



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIR

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**SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS
GOVERNOR**

**KENDALL W. PENN
RET. MAJOR GENERAL
SECRETARY**

8 March 2023

**MEMORANDUM FOR EMPLOYEES OF ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS**

**SUBJECT: Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs (ADVA) Workplace Professionalism
Policy**

1. ADVA Human Resources is responsible for the creation, revision, and dissemination of agency policies and procedures in order to assist in the maintenance of an effective workplace.
2. This policy is intended to provide guidance for the minimum required standards necessary for a professional workplace and is applicable to all ADVA employees and shall remain in effect until revoked or superseded.
3. Point of contact for this memo is Melissa Butler at (501) 682-1954

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K. W. Penn", is positioned above the typed name.

**KENDALL W. PENN
MAJOR GENERAL, Retired
SECRETARY**

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Workplace Professionalism Policy

I. PURPOSE:

The following shall establish and set forth the Department of Veterans Affairs (ADVA) standards and expectations from all employees in order to provide a work environment that is respectful, dignified and professional, and free from inappropriate or unprofessional behaviors.

This policy solely addresses communications and behaviors that do not involve protected class status. Communications and behavior that involve protected class status are addressed in the ADVA Equal Employment Opportunity Discrimination Policy and Complaint Procedures.

II. POLICY:

ADVA is committed to providing a positive environment in which all employees and others conducting business with the agency are treated with professionalism and respect. Disorderly, abusive, or indecent conduct in the workplace that creates, encourages, or otherwise permits an offensive, intimidating, or inappropriate work environment or that endangers the health, safety, or wellbeing of others may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Additionally, any employee who reports unprofessional behavior or participates in conflict resolution shall be free from retaliation.

All ADVA employees are expected to perform their duties in a civil and professional manner that inspires trust and confidence in others. Employees shall exhibit a high degree of integrity, ethics, and professionalism at all times during duty hours or while representing the ADVA. Disrespectful or unprofessional communications and behavior disrupts the proper functioning of the business units and interferes with the successful execution of the agency's mission.

III. CRITERIA:

Disrespectful or unprofessional behavior includes acts or omissions that would cause a reasonable person, based on the severity, nature, and frequency of the conduct, to believe that an employee was subject to an uncivil work environment.

Unprofessional behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Deliberately destroying, damaging, or obstructing another's work performance, tools, or materials;
- Misrepresentation of authority;
- Undermining or insulting colleagues, to include leadership or chain of command;
- Verbal or nonverbal conduct (to include written or electronic communications or photographs) of a threatening, intimidating, or humiliating nature (i.e. sarcasm, misleading characterizations), use of profanity or other inappropriate language;
- Arrogance or condescending behaviors or comments;
- Insubordination; and/or

- Use of this policy to knowingly make false complaint(s).

A single act generally will not constitute unprofessional behavior, unless such conduct is determined to be especially severe and egregious.

Unprofessional and disrespectful behavior does not include:

- Disciplinary procedures in accordance with the ADVA Uniform Discipline Policy;
- Clear communication of job expectations;
- Routine coaching and counseling, including feedback about and correction of work performance;
- Reasonable work assignments, including, but not limited to shift changes, post, and chain of command;
- Individual differences in styles of personal expression;
- Differences of opinion on work-related concerns;
- The non-abusive exercise of managerial prerogative.

IV. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES:

Workplace civility and respect requires that issues be addressed through processes that are fair, with a true desire for conflict resolution and without undue delay. Employees are therefore encouraged to handle minor disagreements quickly and privately. In the event that assistance is needed or if the conflict involves the employee's supervisor, the employee shall report the issue through his or her chain of command, beginning at the lowest possible level. Should the employee believe that the dispute has not been resolved through his or her chain of command, The ADVA Equal Employment Compliance Officer shall be available for guidance or recommendations on further procedures.

V. ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS RESPONSIBILITIES:

Under this policy, members of the ADVA supervisory and management staff shall be responsible for ensuring compliance and that any complaints or concerns to the contrary are addressed in a timely manner through appropriate disciplinary action. Failure to comply with any portion of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.