

Support a retaliation-free workplace

Metro is committed to promoting and maintaining a work environment where everyone feels safe to report concerns without fear of retribution.

At Metro, retaliation is defined as negative conduct that would likely deter a reasonable individual from complaining or reporting a problem or raising a concern.

Things that can lead to workplace retaliation include:

Reporting misconduct: When an employee reports harassment, discrimination, or other unethical behavior, they may face retaliation from supervisors or coworkers who disagree with the reporting.

Participating in investigations: Employees who cooperate in investigations related to complaints or grievances may experience negative treatment afterward.

Filing complaints: Those who file formal complaints with Human Resources or external agencies may be subjected to retaliation from those identified in the complaint, unwilling witnesses, or other interested parties, like coworkers.

Requesting accommodations: Employees who seek reasonable accommodations for disabilities or other needs might encounter pushback or adverse treatment.

Whistleblowing: Employees who expose illegal or unethical practices within the organization often face retaliation to discourage them from speaking out.

Performance feedback: After providing constructive feedback about workplace issues, an employee might experience changes in treatment or performance evaluations.

Use of protected leave: Employees who take leave for medical reasons, family care, or other protected reasons may face retaliation upon their return.

What does retaliation at work look like?

Retaliation can take many forms, such as verbal abuse, reduced responsibilities, assignment of less desirable tasks, or exclusion from meetings. It may also include harassment, bullying, denial of promotions or even termination. Giving an employee the “cold shoulder” may amount to retaliation if that behavior starts after a complaint is filed and has a negative effect on the recipient’s employment.

Generally speaking, if there’s no reasonable business reason for the change in working conditions (such as a shift reassignment or relocation) and the action negatively affects an employee’s daily life in a way that would dissuade them from raising a concern in the future, that action could amount to retaliation.

Avoid retaliation and support a non-retaliation workplace

To reduce the likelihood and risk of retaliation, supervisors must foster a culture of openness and respect that empowers employees to bring forward concerns:

- Ensure confidentiality for employees by keeping sensitive information confidential and limit access to information to Human Resources staff directly involved with handling concerns.
- Keep detailed records of relevant employee interactions in a secure file location only accessible by you.
- Support your team’s annual training and review of Metro’s conduct policies include the Non-retaliation policy
- Collaborate proactively with your department’s HR Business Partner on employee accommodation requests.
- Support employees during investigations by ensuring they have know the process and how to report concerns, help coordinate any meetings with the employee and Human Resources, and make sure they know how to access employee assistance program resources and support.



Questions?

Contact Human Resources

human.resources@oregonmetro.gov
503-797-1570
oregonmetro.gov/reportconcerns