



## Common Questions

### **Why do we need SpeakUp?**

Abbott believes that employees are our most important asset. By creating open channels of communication, we can promote a positive work environment and maximize productivity. In addition, all publicly traded companies in the U.S. are required to establish a reporting function allowing for the confidential, anonymous reporting by employees of concerns regarding questionable accounting or auditing matters. SpeakUp helps us meet those requirements while also fostering a culture of integrity and ethical decision-making. SpeakUp provides an avenue for employees and/or others to raise concerns perceived or known in the work environment.

### **Why should I report a concern?**

We all share in the responsibility to live our values every day. That includes keeping an open dialogue by asking questions when we don't know what to do and reporting concerns related to our business activities.

We earn our reputation every day by the decisions we make and the actions we take. Raising a concern of noncompliance continues our commitment to act ethically in all aspects of our business and fosters a culture of compliance. Your actions can make a difference.

### **I am aware of some individuals involved in unethical conduct, but it doesn't affect me. Why should I bother raising a concern?**

Abbott chooses to promote ethical behavior. All unethical conduct, at any level, ultimately hurts the company and all employees, including you. One only has to consider what happened in recent corporate scandals to see the disastrous effects a seemingly harmless lapse in ethics can have on an otherwise healthy company. If you know of any incidents of unethical conduct, consider it your duty to yourself and your co-workers to raise a concern.

### **If I see an incident, shouldn't I just report it to my manager, security, or human resources and let them deal with it?**

When you observe behavior you believe is unethical or a violation of our code of conduct, we expect you to raise a concern. You have several channels for raising concerns, including your direct manager or other member of our management team, your local/division OEC contacts, HR, and Global Security. Ultimately, serious concerns raised through channels other than OEC's SpeakUp website/helpline should be escalated and will be handled by OEC Investigations. Providing the most accurate information about a concern is crucial and second-hand reports can result in a partial/inaccurate messages, so please report your concern directly



to SpeakUp, when possible. We do recognize, however, that there may be circumstances when you are more comfortable raising a concern through a specific channel other than SpeakUp. In those circumstances, we would rather you raise the concern through another channel, than keep the information to yourself.

### **Can I still call my Office of Ethics and Compliance contact?**

Yes, you may raise concerns to or consult with anyone in the Office of Ethics and Compliance with whom you feel comfortable connecting. If the matter requires an investigation, that contact will escalate as appropriate.

### **I would like to raise a concern, but I don't want to get anyone into any trouble.**

While you may not want to get a co-worker or manager into trouble, you need to remember:

- First, you have an obligation to raise concerns of any actual or potential misconduct;
- Second, by raising your concern, you're actually helping protect the larger Abbott community, your colleagues, the company, and our stakeholders;
- Third, if you want to remain anonymous, you can. However, we encourage you to provide some form of contact information (which is still possible while remaining anonymous), so that we can reach you if follow up is necessary.

### **Does management really want me to raise a concern?**

We certainly do. In fact, we need you to raise a concern. You know what is going on in our company -both good and bad. You may be the only person with knowledge of an activity that may be cause for concern. By raising a concern, you can minimize the potential negative impact on the company and our people. You may also help identify issues that can improve corporate culture and performance.

### **What type of concerns should I raise?**

You should raise a concern if you become aware of any unethical behavior or violation of our Code of Conduct. You also can use the SpeakUp Website/helpline to ask questions, report conflicts of interest, and share compliance success stories.

### **I am not sure if what I have observed or heard is a breach of company policy or involves unethical conduct, but it just does not look right to me. What should I do?**

Report the issue to SpeakUp. We would rather you raise a concern that turns out to be harmless than let possible unethical behavior go unchecked because you were unsure.



### **What if my boss or other managers are involved in unethical behavior? Won't they get notified and start a cover-up?**

No. Concerns raised to OEC are handled by independent employees of Abbott, OEC or those accountable to OEC. We specifically assign individuals to investigate concerns who are not in the same reporting line as those accused of compliance violations.

