

How to Report Sexual Abuse and/or Sexual Harassment

Inform the Duty Officer at any of the department's juvenile facilities:

Indio Juvenile Hall/YOP
(760) 863-7600

Riverside Juvenile Hall
(951) 358-4200

Southwest Juvenile Hall
(951) 600-6750

AMC YTEC
(951) 358-4400

Or

Contact the Volunteer Coordinator
at your assigned site.

Riverside County Probation
Department utilizes the
following agencies for victim
support:

Riverside Area Rape Crisis
Center
1-866-686-7273

Coachella Valley Sexual Assault
Services
1-760-568-9071



A Guide to the Prevention and
Reporting of Sexual Abuse
and Sexual Harassment with
Probation Clients



For Contractors, Vendors,
and Volunteers of the
Riverside County Probation
Department

Sexual Abuse and/or Sexual Harassment

Riverside County Probation is committed to maintaining an environment free from sexual abuse and sexual harassment of clients in its facilities. There is a zero tolerance for anyone to engage in any form of sexual abuse or sexual harassment of a client. In this definition, “staff” includes: contractors, vendors, and volunteers of the Riverside County Probation Department as well as staff from other Federal, State, and local jurisdictions. A “client” is defined as someone confined/detained in a detention facility.

Riverside County Probation Department defines sexual abuse or sexual harassment in accordance with Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) 2003. Forms of sexual abuse and/or sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Any behavior of a sexual nature directed toward a client by a department staff, contract staff, or volunteer;
- Inappropriate touching between client and staff;
- All completed, attempted, threatened, or requested sexual acts between department staff and client;
- Sexual comments and conversations with sexually suggestive innuendos or double meanings; or
- Display or transmittal of sexually suggestive posters, objects, or messages.

Depending on the investigation finding of an alleged incident, the outcome may result in the loss of your job/assignment and the possibility of criminal charges. In addition, persons accused of sexual harassment in civil or criminal proceedings may be held personally liable for damages to the person harassed.

An Abuse of Power

Due to the imbalance of power between a client and staff in correctional settings, sexual interactions between staff (who have power) and client (who lack power) are unprofessional, unethical, and illegal.

Some clients who lack power may become sexually involved with staff in an effort to equalize the imbalance of power. Occasionally, a client may try to use sex to improve his or her standing or circumstances (e.g., better job, avoid disciplinary actions, affect release plan, gain privileges, etc.)

As a Probation Department contractor, vendor, or volunteer, your designated assignment places you in a position of authority over the client with whom you interact in a professional capacity. It is not possible to have a relationship as equals because you have the responsibility to maintain custody, evaluate work performance, and/or provide input to issues that affect the success of the client, release dates, disciplinary actions, or other sanctions.

Because of the imbalance of power between the client and staff, vendors, contractors and volunteers, there can never be a consensual relationship between staff and client. In fact, the law states “consent” is not a defense from prosecution and anyone under the age of 18 can not consent to sex with an adult.

History of Victimization

Some staff do not think of a client as “victims” of sexual abuse and/or harassment, especially when the client appears to be a willing participant or even initiates the sexual or romantic interactions with a staff member. The client is always the victim because of the imbalance of power. The consent or willingness of a client to participate may be a survival strategy or a learned response to previous or current victimization.

Many clients have a history of victimization (physical or sexual abuse), which may make them especially vulnerable to the sexual overtures from a person in a position of authority. Their perception of affection/love may be

skewed by this background of abuse, making it impossible for them to refuse advances of a staff member. In some instances, particularly for a female client, their survival in the community has been directly related to using their sexuality to obtain the means to survive. Coupled with low self-esteem, this carries over into their conduct in juvenile facilities and the community.

As a person in authority, it is your responsibility to discourage, refuse, and report any overtures as well as maintain professional boundaries at all times.

Boundaries in relationships can be difficult. If you question your professional boundaries with a client or feel uncomfortable with his or her actions or advances toward you, talk to another person you respect and/or bring this matter to the attention of a Probation employee before it gets out of control.

Red Flags:

The following are behaviors or “red flags” that may signal you that someone may be in danger of engaging in sexual misconduct with a client:

- Spending a lot of time with a particular client;
- Change in appearance of a client or staff member;
- Deviating from agency policy for the benefit of a particular client;
- Sharing personal information with a client;
- Doing favors for a client;
- Constantly volunteering for a particular assignment or shift;
- Coming to work early/staying at work late;
- Flirting with a client; and/or
- Overlooking infractions of a particular client.