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About EthicsPoint

What is EthicsPoint?

EthicsPoint is a comprehensive and confidential reporting tool created by NAVEX Global to assist management and employees in working together in addressing fraud, abuse, and other misconduct in the workplace, all while cultivating a positive work environment.

Why do we need a system like EthicsPoint?

- The county believes 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.

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?

The EthicsPoint system is designed for employees or members of the public to report any violation in our Code of Conduct and Human Resources Policies and Procedures. These documents are available through the EthicsPoint page and on the county's website for your reference.

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 violates our code of conduct, policies and procedures, it is your responsibility to report it. Ideally, you should bring any concerns forward to your direct supervisor, or another member of our management team. We recognize, however, that there may be circumstances when you are not comfortable reporting the issue in this manner. In accordance with the Whistleblower Act and OMB A-123, the county has established a telephone and web-based hotline to which employees may report instances of

waste, fraud, abuse, corruption and mismanagement. Examples of information that may be reported to the hotline include, but not limited to: kickbacks, fraud, conflicts of interest, use or sale of drugs, theft of cash or goods, falsifying county records, physical abuse or harassment.

Why should I report what I know?

We all have the right to work in a positive environment and with that comes the responsibility of acting in an ethical manner and letting department heads, County management, or the Human Resources Department know if someone is not following our code of conduct, policies and procedures. Each employee contributes to the county's growth and success. By working together, we can maintain a healthy and productive environment.

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 the System Administrators, who are authorized county employees, tasked with managing the system. Additionally, selected county department heads will have some access to the hotline. The way the reports are handled are determined by the type of complaint and/or who is implicated in the report. However, if any staff who is authorized to have access to the hotline is implicated in a complaint, the EthicsPoint system will prevent them from even seeing the report.

Reports are maintained to the highest degree of confidentiality permissible by law. It is important to note that there are some circumstances that the county is legally required to release hotline complaints due to the State of New Mexico's Inspection of Public Records Act (NMSA 1978, Section 14-2-1, et seq.).

Reporting Security & Confidentiality

It is my understanding that any report I send from a county 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?

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, 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?

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 next to Jan Smith..." or "In my 33 years..."

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

Best ways to make a report

While the county encourages the anonymous reporting of alleged violations of our Code of Conduct and Human Resources Policies and Procedures, having detailed, specific information on an incident, including witnesses, is extremely helpful when determining the appropriate course of action. It is an important part of the process to check back on the report you submitted via EthicsPoint, as there may be additional questions that county is asking to determine the best investigative path forward. Additionally, there are times that information is posted in response to complaints submitted through the hotline.

The reports are kept confidential unless the release is required by state law. Retaliation for filing a hotline complaint is against county policy.

I am not sure if what I have observed or heard is a violation of company policy, or involves unethical conduct, 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. The county would rather you report a situation that turns out to be harmless than let possible unethical behavior go unchecked because you weren't sure.

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

You can file an EthicsPoint report from any computer that can access the Internet. You can file from home. 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.