



# Employee Conduct During Travel Status Training

Expectations for Professional Conduct,  
Case Studies & Discussion Guide



EMPOWER | BUILD | IMPROVE | PARTNER

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# Before We Begin

## What this training is:

- Case studies and discussion guide for managers and employees who travel on work-related business.

## What this training is not:

- A guide for booking travel arrangements, submitting travel reimbursements or other travel policy related issues.



# Expectations of Professional Conduct While in Travel Status



When the purpose of travel is related to our work and costs are covered by project funds, employees are considered representatives of our organization, RF and the sponsor and must convey professionalism throughout the duration of the trip, *including hours that may be considered off-duty.*

# Expectations of Professional Conduct While in Travel Status

- What does professional behavior mean to you?
- What behaviors should employees avoid in order to maintain professionalism while in travel status?
- What are the risks to the employee, the organization, RF and SUNY when professionalism isn't maintained?
- What kind of reputation do you want to have at work with your colleagues, those we serve and the sponsor? (Your personal brand)
- What support do you need to achieve your "personal brand" goals?

# Expectations of Professional Conduct While in Travel Status

## Do's

- Be aware of appearances
- Be aware of our company expectations, your surroundings, the company you keep and your safety at all times
- Remember that at all times you are representing the RF, SUNY, the Sponsor and/or Program



Video: 5 Tips For Business Travel Etiquette

## Don'ts

- Illegal drugs, excessive drinking of alcohol, crude jokes, bullying, nonconsensual sex, assault, harassment, shared sleeping arrangements

# Expectations of Professional Conduct While in Travel Status

Diminished ability to think reasonably due to drugs and alcohol can lead to...

- Blurred lines between colleagues
- Regret
- Legal or employment status consequences
- Broken trust
- Change in reputation for you, your program/sponsor, SUNY and the RF



*It is wise to keep drinking to a minimum while in travel status, including during “off hours.”*



# Case Study - A Safe Ride Home

Consider this:

- You are traveling with several coworkers
- Everyone goes to dinner together after work
- You think Joe, the colleague with the rental car, has had too much to drink and you are worried for your safety
- Joe insists he is fine to drive everyone back to the hotel



# Case Study - A Safe Ride Home

What could you do if you found yourself in this situation?

- Offer to drive (if allowable per rental agreement)
- Call your supervisor, program director or HR partner for advice
- Call a cab, or ride sharing service



# Case Study - A Safe Ride Home

What could the consequences of this situation be?

- Tarnished reputation for intoxicated employee
- Car accident, arrest, law suits, job loss, injury and/or death
- Employee coaching conversation, (progressive discipline) up to and including termination.



# Case Study – Room/Tent Sharing

Consider this:

- Your team is trying to save money in the project budget so they decide to share rooms when traveling.
- You know that nothing problematic will happen. But another co-worker said “we should probably check in with our manager before we book the room.”



# Case Study – Room/Tent Sharing

What could you do?

- Talk to manager/HR
- Confirm what the RF guidelines for room sharing are.
  - What is expected, allowed, and in what situations are there exceptions to the rules if any.
- Review options prior to booking/ or making an emergent decision:
  - Book two separate rooms/tents
  - Share one room
  - Only one person travels



# Case Study - Happy Hour

Consider this:

- Training participants invite employees (the training instructors) to happy hour.
- Employees go, drink, engage in conversations that are about opinions, bias, sexual content and substance use.
- Some of the participants go back to their agency and share details of the experience and their discomfort with the employee as an instructor going forward.



# Case Study - Happy Hour

Discuss:

- What went wrong here?
- Is going to happy hour inherently wrong or prohibited?
- What could you do in this situation?
- What are the risks to you of attending the happy hour even if you don't partake in discussing the "hot topics?"



*Maintaining professional conduct while in travel status is about wise decision-making and avoiding situations that may get out of hand.*

# Case Study - Happy Hour

## Keep in Mind:

- Networking and relationship building is a positive benefit of work travel.
- Going to happy hour in and of itself is not the issue; it is what may happen during the event that has the potential to become a concern.



