About EthicsPoint

What is EthicsPoint?

EthicsPoint is a comprehensive and confidential reporting tool created by NAVEX Global to assist management and employees 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?

- 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.

- Ensuring open lines of communication is a critical element of an effective compliance program. While we want you to feel comfortable in approaching your supervisor or management in instances where you believe violations of policies or standards have occurred, Virginia Tech also provides the opportunity for employees to report concerns confidentially or anonymously.

Reporting – General

May I report using either the Internet or the telephone?

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

What type of situations should I report?

The EthicsPoint system is designed for employees and the public to report suspected violations of law, university policy, or Business Conduct Standards and other concerns.

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

If you observe suspected wrongdoing, you have a responsibility 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. Concerns reported through EthicsPoint are kept confidential.

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 reporting suspected wrongdoing. By working together, we can maintain a healthy and productive environment.

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 university - 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 university and our people. Also, offering positive input may help identify issues that can improve our culture.

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 the university's Office of Audit, Risk, and Compliance who are charged with evaluating the report and determining the appropriate next steps. Each of these report recipients has had training in keeping these reports in the utmost confidence.

Can I report sexual harassment or misconduct?

Concerns regarding sexual harassment, assault, or misconduct have a separate reporting mechanism. You should report such concerns to the Office of Equity and Accessibility (oea.vt.edu).

Reporting Security & Confidentiality

It is my understanding that any report I send from a university 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…."

Is the telephone toll-free hotline 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. Again, this information is kept confidential and is available only to specific individuals within the university's Office of Audit, Risk, and Compliance. Providing your contact information allows us to follow up with you to ask additional questions and to gather more detail.

Tips & Best Practices

I am not sure if what I have observed or heard is a violation of 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. We'd rather you report a situation 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 those responsible for investigating the complaint have 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 posed by a university representative 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 questions. You and the university 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?

> 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?

> 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.