

Section I – General

The City of Hagerstown expects employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As an employee of the City of Hagerstown, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations. This policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the organization.

Section 2 – Definition

An employee of the City of Hagerstown who reports an activity that he/she considers to be illegal or dishonest to management within the organization. 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/or a direct threat to public interest; such as fraud, health/safety violations, corruption, and fraudulent financial reporting.

Section 3 – Reporting Process

If an employee has specific knowledge of an illegal activity, the employee shall submit his/her knowledge and complaint in writing to the Human Resource Director. A concern of an unethical or dishonest activity may also be put in writing to the Human Resource Director. Any action taken involving sworn Police Department personnel cannot be in conflict with the Law Enforcement Officer's Bill of Rights.

Section 4 - Handling of Reported Violations

The Director of Human Resources will acknowledge the department's receipt of the alleged violation. All reports will be promptly investigated.

Section 5 – Acting in Good Faith

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for the reported violation. The complainant 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.

Section 6 – No Retaliation

Protections for Whistleblowers 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. The City of Hagerstown 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 Human Resource Director immediately. The right of a whistleblower for protection against retaliation does not include immunity for any personal wrongdoing that is alleged and investigated.