### **When is the best time to raise a concern?**

The sooner the better. The longer you wait to raise your concern, the worse the situation may become, and the more difficult it may be to investigate. In fact, it may be unethical to remain silent.

### **How can I raise my concern to SpeakUp?**

If you wish to raise a concern, just click on the "Raise a Concern" button at the bottom of the SpeakUp home page. Then, you will be given the choice of raising your concern online by filling out a webform on this website, or you will be able to enter your country to access a telephone number where you may speak with a specialist by phone .

If you choose to raise your concern by telephone, the number will vary by country but, in most cases, the company offers a telephone number you can call with no cost to you. In addition, although your call may initially be answered in English, if you would prefer to raise your concern in a language other than English, the specialist who answers your call will arrange for a specialist who is fluent in your native language. Both the phone lines and web forms are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In addition to providing service 24 hours a day, SpeakUp allows telephone and web reports to be submitted in dozens of languages.

### **Can I still raise a concern if I don't have access to the Internet?**

Yes, you can call the main OEC phone number in Chicago 1-224-667-5210 and ask to be transferred to the helpline or the OEC Investigations group.

### **May I raise my concern anonymously?**

Regardless of whether you choose to report by telephone or online, you will have the option to remain anonymous, if you so choose. When you complete the report submission process, you will be provided with a report key and asked to create a password. Retain these to follow up on the report you submitted.



### **How do I know my report to SpeakUp will remain anonymous?**

The SpeakUp helpline is operated by an independent third party who receives the reports submitted via SpeakUp and provides them to OEC for investigation and/or other action. However, that third party does not provide any information to Abbott or OEC about the identity of anonymous reporters. To further ensure your anonymity as a reporter, you can also take care not to reveal any identifying details as part of your report. For example, avoid including identifying information such as, “from my cube next to Jan Smith ... ” or “in my 33 years ... ”

### **It is my understanding that any concern I send from a company computer generates a server log that shows every website my PC connects with - won't this log identify me as a report originator?**

The independent third party who operates the helpline and receives reports does not generate or maintain any internal connection logs with IP addresses, so no information linking your PC to SpeakUp is available. In fact, Abbott's contract with that third party prohibits the company from pursuing a reporter's identity.

However, if you feel uncomfortable raising a concern on your work PC, you have the option of reporting by telephone.

### **Is the SpeakUp telephone toll-free helpline confidential and anonymous too?**

Yes. You will be asked to provide the same information you would provide in an online report; the interviewer/specialist will type your responses directly into SpeakUp's secure environment. Helpline-based reports have the same security and confidentiality measures applied to them during delivery as Internet-based reports.

### **How can I monitor progress on my concern?**

Once your report is complete, you will be provided with a report key and asked to create a password. With those two pieces of identification, you can follow up on the report by visiting the Speak Up website portal or contacting the company hotline. You may need to wait several days after you make your initial report, at which point you can monitor progress on your report and learn whether any additional information is needed from you to address your concern.

### **How can I follow up with OEC on a concern I have raised if my report is anonymous?**

Even if you submit a concern to SpeakUp anonymously, either online or by telephone, you will receive a report key and be asked to create a password. With the report key and your password, you can return to SpeakUp, either online or by telephone, and access your original report. You can also use your report key and password to communicate anonymously with investigators through the system, provide additional information, or check on the status of a report.



### **What if you have questions for me regarding my concern?**

If you have provided your contact information, an investigator will use that information to reach out to you if he or she needs additional information. If you submitted your concern to SpeakUp anonymously, after a few days have passed, please use the report key you received at the end of your report and the password you created to enter your report and see if the investigator has any further questions for you. Your information and cooperation can be critical to investigating and resolving your concern.

### **What should I do if I lose my Report Key or password?**

Because of the high level of confidentiality that is maintained for reports, if you lose your report key or password, you will be required to raise a new concern. You can mention in the new report that this matter relates to another concern you supplied earlier.

