

From: Message from the Administrator

Sent: Monday, November 19, 2018 4:20 PM

To: Message from the Administrator <messagefromtheadministrator@epa.gov>

Subject: Zero tolerance at EPA for racist and offensive language



Colleagues,

Recently, and over the past year, there have been multiple instances of offensive notes or inappropriate messages left in EPA common areas. **This is not acceptable anywhere at EPA - - at EPA HQ or in EPA regional offices.** We have referred these matters to the Office of Inspector General, and an active investigation is underway. We are taking every possible measure to find the individual, or individuals, who are spreading these awful messages, and we will hold them accountable for their unacceptable actions. I am firmly committed to ensuring that every member of our community—regardless of position, seniority, or responsibility—can work and learn in an environment that is free of discrimination, misconduct, or retaliation. To achieve this, we must all be vigilant, and we encourage anyone who has experienced or witnessed offensive language or actions or is aware of such behaviors to report it immediately.

Additionally, at last week's meeting with EPA's senior career leadership (Executive Management Council), I made it clear that EPA has **zero** tolerance for racism or any act of discrimination against our employees. I have asked our Agency's career and political leadership to take any and all steps to create an environment where every employee has the opportunity to maximize their potential, reach their professional goals, and contribute to our shared mission of protecting human health and the environment. **Creating a safe environment for our employees is my top priority, and I expect that it is shared by all of EPA's management.**

I have asked the Office of Mission Support, which includes human resources and physical security, along with the Office of Civil Rights, to develop procedures on how to respond to these types of incidents in the future. The procedures will include actions to address these incidents, including recommended stakeholder involvement, internal and external communications, investigative plans, and staff engagement.

Finally, within the next week, I plan to meet with several groups to discuss these troubling matters and to chart a path forward for the Agency. I have asked Helena Wooden-Aguilar, Acting Deputy Chief of Staff, and Vicki Simons, Director of the Office of Civil Rights, to assist me in coordinating this effort.

I take great pride in EPA's diverse and talented workforce. Diversity makes us stronger as an Agency and better attuned to meeting the needs of the diverse society we serve. We must all work together to ensure that we continue to create a positive and safe environment for all our employees.

Andrew Wheeler

Acting Administrator