

# Harassment in any form is unacceptable behavior at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

## Our Policy

The Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution is committed to maintaining a positive working and learning environment, free of illegal discrimination and harassment. As a matter of policy, the Institution expressly endorses the principle of equal employment opportunity and explicitly prohibits all forms of harassment, even when such conduct may not violate the law (see the Harassment Policy for guidance). Institution scientists, administrators, managers and supervisors ashore and at sea are obliged to strongly support this effort; all shore-based and at-sea employees, post-docs and students of the Institution are expected to support this goal.

Harassment in any form is unacceptable behavior at the Institution, whether ashore or at sea. For purposes of this brochure, the focus is on behavior at sea.

## Harassment defined

Verbal or physical conduct, whether on or off the premises, which has the intent or effect of unreasonably interfering with any individual's or group's academic or work performance, which significantly affects an individual's ability to participate in the activities of the vessel, whether on or off duty, or which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational or work environment, when such conduct is based upon age, race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, creed, disability or status as a Veteran.

Harassment can take many forms. It can be blatant or subtle, printed on paper or communicated electroni-



R/V Atlantis with Alvin.



Jayne Doucette, WHOI

Short one line caption

cally, verbal or physical. Examples of conduct that can constitute harassment are:

- Outright proposition/improper suggestions or requests for sexual favors
- Racial or ethnic jokes, slurs or cartoons
- Abuse, insults, or jokes concerning sexual orientation
- Unwanted physical contact, including touching, pats, hugs, squeezes, brushing against, putting arm around another person.
- Insinuations or comments about private life or lifestyle
- Threats or promises regarding compliance with sexual behavior
- Actions or sounds—whistling, suggestive sounds, obscene gestures, display of offensive pictures or graffiti
- Stalking or following someone
- Unwelcome advances such as repeatedly asking someone out on a date in spite of past refusals
- Sexist, lewd or obscene remarks, jokes or cartoons; disparaging remarks about gender
- Sexual innuendoes or statements made at inappropriate times or disguised as humor
- Imbalance of attention, whether it be positive or negative, towards one employee or student based upon gender or race
- Assault—sexual or otherwise

## Social conditions at sea are very different from those on land.

The close quarters demand utmost consideration of others at all times. Privacy is greatly reduced, and

as a result, interactions can become more intense, intentionally or not. When at sea, anyone may be subject to more intense or excessive attention, welcomed or unwelcomed, than might be experienced ashore. In particular, sexual awareness and tensions can be heightened and this attention can be magnified to the point of harassment.

## How to handle harassment

If you believe you may have experienced or witnessed harassment, do not hesitate to speak with the offender. Many situations can be resolved very simply by directly and promptly telling the offending party that his/her behavior is making you uncomfortable and asking him/her to stop. This conversation should occur in private if possible and if you feel safe approaching the person alone. In addition or alternatively, it is your right and, especially in the area of sexual harassment, you are strongly encouraged to report the matter to the ship's Captain and/or the Chief Scientist. They have the responsibility to maintain a safe working and learning environment free of illegal harassment and discrimination.

While speaking directly to the offender or reporting your concerns to the Captain or Chief Scientist are the first options to consider, there may be instances when neither of those is appropriate. In that case, you should seek advice from someone else who is in a position to help. You may choose to report the matter to your land-based supervisor, the Marine Personnel Coordinator, your academic advisor, or department head.



R/V Knorr.

## Resources

It can't be emphasized enough that if you are the recipient of unwanted or unwelcome attention or harassment and have not or can not resolve the situation yourself, you need to speak with someone. For overall or general support, you may want to speak with a friend, colleague, peer or member of the clergy, but to address your specific concern, it is important that you speak with someone in a position to help.

**Resources for all personnel including those at sea such as crewmembers and members of the science party, whether they are employees, postdocs, or students:**

### At Sea:

- Supervisor
- Chief Scientist
- Captain
- Chief Mate
- Via Email: Ombudsperson or EEO Officer

### On Shore:

For crewmembers, *Alvin* crew and OSS techs:

- Ship Operations Manager
- Marine Personnel Coordinator
- Manager OSS
- EEO Officer
- Ombudsperson
- Employee and Student Assistance Program

For science party employees & students:

- Supervisor or Academic Advisor
- Department Administrator—at WHOI
- Administrative Officer—at MIT
- Department Chair
- Education Coordinator
- Dean or Associate Dean
- EEO Officer—at WHOI (508-289-2704) or MIT (617-253-1594)
- Employee and Student Assistance Program—at WHOI (508-548-7119)
- Medical Department Personal Assistance Program—at MIT (617-253-4911)
- Ombuds Office—at WHOI (508-289-2645) or MIT (617-253-5921; [web.mit.edu/ombud/](http://web.mit.edu/ombud/))
- Academic Programs Office Staff at WHOI—for referrals
- MIT/WHOI Joint Program Office at MIT—for referrals



*A view of the WHOI dock area with R/V Atlantis at left and Oceanus at right.*

## More resources

Two additional resources available to you are the WHOI Ombudsperson and the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer.

The Ombuds Office is defined as a neutral, confidential resource. Speaking with the Ombudsperson is an informal route to follow and does not put the Institution on official or legal notice with regard to harassment, but can be helpful to you in defining your options and deciding what, if any, further action you may want to take. The Ombudsperson will not take any action without your permission.

The EEO Office handles formal discrimination and harassment related complaints and is always one of the options to consider. Notice to the EEO Officer constitutes legal notice to the Institution, but reports of inappropriate behavior made to this office will still be handled and investigated as privately and with as much confidentiality as is reasonably possible. The Ombudsperson, the EEO Officer, or any other shore-based resource may be contacted via email from the ship, or contacted by phone or in person upon return to shore. It should be remembered that although they are typically private, email communications cannot be guaranteed to be confidential.



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# Harassment Policy Guide

## At Sea

