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About EthicsPoint

What is EthicsPoint?

EthicsPoint is an independent, comprehensive and confidential reporting tool to assist management and employees to address fraud, abuse, and waste in the workplace, all while cultivating a positive work environment.

Why do we need a system like EthicsPoint?

- We believe that our employees are our most important asset. By creating open channels of communication, we can promote a positive work environment and maximize productivity.
- An effective reporting system will augment our other efforts to foster a culture of integrity and ethical decision-making.

Definitions of Waste, Fraud and Abuse

Waste

The needless, careless or extravagant expenditure of agency funds, incurring of unnecessary expenses, or mismanagement of agency resources or property. Waste doesn't necessarily involve private use or personal gain, but almost always signifies poor management decisions, practices or controls.

Examples:

- Purchase of unneeded supplies or equipment.
- Purchase of goods at inflated prices.
- Failure to reuse or recycle major resources or reduce waste generation.

Fraud

A dishonest and deliberate course of action that results in the obtaining of money, property, or an advantage to which an agency employee committing the action would not normally be entitled. Intentional misleading or deceitful conduct that deprives the agency of its resources or rights. There are three categories of fraud: financial statement fraud, misappropriation of assets, and corruption.

Examples:

- Falsifying financial records to cover up theft.
- Theft or misuse of agency money, equipment, supplies or other materials.
- Intentionally misrepresenting the costs of goods or services provided.
- Falsifying payroll information.
- Use of agency equipment or property for personal gain.
- Submitting false claims for reimbursements.
- Soliciting or accepting a bribe or kickback.
- Intentional use of false weights or measures.

Abuse

The intentional, wrongful or improper use or destruction of agency resources, or seriously improper practice that does not involve prosecutable fraud. Abuse can include the excessive or improper use of an employee's position in a manner other than its rightful or legal use.

Examples:

- Failure to report damage to agency equipment or property.
- Serious abuse of agency time such as significant unauthorized time away from work or significant use of agency time for personal business.
- Abusing the system of travel reimbursement.
- Receiving favors for awarding contracts to certain vendors.

Reporting – General

May I report using either the Internet or the telephone?

Yes. With EthicsPoint, you have the ability to file a confidential, anonymous report via either the telephone or the Internet.

What type of situations should I report?

TriMet started the EthicsPoint Hotline in 2014 based on a recommendation from the Oregon Secretary of Statue 2013 audit to provide employees a hotline to report concerns about fraud, waste or abuse of agency resources. The EthicsPoint system was designed with that objective in mind. Our Request for Safety Assessment (RSA) portal also has a link to EthicsPoint as a means of reporting RSA-style issues and other safety concerns anonymously.

If I see a violation, shouldn't I just report it to my manager, security, or human resources and let them deal with it?

When you observe some behavior that you believe constitutes fraud, waste or abuse of resources, we expect you to report it. Ideally, you should bring any concerns forward to your direct manager, or other member of our management team. We recognize, however, that there may be circumstances when you are not comfortable reporting the issue in this manner. It is for such circumstances that we have partnered with EthicsPoint. We would rather you report anonymously than keep the information to yourself.

Why should I report what I know? What's in it for me?

We all have the right to work in a positive environment and with that right comes the responsibility of acting in an ethical manner and letting the appropriate people know if someone is not acting appropriately. Misconduct can threaten the livelihood of an entire agency.

Does management really want me to report?

We certainly do. In fact, we *need* you to report. You know what is going on in our agency - both good and bad. You may have initial knowledge of an activity that may be cause for concern. Your reporting can minimize the potential negative impact on the agency and our people. Also, offering positive input may help identify issues that can improve moral and performance.

Where do these reports go? Who can access them?

Reports are entered directly on the EthicsPoint secure server to prevent any possible breach in security. EthicsPoint makes these reports available only to specific individuals within TriMet who are charged with evaluating the report, based on the type of violation

and location of the incident. Each of these report recipients has had training in keeping these reports in the utmost confidence.

Isn't this system just an example of someone watching over me?

The EthicsPoint system concentrates on being a positive aspect of our overall philosophy, and allows us to assure an ethical workplace. You are encouraged to seek guidance on ethical dilemmas, provide positive suggestions, or communicate a concern. Effective communication is critical in today's workplace and this is a great tool to enhance that communication.

Should I report instances of discrimination, harassment, safety concerns or workplace violence using EthicsPoint?

The EthicsPoint system does not accept all types of complaints and was set up specifically as a tool to report waste, fraud and abuse of TriMet resources. TriMet has methods to report other issues and concerns, such as those regarding workplace safety or professional conduct, as listed below:

Contact HR for the following issues:

- Discrimination and Harassment
- Employee Relations
- Offensive or Inappropriate Communication
- Retaliation
- Sexual Harassment
- Substance Abuse

You can report these issues to an HR Generalist or your HR Business Partner.

