



**FORT KNOX  
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY  
3<sup>rd</sup> QTR FY 22**



**“Information to Demonstrate”**

As COVID strategies transition to an endemic focus, we must keep a clear perspective of the potential impacts of this new normal on the workplace. The immediate future presents great opportunity to grow and adapt but it also opens the door for transitional difficulties. Now is a good time to review some of the fundamental concepts that help ensure the workplace is free of harassment and discrimination.

“Every person should be treated with respect and dignity and should be able to live without fear, no matter who they are or whom they love” (Executive Order 13988).

**The New Hostile Work Environment**

Harassment is unwelcome conduct based on a protected category or protected activity – Race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age (40 or older), disability, genetic information, reprisal.

Harassment becomes unlawful where: Enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive. COVID-19 related hostile conduct might include: intentional and repeated violations of her personal space, in violation of CDC protocols; teasing, mocking, staring, intimidation; mocked by a supervisor for requesting a COVID-19 related reasonable accommodation; subjected to multiple disciplinary actions after filing her EEO complaint.

Harassment can also occur in the virtual environment. Examples might be: Comments about coworker clothing, furniture, décor; photos of family members; content in private chats and messages; gestures over webcam.

We all have a responsibility to recognize harassment amidst the changing nature of how business is conducted. As return to the workplace orders are implemented, agencies and individuals must remain vigilant against potential areas of harassment associated with the adjustment and ensure everybody is treated with dignity and respect.

**Disability Employment Awareness**

Individuals with Disabilities are confronted with many barriers to employment. The major barrier they face is attitude. This barrier can be reduced by improving our attitudes through better understanding disability in the workplace and good practices for managing disabilities. We can acknowledge that disabilities are a common human experience. Many have all experienced an impairment that affected a major life activity, whether temporary or permanent.

By having an informed understanding of a disability we can capitalize on the talents of people with a disability. To do this, we must make sure that the doors are open to employ people with disabilities. This can be accomplished through the use of accessible buildings, technology, and flexible scheduling. Inclusive policies, practices, public relations, marketing, and external partnerships with disability-related services are additional ways to open the door. An inclusive ethos, with a focus on language and communication, is a vital component in creating a fair and equitable environment.

**FT. KNOX EEO TEAM**

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**Equal Employment  
Opportunity services  
complaints:**

**FOR CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES,  
FORMER EMPLOYEES,  
APPLICANTS FOR  
EMPLOYMENT (U.S. CITIZENS  
ONLY) and SOME  
CONTRACTORS**

Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against based on race, color, religion, sex, (including sexual harassment), age (40 & above), national origin, physical and/or mental disability, genetic information, and/or reprisal in employment matters **have 45 CALENDAR DAYS** from the date they become aware of the action to initiate the pre-complaint process.