

Safeguarding and Fraud/Financial Misconduct: Common Questions

How can I report concerns or suspicions of misconduct or wrongdoing?

If you experience, observe, or hear about behavior that you believe violates CRS' Code of Conduct and Ethics, Safeguarding Policy or other similar guidelines, you are obligated to report it. You can report all concerns through any of the following channels:

- Human Resources (HQ or Country Program)
- The Country Representative
- Senior Regional Team
- Ethics Unit Team
- Country Program Safeguarding designate (if available)
- Email: alert@crs.org • Skype: 1-866-295-2632
- Mail:

*Attention: Director of the Office of Legal Counsel
Catholic Relief Services
228 W. Lexington Street Baltimore, MD
21201*

- The CRS Whistleblower site ([EthicsPoint](#)), where staff may submit an online report with option of anonymity

What is EthicsPoint?

EthicsPoint is a comprehensive and confidential reporting tool created by NAVEX to assist CRS management and employees, and other stakeholders, to work together in addressing fraud, abuse, and other misconduct in and outside of the workplace, in order to cultivate a positive work environment, honor and protect the dignity of all people, and model stewardship and accountability.

What should be included in the report?

Reports should include as much information as is readily available, such as date, time and location of the incident, description of what took place, names of individuals involved in the incident/allegation, how the reporter came to know about the incident/allegation (directly involved, witnessed, heard about), any immediate help or actions required, and any action that has already taken.

Reporters are not required to accurately identify the category of prohibited behavior (ex. fraud, kickback, bribery, falsification, harassment, bullying, abuse, exploitation, etc.) – CRS' Ethics Unit Team will determine the appropriate category in its initial assessment of the allegation.

When a report is submitted with minimal information about the incident/allegation, CRS' Ethics Team will follow-up with reporters to obtain additional details as needed.

Can I report anonymously?

Yes. Anyone may report anonymously through the CRS Whistleblower site ([EthicsPoint](#)). While anonymous reports are allowed, they can sometimes make follow-up more difficult or even impossible, so CRS encourages anonymous reporters to include as much information as is known in their initial report, and to return to EthicsPoint periodically to follow-up on the report. CRS' Ethics Team will contact

the anonymous reporter and/or victim/survivor via EthicsPoint to ask clarifying questions and address concerns such as safety, security and well-being.

What happens after I report?

CRS' zero tolerance principle means that all allegations must be promptly assessed and acted upon. Allegations will either be investigated, referred to the appropriate agency (if the allegation involves another aid organization), or otherwise addressed as appropriate to the type of allegation.

Investigations will be carried out in a confidential, safe, timely, thorough, and professional manner following CRS' investigation protocols.

Throughout this process, the reporter and survivor (if different from the reporter) will be notified of the steps taken to assess the allegation and provided with updates on the status of the case.

How does CRS maintain the confidentiality of those involved in a report?

Confidentiality is critical to maintaining safety/security, reputation and wellbeing of individuals, communities, and the agency. CRS seeks to maintain the confidentiality of victims/survivors, reporters, witnesses and subjects of complaint to the extent possible. However, it is important for all reporters to understand that CRS may be legally mandated to follow-up on certain reports (with donors, or local authorities in case of potential criminal offense) and that strict confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed.

Isn't there a risk of retaliation if I report?

CRS prohibits any form of retaliation against any individual reporting an allegation in good faith or participating in an investigation. Any form of retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. If anyone believes they have been retaliated against for reporting or involvement in a fraud or safeguarding allegation or investigation, they should notify the Ethics Unit or report through one of the established reporting channels immediately.

I am not sure if what I have experienced, observed, or heard is a violation of CRS policy or involves unethical conduct. What should I do?

When in doubt, file a report. We would much rather you report a situation that turns out to be false or unsubstantiated, than let possible unethical behavior go unchecked. CRS staff, board members, and affiliates are obligated to report concerns or suspicions of misconduct, even if not all details are known to them. Report the details that are known – it is better to report early with fewer details than wait to report or not report at all. Your reporting can help prevent further loss or harm and minimize the potential negative impact on CRS' projects, resources, staff, partners, and project participants.

How can I follow-up on my report if I remember something later or CRS has questions about my report?

When you file a report at using CRS' Ethicspoint website or through the call center, you will receive a unique, randomized number called a "Report Key" and will be asked to choose a password. You can return to the Ethicspoint system again and access the original report to add more details or answer questions posed by a CRS Ethics Unit representative. Simply visit the Ethicspoint website, click on the "Follow-up on an Existing Report" button, and fill in your report key and password. We encourage reporters to return to the site periodically to see if the organization has any questions about your report.

What if I lose my Report Key or forget the Password I created?

Lost report keys and passwords cannot be recovered. To ensure that security and confidentiality is maintained, you will need to file a new report if you lose your report key or password. Mention in the new report that it is related to a report or question you previously submitted.

Where can I find more information?

Review CRS' [Code of Conduct and Ethics](#), [Safeguarding Policy](#), and [Whistleblower Policy](#), or contact CRS' Ethics Unit at alert@crs.org.