Your Report to HR can be made confidentially.

More information is also provided on TriNET at <https://trinet.trimet.org/home/divisions/labor-relations-human-resources/or-hr-business-partnering/ComplaintPacket.pdf>

Make a Request for Safety Assessment (RSA) for the following concerns:

- Environmental Protection, Health or Safety
- Safety
- Unsafe Working Conditions
- Workplace Violence

You can also report using the RSA hotline at 503 962 6236, or through the RSA portal at <https://trinet.trimet.org/app/rsa/#new>

More information about the RSA process is available on TriNET at <https://trinet.trimet.org/home/safety-security/safety-dept/safety-forms-policies-and-programs/request-for-safety-assessment/rsa-flow-chart>

Reporting Security & Confidentiality

It is my understanding that any report I send from an agency computer generates a server log that shows every web-site that my PC connects with, and won't this log identify me as a report originator?

No. EthicsPoint does not generate or maintain any internal connection logs with IP addresses, so no information linking your PC to EthicsPoint is available. In fact, EthicsPoint is contractually committed not to pursue a reporter's identity.

If you feel uncomfortable making a report on your work PC, you have the option of using a PC outside our work environment (such as one located at an Internet café, at a friend's house, library, etc.) through the EthicsPoint secure website. Many people choose this option, as EthicsPoint's data shows that fewer than 12% of reports are generated during business hours.

Can I file a report from home and still remain anonymous?

Yes. A report from home, a neighbor's computer, or any Internet portal will remain secure and anonymous. An Internet portal never identifies a visitor by screen name and the EthicsPoint system strips away Internet addresses so that anonymity is totally maintained. Plus, EthicsPoint is contractually committed not to pursue a reporter's identity.

I am concerned that the information I provide EthicsPoint will ultimately reveal my identity. How can you assure me that will not happen?

The EthicsPoint system is designed to protect your anonymity. However, if you wish to remain anonymous, you - as a reporting party - need to ensure that the body of the report does not reveal your identity by accident. For example, "From my cube sitting next to Jan Smith..." or "In my 33 years at TriMet...".

Is the telephone toll-free hot line confidential and anonymous too?

Yes. You will be asked to provide the same information that you would provide in an Internet-based report and an interviewer will type your responses into the EthicsPoint Web site. These reports have the same security and confidentiality measures applied to them during delivery.

What if I want to be identified with my report?

There is a section in the report for identifying yourself, if you wish.

Tips & Best Practices

I am aware of some individuals involved with unethical conduct, but it doesn't affect me. Why should I bother reporting it?

TriMet chooses to promote ethical behavior. All unethical conduct, at any level, ultimately hurts the agency and all employees, including you. You only have to consider what happened in recent corporate and public agency scandals to see the disastrous effects that a seemingly harmless lapse in ethics can have on an otherwise healthy organization. So if you know of any incidents of misconduct or ethical violations, consider it your duty to yourself and your coworkers to report it.

I am not sure if what I have observed or heard involves fraud, waste, or abuse, but it just does not look right to me. What should I do?

File a report. EthicsPoint can help you prepare and file your report so it can be properly understood. We'd rather you report a situation of suspected fraud, waste, or abuse that turns out to be harmless than let possible unethical behavior go unchecked because you weren't sure.

What if my boss or other managers are involved in a violation? Won't they get the report and start a cover-up?

The EthicsPoint system and report distribution are designed so that implicated parties are not notified or granted access to reports in which they have been named.

What if I remember something important about the incident after I file the report? Or what if TriMet has further questions for me concerning my report?

When you file a report at the EthicsPoint Web site or through the EthicsPoint Call Center, you receive a unique user name and are asked to choose a password. You can return to the EthicsPoint system again either by Internet or telephone and access the original report to add more detail or answer questions and add further information that will help resolve open issues. We strongly suggest that you return to the site in the time specified to answer agency questions. You and the agency now have entered into an "anonymous dialogue," where situations are not only identified, but can also be resolved, no matter how complex.

Are these follow-ups on reports as secure as the first one?

Yes. All EthicsPoint correspondences are held in the same strict confidence as the initial report, continuing under the umbrella of anonymity.

Can I still file a report if I don't have access to the Internet?

Yes. You can file an EthicsPoint report from any computer that can access the Internet. Many public locations, including the public library, have Internet computers. If you don't have access to or are uncomfortable using a computer, you can call the EthicsPoint toll-free hotline, which is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.