

4.07 WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY AND FRAUD HOTLINE

A. Definition and Purpose

A whistleblower, as defined by this policy, is an employee under the hiring authority of the Board of Commissioners who reports an activity that he/she considers to be illegal or dishonest. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the activity or for determining fault or corrective measures; appropriate management officials are charged with these responsibilities.

B. Required Action

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

C. Whistleblower Protections

Ohio law provides whistleblowers with several protections including confidentiality and a prohibition against retaliation.

1. 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.
2. The Board will not retaliate against a whistleblower. This includes, but is not limited to, protection from retaliation in the form of an adverse employment action such as termination, compensation decreases, or poor work assignments and threats of physical harm. Any whistleblower who believes he/she is being retaliated against must contact the Department of Human Resources immediately. The right of a whistleblower to protection against retaliation does not include immunity for any personal wrongdoing that is alleged and investigated.

D. Fraud Hotline

The Ohio Auditor of State's Office maintains a system for the reporting of fraud, including misuse of public money by any official or office. The system allows for all Ohio citizens, including public employees, the opportunity to make anonymous complaints through a toll-free number, the State Auditor's website, or through the United States mail.

Complaints can be made via:

Telephone: 1-866-FRAUD OH (1-866-372-8364)

U.S. Mail: **Ohio Auditor of State's Office
Special Investigation Unit
88 East Broad Street
P.O. Box 1140
Columbus, OH 43215**

Website: www.ohioauditor.gov

