

WHISTLEBLOWER

A whistleblower as defined by this policy is an employee, vendor, consultant, and/or contractor of Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) who reports an activity that he/she considers to be illegal or dishonest to one or more of the parties specified in this Policy. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the activity or for determining fault or corrective measures; appropriate management officials are charged with these responsibilities.

Examples of illegal or dishonest activities are violations of federal, state or local laws; billing for services not performed or for goods not delivered; and other fraudulent financial reporting.

If an employee has knowledge of or a concern of illegal or dishonest fraudulent activity, the employee is to contact his/her immediate supervisor, the Ethics Officer, Executive Director, or Human Resources Supervisor. The employee must exercise sound judgment to avoid baseless allegations. An employee who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Whistleblower protections are provided in two important areas -- confidentiality and against retaliation. Insofar as possible, the confidentiality of the whistleblower will be maintained. However, identity may have to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the law and to provide accused individuals their legal rights of defense. The GMRC will not retaliate against a whistleblower. This includes, but is not limited to, protection from retaliation in the form of an adverse action such as termination, compensation decreases, or poor work assignments and threats of physical harm. A vendor, consultant, or contractor shall also be extended protection from retaliation in the form of adverse action, as to the extent, the level of expectation from the contract is maintained.

Any whistleblower who believes he/she is being retaliated against should contact Human Resources immediately. The right of a whistleblower for protection against retaliation does not include immunity for any personal wrongdoing that is alleged and investigated.

All reports of illegal and dishonest activities will be promptly submitted to the Ethics Officer who is responsible for investigating and coordinating corrective action.

Employees, vendors, consultants, and/or contractors with any questions regarding this policy should contact Human Resources.



Whistleblower Policy approved
October 30, 2014