

WASHINGTON COUNTY
ETHICS MATTERS HOTLINE
Questions & Answers

What is the Ethics Matters Hotline?

A guiding principle for Washington County is for all County employees, officials, and agents to commit themselves to the highest standards of ethical conduct and to accept full accountability for their actions. The Ethics Matters Hotline is provided as a means for the public and employees to anonymously report allegations of governmental misconduct.

The Hotline provides both on-line (website) and operator assisted (contact center) reporting options and augments other reporting options described in the [Reporting of Improper Governmental Conduct Policy](#). The County will ensure that investigation and appropriate corrective action are undertaken in response to all reports received through the Hotline. The hotline is administered by the County's Controller through a third party administrator.

The Ethics Matters Hotline is one avenue for the public and employees to report misconduct. Additional reporting options are described in the [Reporting of Improper Governmental Conduct Policy](#).

How do I make a report using the Hotline?

You can file a report 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by phone or by completing an online form. If you call the EthicsPoint toll free number (855-236-6972) 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. (<http://washingtoncounty.ethicspoint.com>)

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

What Types of Issues are Appropriate for Reporting through the Hotline?

The Hotline is intended as a vehicle to report Improper Governmental Conduct, including: 1) abuse of authority, 2) gross waste of funds, 3) mismanagement, 4) theft or misappropriation of County assets; and 5) violation(s) of County policy, State and/or Federal law(s).

Will the County investigate my report?

Yes, reports of misconduct will be reviewed and investigated as appropriate.

How do I know if I provided enough information?

Once a report is received, the reporter will be given a unique user name and asked to select a password. The user name and password will allow the reporter to return to the EthicsPoint system, either by internet or phone and access your report, and answer any questions posted by the Hotline Administrator. This step is critical to ensure that there is sufficient information to guide the investigation and address your concern.

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Who receives the report of misconduct?

Once a report is filed, the system generates an email to the Hotline Administrator. The Hotline Administrator will work with the Hotline Advisory Committee to assign the investigation to an appropriate “receiving employee or official”. This employee or official will either conduct the investigation or assign to another employee or agency as appropriate. The receiving or investigating employee will conduct an investigation in accordance with the requirements of the Reporting of Improper Governmental Conduct Policy. Upon conclusion of the investigation, a written report will be prepared. The report will summarize the allegations and findings.

What if the report I am submitting involves an Elected Official, Executive Manager or my Supervisor?

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. The Ethics Matters Procedures describe the manner in which reports will be assigned to an appropriate employee or official for investigation.

Can I remain anonymous?

You have the choice to remain anonymous or may leave your personal information that will be kept confidential.

Can 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 County’s network may be able to gather this information. If this is a concern, you can file a report online from home, or any internet portal.

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

County policy and the State of Oregon’s Whistleblower Statute (ORS 659A.199 - 236) 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 County policy, directive, ordinance, or Charter provision by any officer or employee of Washington County.

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 or you may also call the hotline to inquire about the status. However, no specific details of any on-going investigation will be provided.