

Employee Fraternalization Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to establish restrictions on fraternization. As an organization that is heavily dependent upon its human resources, the Town of Seekonk has a vital interest in the maintenance of harmonious, efficient, and productive working relationships between its employees. Personal relationships that cause unrest, lend themselves to the perception of favoritism, adversely affect morale, or otherwise disrupt the good working order of the Town are undesirable.

Policy Statement

This Policy is established to create and maintain a professional standard of conduct within the Town of Seekonk to dispel the appearance of favoritism and/or actual or perceived potential conflicts of interest within the Town to ensure the credibility of employees of the Town, and to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the Town.

A. Restrictions

- 1. Supervisory Staff:** Employees serving in a command, management or supervisory position, including those designated to serve as temporary supervisors are strictly prohibited from dating or being otherwise involved in a romantic relationship with any other employee whom they presently, or may in the future supervise or manage. This includes all employees of the supervising employee's department or who work in the same building, seasonal employees, administrative staff, and other supervisory/managerial personnel. It shall be the responsibility of the manager/supervisor to report his/her romantic relationship(s) with other employee(s) to his/her Department Head. Supervisory positions include any position where an employee has authority, direct or indirect, over another employee by virtue of their rank or job classification.
- 2. Non-Supervisory Staff:** Non-supervisory employees are strictly prohibited from dating or being otherwise involved in a romantic relationship with any other employee of their department. This includes seasonal employees, administrative staff, and other employees in the employee's department. It shall be the responsibility of the employee to report his/her romantic relationship(s) with other employee(s) to the Department Head.

B. Pre-Existing Relationships: The restrictions described in subsection A, above, shall not apply to dating or romantic relationships that existed prior to the hire date of one or both employees or prior to the effective date of this Policy. Nonetheless, those relationships must be disclosed in accordance with this Policy.

C. Reporting: Failure by an employee to report relationships covered under the Policy compromises the integrity of the Town's operations, disrupts the work environment, causes decline in morale and can reduce productivity. Any failure to report relationships as required by this Policy shall constitute misconduct and may subject an employee to disciplinary action.

SUMMARY

The Town shall review violations of this Policy on a case-by-case basis and determine appropriate action. Appropriate action may include, but is not limited to: moving, reassigning, transferring or changing assignments (including shifts) and/or discipline up to and including termination of employment with the Town.

Employees who are currently involved in a dating or romantic relationship prohibited by this policy are required to notify their Department Head within seven (7) days of the Policy's effective date.

Disclaimer:

This Policy is for Town use only and is not intended to enlarge an employee's criminal or civil liability. Violations of this Policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by the Town, and then only in an administrative proceeding.

The Fraternalization Policy is hereby approved by the Board of Selectmen on May 29, 2019.