

MESC/DISL Civil Rights & Nondiscrimination Policy

1. Nondiscrimination Statement

The Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium (MESC), doing business as Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL), complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, age, genetic information, disability, protected veteran status, or any other applicable legally protected basis in any program, activity, or employment.

MESC/DISL does not exclude individuals from participation in, deny them the benefits of, or otherwise subject them to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance from any federal agency. For programs or activities funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), MESC/DISL specifically complies with the nondiscrimination requirements of 40 CFR Parts 5 and 7.

2. Legal Authority and Framework

The MESC/Dauphin Island Sea Lab complies with all applicable laws prohibiting discrimination, including, as applicable:

- Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act;
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972;
- Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
- The Vietnam Era Veterans Adjustment Assistance Act;
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1975;
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990;
- The ADA Amendments Act of 2008; and
- The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008.

3. Definitions

- **Discrimination:** Unfair treatment because of your race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, age, genetic

information, disability, protected veteran status, or any other applicable legally protected basis.

- **Harassment:** Harassment by managers, co-workers, or others in your workplace because of your race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, age, genetic information, disability, protected veteran status, or any other applicable legally protected basis.

4. Auxiliary Aids, Services, and Language Assistance

MESC/DISL is committed to ensuring full accessibility for all participants and community members:

- **Disability Accommodations:** MESC/DISL provides free auxiliary aids and services to individuals with disabilities to ensure effective communication, including qualified sign language interpreters and written materials in alternative formats.
- **Language Assistance Services:** MESC/DISL provides free language assistance services to persons whose primary language is not English, including qualified interpreters and translated written information when appropriate.

To request assistance or accommodations, please contact the Civil Rights Coordinator listed below.

5. Civil Rights Coordinator Contact Information

For inquiries, accommodation requests, or to file an internal civil rights complaint, please contact:

Chris Shaw

Civil Rights Coordinator

Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium / Dauphin Island Sea Lab

101 Bienville Boulevard, Dauphin Island, Alabama 36528

Phone: (251) 861-2141

Fax: (251) 861-4646

Email: cshaw@disl.edu

6. Internal Complaint and Grievance Procedure

If you believe that MESC/DISL has discriminated against you on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, or any other protected category in a program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance, you may file a complaint following the process outlined

below:

Stage / Step	Timeline	Description
Complaint Submission	Within 180 Calendar Days	Complaints must be submitted in writing (in person, by mail, by fax, or by email) to the Civil Rights Coordinator within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory act.
Acknowledgment	Within 5 Business Days	The Civil Rights Coordinator will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing and notify the complainant of the next steps.
Investigation & Review	30 to 45 Business Days	The Coordinator (or designated impartial investigator) will conduct a thorough review, interviewing relevant parties and gathering documentation.
Written Determination	Within 60 Business Days	A written determination regarding the findings and any corrective actions will be issued to the complainant and relevant administrative leadership.

- **Good Faith Reporting:** All MESC/DISL employees and participants are expected to act in good faith when making a complaint or participating in an investigation. Frivolous or malicious complaints are prohibited and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion.

- **Confidentiality:** To the extent possible, confidentiality will be observed. However, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed when conducting a thorough investigation, providing a safe environment, or complying with applicable laws.

7. Filing an External Complaint

Filing an internal complaint with MESC/DISL does not prevent you from filing a complaint directly with federal oversight agencies. You may file an administrative civil rights complaint directly with the federal agency from which the program or activity received financial assistance. For EPA-funded programs, complaints may also be filed directly with the EPA Office of Civil Rights. Please refer to the EPA's official website or the specific civil rights compliance office contact information on the respective federal agency's website for detailed filing procedures.

8. Protection from Retaliation

MESC/DISL strictly prohibits intimidation, threats, coercion, or retaliation against any individual for exercising rights protected by federal civil rights laws, filing a complaint, participating in an investigation, or otherwise engaging in protected activity.

9. Enforcement

MESC/DISL's Human Resources department, in coordination with the Civil Rights Coordinator, is responsible for implementing and enforcing this policy. Persons found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary actions—including, but not limited to, warning/reprimand, demotion, transfer, suspension, termination, or expulsion.

10. Publication and Accessibility

This policy notice is posted prominently across the MESC/DISL campus, included in key participant and student onboarding documents, and made publicly accessible on the Administration page of our official website at www.disl.edu.