### **What if I want to be identified with my SpeakUp report?**

There is a section in the report where you may identify yourself, if you wish.

### **Should I identify myself?**

We encourage you to identify yourself because it makes it easier for investigators to properly investigate your concern. If you choose to identify yourself in raising your concern, the company will make every effort to keep your identity confidential. The investigators who follow up on SpeakUp reports are experienced at investigating concerns without identifying their source. Many investigations can be more quickly and effectively completed when the reporter is identified because it allows company investigators to follow up directly with the reporter. In addition, when the investigator knows the identity of a reporter, he or she can take steps to ensure that the reporter is not subject to retaliation for reporting the concern.

### **If I raise a concern, will it remain confidential?**

Preserving the confidentiality of a concern submitted via SpeakUp and the subsequent investigation is a priority for OEC. OEC maintains the confidentiality of those involved in an investigation to the fullest extent possible. In addition, all employees involved in such matters are advised of the requirement to maintain confidentiality and to discuss only as authorized. If any employee violates these instructions, he or she is subject to disciplinary action.

### **Where do these reports go? Who can access them?**

Reports are entered directly to a secure server to prevent any possible breach in security. These reports are available only to specific individuals within Abbott who are charged with evaluating the report and assigning them to an investigator based on the type and location of the incident.



After a report is assigned to an investigator, only that investigator and the individuals who evaluated the report have access to the report. All of the individuals involved in evaluating and investigating reports have had specific training on keeping these reports confidential.

### **Are follow-ups on concerns as secure as the first one?**

All correspondence and discussions regarding reports are handled in the same strict confidence as the initial report.

### **How does the company investigate concerns?**

OEC Investigations receives the reports submitted via SpeakUp and assigns them to investigators based on the type of concern reported and/or the location of the incident reported. The investigators are trained and experienced in the subjects they are assigned to investigate. All concerns reported are taken seriously and are investigated in a thorough, prompt, and consistent manner. Where concerns are founded, we discipline employees and implement other remediation, as appropriate.

### **I just learned that a co-worker has been accused of violating a policy and an investigation is being launched. I can't believe it's true, and I think it's only fair that I give my co-worker a heads-up, so he can defend himself. Is it okay if I tell him?**

No, you should not tell him. Your co-worker will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegation, and Abbott will conduct a fair and impartial investigation. The allegation may have implications not only for the individuals involved, but also for our company. Giving your co-worker a heads-up could jeopardize the investigation and expose Abbott to additional risk. Such an action may also subject you to disciplinary action.

### **What if I face retaliation?**

The company strictly forbids any retaliation against any person who raises a concern. Concerns raised in good faith will not expose you to any sanctions, regardless of whether the underlying facts prove to be correct or result in any corrective action. If you believe you have faced retaliation of any kind, please report that to the investigator handling the concern or via SpeakUp so that the company can investigate and take appropriate action.

### **How long is my information retained?**

We only collect as much information as we reasonably need to respond to your query and/or allegation. Your information will be retained for five years following the closure of an investigation, unless there is a local legal requirement to retain your information longer or delete your information earlier.



### **What are my rights with regards to information access, information correction and information related questions?**

In accordance with your local law, Abbott will provide you with the ability to access and correct your information following verification of your identity. For information about accessing or correcting your information or if you have any questions in relation to the treatment of your personal information, please contact [investigations@abbott.com](mailto:investigations@abbott.com).

### **How does Abbott secure my personal information?**

Abbott takes reasonable and appropriate administrative, technical, physical and organizational measures to protect your personal information in our possession and/or under our control from loss, misuse and unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration, and destruction. Abbott also requires third parties to correctly and appropriately safeguard any personal information shared with them and hold your personal information securely and confidentially.

### **What if this is an emergency?**

Concerns about an immediate threat of physical harm or damage to property should not be reported to SpeakUp. If you require emergency assistance, please contact your local emergency services.