



November 2019

New Jersey's Domestic Violence for Public Employers

In January of 2018, the New Jersey Legislature enacted the Domestic Violence Policy Act for Public Employers. The law directed the Civil Service Commission (NJCSC) to develop a uniform domestic violence policy and requires all public employers to adopt a written policy concerning the reporting and handling of domestic violence, regardless of whether or not the employer is subject to Civil Service.

On October 15, 2019 the NJCSC issued its uniform domestic violence policy. The policy is posted on the MEL website at <https://njmel.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Domestic-Violence-Policy-for-Public-Employers.doc>. Employers may modify the uniform policy, however, the employer must provide the same or higher level of protection and service to their employees as set forth in the model policy. If an employer modifies the NJCSC uniform policy, the employer must submit their policy for review and approval of the NJCSC.

Key provisions of the uniform domestic violence policy include:

- All employees must be covered under the policy, including full and part time employees, seasonal employees, interns, volunteers and temporary employees at any workplace location.
- Each public employer must designate a Human Resource / Personnel Officer (HRO) who will be the primary contact within the organization for employees involved in a domestic violence situation. The law specifies a secondary HRO must also be identified for times when the primary HRO is not available.
- Employees must be made aware of the employer's Domestic Violence Policy and how to report an incident involving themselves or a co-worker. Employees must know their situation will be handled with the utmost in confidentiality and sensitivity.
- An HRO must respond immediately to a request for assistance and provide a safe and confidential location for an employee to describe their concern and request assistance from the employer.
- The State defined a very specific course of action should a HRO become aware of a potential or actual domestic violence case involving an employee.
- The HRO will work closely with local police, if needed, and the department leaders, and administrators to implement any needed safeguards, accommodations, or counseling for the worker and other affected employees.
- The HRO should be prepared to guide the affected employee through the provisions and protections of the N.J. Security and Financial Empowerment Act (NJ SAFE).

The law requires the HRO to be trained. The Safety Director anticipates further guidance on training requirements will be released by the NJ Department of Community Affairs or the NJCSC. New information will be posted on the MEL website.

This bulletin is intended for general information purposes only. It should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion regarding any specific or factual situation. Always follow your organization's policies and procedures as presented by your manager or supervisor. For further information regarding this bulletin, contact your Safety Director at 877.398.3046.