*Even if you just have one alcoholic drink if someone snaps and posts a photo of you on social media you, the RF/SUNY and the sponsor are now opened up to more potential risks.*





# Case Study

## Sexual Harassment and/or Assault

Sexual Harassment includes unwelcome conduct that is either of a sexual nature, or which is directed at an individual because of that individual's sex when:

- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or **creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment**, even if the complaining individual is not the intended target of Sexual Harassment; such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; or submission to or rejecting of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting an individual's employment.
- A sexually harassing **hostile work environment consists of words, signs, jokes, pranks, videos, photographs, intimidation, or physical violence which are of a sexual nature, or which are directed at an individual because of that individual's sex**. Sexual Harassment also consists of any **unwanted verbal or physical advances, sexually explicit derogatory statements or images, or sexually discriminatory remarks** made by someone which are offensive or objectionable to the recipient, which cause the recipient discomfort or humiliation, or which interfere with the recipient's job performance, or which subjects the recipient to inferior terms, conditions or privileges of employment.
- Sexual Harassment also occurs **when a person in authority tries to trade job benefits for sexual favors**. This can include hiring, promotion, continued employment or any other terms, conditions, or privileges of employment. This is called "quid pro quo" harassment.

# Case Study

## Sexual Harassment and/or Assault

Consider this:

- A group of employees attend a conference together.
- Alcohol is consumed and a manager and employee that they supervise have sex.



# Case Study

## Sexual Harassment and/or Assault

Discuss:

- Does this activity put our organization, the RF and the sponsor at risk?
- Why is this situation cause for concern?
  - Potential sexual harassment/assault and/or potential hostile work environment moving forward
  - Potential unfair treatment of employee moving forward i.e. promoted or/not promoted, given larger or smaller raise (potential quid pro quo)
  - Does the employee feel victimized or traumatized?



# Case Study

## Sexual Harassment and/or Assault

### Keep in Mind:

- The Supreme Court long ago decoupled consent and sexual harassment when the harasser is a supervisor.
- Employees can still prove sexual harassment if they can show the conduct was unwelcome, even if they consented, if there was fear of losing their jobs or if they were threatened. (*Medina v. United Christian Evangelistic Association*, No. 08-22111, SD FL, 2009)
- The manager cannot attempt to investigate on their own. Instead contact one of the following:
  - OM or Deputy OM, Campus Human Resource Office, RF Corporate HR Office (518) 434-7071, RF Compliance Office (518) 434-7145, RF Ethics Hotline - 800-670-7225 (anonymous), RF Office of General Counsel (518) 434-7045



# Case Study

## Sexual Harassment and/or Assault

Potential consequences:

- Job loss
- Change in reputation
- Difficulty gaining subsequent employment
- Legal consequences
- Victim impact for life i.e. PTSD, depression, anxiety, self esteem, etc.
- Risk to our organization, RF and the sponsor



# Case Study for Managers

Consider this:

- You receive a phone call from the project sponsor informing you that there were complaints from participants at last week's work event about the conduct of two of your employees, both during the event and after in the hotel restaurant.
- The sponsor wants you to discipline both employees and send an apology to the sponsor for their behavior.
- When you ask the sponsor representative to provide details about the alleged behavior issues, the sponsor will not give details but they demand you to investigate and respond.



# Case Study for Managers

How should you, the manager, approach this situation?

- The manager should not attempt to investigate on their own.
  - OM or Deputy OM
  - Campus Human Resource Office
  - RF Corporate HR Office (518) 434-7071
  - RF Compliance Office (518) 434-7145
  - Speak Up RF - Ethics Hotline – 800-461-9330 (anonymous)
    - [www.rfsuny.org/speakuprf-ethicshotline](http://www.rfsuny.org/speakuprf-ethicshotline)
  - RF Office of General Counsel (518) 434-7045



# Important Policies

- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [RF Travel Handbook](#)
- [Sexual Harassment Policy](#)
- [RF Employee Handbook](#)