

CITY OF STOCKTON
ETHICS HOTLINE
Questions & Answers

What is the Ethics Hotline?

The Ethics Hotline is a mechanism for employees to report misconduct, violations of City policy, theft, waste, or misuse of City assets. The hotline is administered by the City Auditor. Although the City Auditor has always responded to reports of this nature, this new system provides more ways to submit a report, increased security, and tools to help with report management.

How do I make a report?

You can file a report 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by phone, completing an online form, or contacting the Office of the City Auditor directly. If you call the EthicsPoint toll free number (888-269-8704), a live operator will walk you through the reporting process. If you use the online form, you can access EthicsPoint's website from any computer with internet access (ethicspoint.com).

Note: When filing a report online, you are able to attach electronic documents to support your concern.

Will the City Auditor investigate my report?

Yes, all legitimate reports will be taken seriously. However, the report may be referred to other departments depending on the nature of the issues. Reports of harassment, discrimination, or grievable labor issues will be communicated to the Human Resources Department. In addition, the City Auditor may refer reports that do not relate to fraud, waste, or abuse to the responsible department for investigation.

How do I know if I provided enough information?

Once you have completed your report you will be given a unique user name and are asked to choose a password. You can return to the EthicsPoint system later, either by internet or phone and access your report to answer questions posted by the City Auditor. This step is critical to ensure that there is sufficient information to resolve your concern.

Who gets the report?

Once you have completed your report, the system generates an email to the City Auditor's Office. The assigned auditor can then access the system and review your report. In addition, the City Attorney receives the email notifications and can view all reports. Dual dissemination of reports is a best practice for hotline administration.

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What if the report I am submitting is about someone in the City Auditor's Office or the City Attorney?

The system is programmed not to send a report to a person who is the subject of the complaint. The person will not receive the notification email and will not be able to view the report.

Can I remain anonymous?

Yes, you can remain anonymous.

Can't I be identified by a server log that shows every web site that my PC connects to?

EthicsPoint does not generate or maintain any internal connection logs with IP addresses, so no information linking your PC to EthicsPoint is available. However, the City's network may be able to gather this information. If this is a concern, you can file a report online from home, a neighbor's computer, or any internet portal.

Will my report be kept confidential?

Yes, to the extent permitted by law. California Government Code Section 53087.6 requires local governments that operate hotlines to keep the identity of those providing information, those involved, and any related investigation confidential. If you elected to provide your name when submitting the report, your identity will be known to those investigating the report that have a legitimate need to know.

If I give my name when reporting, am I protected from retaliation?

The City's Whistleblower Policy (Admin. Dir. HR-44) protects employees from being disciplined, discharged, or subjected to threats, or otherwise discriminated against in retaliation for bringing forth, in good faith, charges of unlawful conduct or conduct in violation of any City policy, directive, ordinance, or Charter provision by any officer or employee of the City of Stockton.

Can I check on the status of the investigation?

Yes, you can log on using your unique user name and password and view the status of the investigation. However, no specific details of any on-going investigation will be provided.