

Relations with ARRL Headquarters Staff

This policy aims to establish guidelines for appropriate relationships and interactions between volunteer Board members and Headquarters Staff members. It ensures professionalism, transparency, and integrity in all engagements to maintain the ARRL's mission, values, and reputation.

Although the ARRL's volunteer Board members are elected volunteers and Headquarters Staff members are employees, the Board and the Staff share a deep common commitment to the ARRL, its goals, and its ideals. Board members must treat ARRL's employees with respect, courtesy, and professionalism in all interactions. Board members are responsible for providing strategic direction, and governance to the organization. They must act in the best interest of ARRL. Employees are responsible for executing ARRL's day-to-day operations, programs, and initiatives.

Because the ARRL Board and the Staff form a relatively small group, the Board/Staff relationship appears less formal than might be the case in other corporations. This relative informality promotes cooperation but may also produce misunderstandings. Good manners, common sense, and mutual respect between the Board and the Staff are necessary to maintain an appropriate balance of friendliness and professionalism.

It is essential for Directors, Vice Directors, and Volunteer Officers to keep in mind that the relationship between us and Staff members, no matter how cordial, is a relationship between the Board of a corporation and the people who are employed by that corporation.

The Staff may perceive the Board as having power over their workplace, even though the Board only has the authority to hire or fire the Chief Executive Officer. Staff members' careers certainly are affected by the Board of Directors' policy decisions and the recommendations of Board committees.

The ARRL's personnel practices conform to the relevant laws and regulations of the federal government (e.g., Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; 29 C.F.R Part 1604.11) and the state of Connecticut. Among these laws and regulations are those pertaining to *workplace harassment*, a type of which is *sexual harassment and racial harassment*. Board members may have been familiarized with such laws and regulations through training provided in their workplaces. If not, they may wish to educate themselves using resources available on the Internet. All new Board Members are provided mandatory harassment training as part of the orientation program. The full Board is re-trained approximately every five years.

Volunteer Board members are expected to treat Staff following state and federal laws and regulations concerning workplace harassment. The consequences of failing to live up to this responsibility may be very embarrassing for the organization and to the Board members, even if they did not intend to do anything improper or offensive.

Harassment can occur involving persons of the same or opposite sex, for example. The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, an agent of the employer, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or a non-employee – such as a member of the ARRL Board.

A hostile work environment exists when an employee experiences workplace harassment and fears going to work because of the offensive, intimidating, or oppressive atmosphere generated by the harasser based on race, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, political affiliation, citizenship status, marital status, or personal appearance.

The anti-discrimination statutes governing hostile work environments are not a general civility code. Even so, behavior by Board members toward staff that could be construed as contributing to a hostile work environment is not acceptable and must be avoided.

Board members should never threaten Staff and should not profess to have any ability or intent to affect a Staff person's job in any respect whatsoever, favorably, or unfavorably.

There are times when feedback from a Board member on Staff performance is appropriate. For example, when a Staff member travels to a convention or hamfest, performs Staff support for a committee, or provides a membership service on which the Board member receives feedback from a member. Board members may provide such feedback to the Chief Executive Officer or the appropriate Staff Officer, but not directly to managers or supervisors below that level. A clear line should be drawn between providing factual feedback and offering conclusions as to what personnel action ought to be taken as a result. Regardless of how positively or negatively a Board member may feel about a member of Staff, it is inappropriate to try to influence the personnel decisions of the Staff member's supervisor.

Board members should avoid individual social invitations to Staff. Such invitations place the Staff member in a position in which they may be reluctant to refuse out of concern that the refusal might have adverse consequences in connection with his or her employment.

From time to time, a Staff member may choose to share with a Board member some information about their private life. This information should not be elicited by the Board member from a Staff member, nor should questions about a Staff member's personal affairs be initiated by the Board Member. Any such personal information received by the Board Member should be handled with great discretion, respecting the Staff member's trust.