

PORT SAN LUIS HARBOR DISTRICT POLICY HANDBOOK

POLICY TITLE: Standards of Decorum and Civility
POLICY NUMBER: 1015
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1015.10 The Port San Luis Harbor District desires to encourage mutual respect, civility, and orderly conduct among elected and appointed District officials, District staff, and members of the public. This policy is not intended to deprive any person of their right to freedom of expression, but to promote, to the extent possible and reasonable, open dialogue and positive communications while discouraging intimidating, demeaning, volatile, hostile, or aggressive actions.

The District is committed to maintaining a safe, productive and harassment-free work environment for District staff and a safe and non-threatening environment for visitors and customers. The District expects elected and appointed officials and its employees to comply with this policy, and also seeks cooperation from members of the public.

1015.20 The District has numerous public interactions, including meetings of the Board of Commissioners and committees (hereinafter "Public Meetings"). All elected officials, appointed officials and District employees (hereinafter "District Officials") as well as public participants are expected to adhere to the following standards of conduct in all public interactions:

- Treat everyone courteously;
- Listen to others respectfully;
- Exercise self-control;
- Give open-minded consideration to all viewpoints;
- Focus on the issues and avoid personalizing debate;
- Embrace respectful disagreement and dissent as democratic rights that are inherent components of an inclusive public process and tools for forging sound decisions and allow all members of the public to speak without intimidation or interruption; and
- Provide fair and equal treatment for all persons and matters coming before District Officials.

1015.30 Standards of Decorum for District Officials. In furtherance of the foregoing standards of conduct, the standards of decorum set forth below shall be followed by District Officials:

1. District Officials shall treat all members of the public with respect at all times during Public Meetings and shall not make belligerent, personal, impertinent, slanderous, threatening, intimidating, abusive, profane, or disparaging comments towards members of the public or other District Officials. No shouting or physical actions that could be construed as threatening will be tolerated on the part of any District Official.
2. Every effort shall be made by District Officials to be fair and impartial in listening to public testimony. Members of the public deserve an opportunity to influence the thinking of elected and appointed officials. Expressing a final opinion or passing judgment prior to the close of presenting evidence and testimony at a Public Meeting casts doubt on the ability of members of a District body to conduct a fair review of the issue.
3. The same level of respect and consideration of differing points of view that is deemed appropriate for Public Meetings shall be maintained by District Officials in private conversations or communications, such as emails, voicemail messages, and text messages regarding matters of District business.
4. The professional and personal conduct of District Officials shall be above reproach and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. District Officials shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character of members of the public or other District Officials.
5. All District Officials shall promote the use of and adherence to these standards at all Public Meetings.

1015.40 Standards of Decorum for Members of the Public. In furtherance of the foregoing standards of conduct, the standards of decorum set forth below shall be followed by Members of the Public:

1. No person attending a Public Meeting shall engage in disorderly or boisterous conduct, including, but not limited to, applause, whistling, stamping of feet, booing, or making any loud, threatening, profane, abusive, personal, impertinent, or slanderous utterance, that disturbs, disrupts, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting.
2. All remarks by members of the public shall be addressed to the President or the Chair of the District body (hereinafter "Presiding Officer") and not to any other member of the public or to any individual member of the District body unless in response to a question from that member.

3. Signs, placards, banners, or other similar items shall not be permitted in the audience during a public meeting if the Presiding Officer determines that the presence of such item disturbs, disrupts, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting.
4. All persons attending a Public Meeting shall obey any lawful order of the Presiding Officer to enforce the Standards of Decorum.
5. All persons attending a Public Meeting shall listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions at the meeting and avoid interrupting members of the public addressing the District body or District Officials.
6. Members of the public while attending a Public Meeting shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character of District Officials.
7. It is the responsibility of the Presiding Officer to keep comments on topic during Public Meetings. Individuals should honor efforts by the Presiding Officer to focus discussion on current agenda items. If there is disagreement about the agenda or the Presiding Officer's actions, those objections should be voiced politely and with reason, following procedures outlined in parliamentary procedure.

1015.50 Enforcement of Standards of Decorum and Civility Policy.

1. The Presiding Officer shall be responsible for maintaining the decorum and civility at Public Meetings and enforcing the Standards of Decorum in a uniform and even-handed manner.
2. The Presiding Officer may intervene to ensure that no Commissioners interrupt members of the public while speaking.
3. District Officials who intentionally and repeatedly do not adhere to these standards may be reprimanded by the Presiding Officer or formally censured by a majority of the members of the Board of Commissioners.
4. In the event that any member of the public breaches the Standards of Decorum in a manner that disturbs, disrupts, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of a Public Meeting, the Presiding Officer shall order that person to cease the offending conduct.
5. If any member of the public continues to breach the Standards of Decorum in a manner that disturbs, disrupts, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of a Public Meeting following an order from the Presiding Officer to cease the offending conduct, the Presiding Officer may order that person to leave the Public Meeting and may engage the efforts of law enforcement as necessary to carry out the order.
6. If a member of the public acts abusively towards a District employee outside of a public meeting but in the workplace, staff will issue a verbal warning before taking further action in response to the abuse and providing that person with this policy. This warning, which should clearly identify both the offending behavior and the potential consequences that may occur if such behavior persists, shall provide the

member of the public with an opportunity to improve their behavior before the District takes more serious action, such as removal from the premises.

7. If a member of the public does not improve their behavior in response to an oral warning, the District will ask the abusive individual to leave the premises for a short period of time (e.g., the remainder of the day).

The above-described remedies for compliance with the Standards of Decorum are not exclusive and shall not preclude the application or use of other remedies provided by State or Federal law or the Port San Luis Code of Ordinances.

A breach of the Standards of Decorum and Civility Policy shall in no event be a basis for the invalidation of any action taken by the Board of Commissioners or any District committee.