NASA Policies, Merit System Principles, and Prohibited Personnel Practices

Conscientious and principled decision making is a must for NASA managers and others who exercise personnel authority. Those who take, direct others to take, recommend or approve any personnel action should be familiar with NASA Policies on Diversity and Inclusion, Equal Employment Opportunity, Anti-Harassment, and the laws governing Merit System Principles and Prohibited Personnel Practices.

NASA Policy on Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and inclusion are integral to mission success at NASA. Commitment to these principles helps to ensure fairness and equity in hiring and decision making. Diversity and inclusion engages and utilizes the talents, backgrounds, and capabilities of individuals and teams to create and maintain a work environment where diverse ideas are highly valued. NASA strives to build and maintain an environment in which employees are encouraged to offer their viewpoints and perspectives before critical decisions are made. To do so, NASA must cast the widest net possible on all hiring actions and be an organization where the expression of ideas and opinions is welcomed and encouraged.

The NASA Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement is accessible at:
http://odeo.hq.nasa.gov/documents/Diversity_Inclusion_Policy_Statement.pdf

NASA Policy on Equal Employment Opportunity

Equal opportunity in employment means opportunity not just for some, but for all. NASA is committed to ensuring its employees have a work environment free from discrimination regardless of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, age, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, status as a parent, or gender identity. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) covers all human capital and employment programs, management practices, and decisions including, but not limited to, recruitment, hiring, merit promotion, transfer, reassignment, training and career development, benefits, and separation. NASA supports employee rights under EEO law, and reprisal against individuals who exercise their rights will not be tolerated. NASA will continue to strive for a workplace that is free from all forms of illegal discrimination, including harassment and retaliation. NASA will also continue to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities, as appropriate.

The NASA EEO Policy Statement is accessible at:
http://odeo.hq.nasa.gov/documents/EEO_Policy_Statement_2013.pdf

NASA Policy on Anti-Harassment

NASA remains committed to providing a work environment free from harassment and to addressing harassing conduct as early as possible, before it becomes pervasive or severe. Therefore, it is NASA policy to take immediate and appropriate action when the Agency is made aware of allegations of harassment or determines that harassing conduct has occurred. Harassment is defined as any unwelcome verbal or physical conduct, based on an individual's race, color, gender, national

origin, religion, age or disability, sexual orientation, status as a parent, or gender identity, which can reasonably be considered to adversely affect the work environment or an employment decision based upon the individual's acceptance or rejection of such conduct. It is the responsibility of all employees to immediately report possible incidents of harassment. Employees who make a good faith report of harassing conduct or who assist in any inquiry regarding such a report are protected from retaliation.

The NASA Anti-Harassment Policy Statement is accessible at:
http://odeo.hq.nasa.gov/documents/Anti-Harassment_Policy_Statement_2013.pdf

The NASA Anti-Harassment Procedures are accessible at:
http://nodis3.gsfc.nasa.gov/displayDir.cfm?t=NPR&c=3713&s=3

Merit System Principles (5 USC 2301)

The Merit System Principles are basic standards governing the management of the executive branch workforce. The principles are part of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978.

Supervisors and managers shall:

- Recruit qualified individuals from all segments of society and select and advance employees on the basis of relative ability, knowledge, and skill after fair and open competition.
- Treat employees and applicants fairly and equitably, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicapping condition, marital status, or political affiliation, and with proper regard for their privacy and constitutional rights.
- Provide equal pay for equal work and appropriate recognition for excellent performance.
- Maintain, and ensure that employees maintain, high standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest.
- Manage employees efficiently and effectively.
- Retain or separate employees on the basis of their performance; inadequate performance should be corrected, and employees who do not meet required standards should be separated.
- Educate and train employees when it will result in better organizational or individual performance.
- Protect employees from improper political influence.
- Protect employees against reprisal for the lawful disclosure of information in "whistleblower" situations (i.e., protecting people who report things like illegal and/or wasteful activities).

Prohibited Personnel Practices (5 USC 2302)

Prohibited Personnel Practices are those things a Federal employee with personnel authority may not do. A Federal employee has personnel authority if they can take, direct others to take, recommend, or approve any personnel action.

Personnel actions include appointments, promotions, discipline, details, transfers, reassignments, reinstatements, performance evaluations, significant changes in duties or working conditions, orders for psychiatric testing or examination, and any decisions concerning pay, benefits, awards or training.

Supervisors and managers shall not:

- Discriminate for or against an employee or applicant on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicapping condition, marital status, or political affiliation.
- Solicit or consider any employment recommendation not based on personal knowledge or records, and that relate to the individual's performance, ability, aptitude, general qualifications, character, loyalty or suitability.
- Coerce the political activity of any person, or take any action as reprisal against an employee or applicant who refuses to engage in such political activity.
- Deceive or willfully obstruct any person with respect to such person's right to compete for employment.
- Influence a person to withdraw from competition for any position for the purpose of improving or injuring the prospects of another person for employment.
- Grant any preference or advantage not authorized by law, regulation, or rule to any employee or applicant for the purpose of improving or injuring the prospects of any particular person for employment.
- Employ or advocate for the employment or advancement of a relative, to a position over which the supervisor exercises jurisdiction or control.
- Retaliate or threaten to retaliate against a whistleblower, whether an employee or an applicant.
- Retaliate or threaten to retaliate against an employee or applicant who exercises his/her appeal/complaint/grievance rights, testifies for or lawfully assists another individual exercising such rights, cooperates with an Inspector General or the Special Counsel, or refuses to obey an order that would require the individual to violate a law.
- Discriminate for or against an employee or applicant based on conduct which does not adversely affect performance of the employee, applicant, or others.
- Knowingly violate Veterans' preference requirements.
- Violate any law, rule, or regulation implementing or directly concerning the merit principles.

Failure to follow the law or Agency policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from Federal service.

Any questions concerning this notice, contact:
NSSC Customer Contact Center
1-877-677-2123 (1-877-NSSC123) or nssc-contactcenter@nasa.gov