policies and Procedures**

**Chapter 1**

**External Complaint Response Policy**

**Effective date  
January 4, 2021**

**Revised**

**Number: 1.11**

This policy addresses the procedures for Department of Natural Resources (Department) employees to respond to external complaints of unlawful or prohibited discrimination by a representative of the Department.

**GENERAL PROVISIONS**

The Department prohibits harassment of and discrimination against any individual by a DNR employee or one of its representatives because of that individual’s race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), national origin, age, disability, veteran’s status, ancestry, or socioeconomic status.

All external complaints of discrimination must be forwarded immediately to the Department’s Employee Relations Office (ERO) for investigation.<sup>1</sup> This policy is not intended to establish a legal cause of action; rather, it provides members of the public the opportunity to file a complaint with the Department if such individuals believe they have been subjected to unlawful or prohibited discrimination by a representative of the Department. Such investigations are undertaken and completed in contemplation of possible disciplinary action and, in some cases, litigation. As a result, the investigative report and all associated materials are generally considered closed records and may be subject to applicable legal privileges pursuant to Missouri Sunshine Law Section 610.021, RSMo, and other legal authorities.

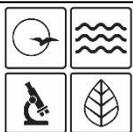
**COMPLAINT OF UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION DEFINED**

For purposes of this policy, a “complaint of unlawful or prohibited discrimination” or a “complaint” is defined as a verbal or written allegation that an external individual has been unlawfully or contrary-to-Department-policy denied or excluded from participation in Department services, or has otherwise been subjected to disparate treatment in the delivery of services, on the basis of any above-mentioned categories.

**PROCEDURE FOR RECORDING AND REPORTING COMPLAINTS**

Department employees who receive verbal or written complaints from any person, including a fellow employee, a member of the public, or any other person, alleging unlawful or prohibited discrimination by a Department employee or employees against an external party are responsible for recording the information and providing it to the ERO as explained below. Allegations that are not based on unlawful or prohibited discrimination should be forwarded through supervisory channels to the appropriate division director or designee for review and action. If the employee receiving the

<sup>1</sup> Employees receiving internal complaints of discrimination are similarly required to report them. Policy and procedures for internal complaints are covered under Department Policy No. 1.02-03 Non-Discrimination / Anti-Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedures.



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allegations is unsure whether the allegations are based on alleged unlawful or prohibited discrimination, the employee will contact the ERO for guidance.

**COMPLAINTS RECEIVED IN PERSON**

If the complaint is received in person by a Department employee, the employee, if reasonably possible, should provide a copy of the DNR [External Complaint of Discrimination Form](#) to the complainant for completion and return to the employee. The employee is responsible for ensuring that section 1 of the form is completed, either by the complainant or by the employee; completing section 7 of the form; and sending a copy of the form to the ERO as soon as possible. The ERO will follow up with the complainant. If the complainant needs assistance filling out or communicating a complaint due to disability, language barrier, or for other reasons, the ERO will assist the complainant or direct the complainant to the appropriate services.

**COMPLAINTS RECEIVED IN WRITING OR VERBALLY**

If the complaint is received in writing or verbally, the recipient of the complaint is responsible for completing, to the extent possible, section 1 on a DNR External Discrimination Complaint Form; completing section 7 of the form; and providing a copy of the form and any written information received by the complainant to the ERO as soon as possible. The ERO will follow up with the complainant.

**INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE**

The ERO is responsible for investigating complaints. Upon completion of an investigation, the ERO will provide the complainant with a written notice that the investigation has been completed. The complainant also will be notified of their right to file a complaint, if applicable, with the appropriate state or federal agency, regardless of the ERO’s determination. Copies of the investigation and determination will be provided to the General Counsel’s Office and the appropriate division director or designee for review and action, if appropriate.

All Department employees are required to provide requested information and assistance to the ERO during its investigation. If unlawful or prohibited discrimination or harassment has occurred, appropriate action will be taken. Employees who are determined to have violated any portion of this policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Personnel actions will not be disclosed to the complainant.

**POLICY STATEMENT AND POSTING REQUIREMENT**

The Department’s division directors are responsible for enforcing the Department’s commitment to nondiscrimination by affirming the principles of equal access to Department services, programs, and activities. Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring the “[Nondiscrimination Notice](#)” is



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posted in all Department offices and in places conspicuous to all individuals participating in Department services, programs, and activities.

**REFERENCES**

Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended

Title IX of the United States Education Amendment of 1972, as amended

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Section 504)

Age Discrimination Act of 1975

Missouri Human Rights Act: Public Accommodations, RSMo 213.020

**Related DNR Policies**

Conduct and Ethics Policy 1.01

Non-Discrimination / Anti-Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedures 1.02

Americans with Disabilities Act Policy 1.05

Discipline Policy 1.08