



Whistle Blower Policy

Updated: 11-2023

Purpose: This Whistleblower Policy (the “Policy”) is intended to support a strong culture of integrity and ethical conduct in the Ohio Valley Region (OVR) by encouraging, valuing, and protecting good faith reporting by athletes, directors, officers, employees, members, committee members, task force members, hearing panel members, and volunteers (“Affiliated Individuals”) of the OVR of any alleged violation of any applicable law, OVR policy, or potential ethics issue.

The freedom to speak up means being able to raise concerns in whatever way is most comfortable and effective and feeling free to cooperate in investigations that follow. It also means that the OVR has zero tolerance for retaliation of any kind against people who speak up in good faith.

1. Violations Covered by this Policy

This Policy is for use where there may be a violation of:

- any applicable law, rule, or regulation
- any OVR policy
- principles of ethics
- accounting or financial practices (e.g., fraud)

If an Affiliated Individual is unsure about whether a matter might be a policy violation or is unsure about their reporting responsibility for a particular type of matter, please start by reviewing the particular policy involved. Refer to the OVR web site under the BOARD tab or by going to the following link <https://www.ovr.org/executive/index.php> for policy documents or reach out to OVR Commissioner with any concerns. If the alleged policy violation involves the Commissioner, the reporting individual should contact any member of the OVR Board of Directors.

Some violations **must** be reported. Specifically, please be familiar with the requirements in the athlete safety policy and/or the SafeSport Code. If an Affiliated Individual suspects any criminal activity against a person or property, they should immediately report this directly to law enforcement.

Nothing in this Policy changes or replaces any mandatory reporting obligations under the SafeSport Code for the Olympic and Paralympic Movements – talk to the OVR Commissioner or the OVR Safe Sport Coordination if you have any questions about those obligations.

Reporting

No Retaliation

The OVR has an open-door policy and encourages Affiliated Individuals to share questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints in the way and to the people with which they are most comfortable. This means Affiliated Individuals have options for how to report any concern about a potential ethical, policy, financial, or legal violation.

The OVR has zero tolerance for retaliation against people who make good faith reports of potential ethical, policy, financial, or legal violations, or who cooperate with investigations of those reports. It is a violation of this Policy to threaten, harass, discriminate against, or take any negative employment action or participation related action (e.g., discharge, demotion, suspension, non-assignment, negative review) as a means of retaliation.

Retaliation should be reported in the same way as any other violation of this Policy. Retaliation will be treated as a violation this Policy and the OVR's Code of Conduct and may lead to serious consequences including termination of employment or participation for anyone involved in the retaliation.

How to Report

Affiliated Individuals may report to an OVR staff member or to their supervisor (if applicable). These are people who can also discuss the concern and help make sure it is addressed. Affiliated Individuals can also make reports to the OVR Commissioner, any member of the OVR Board of Directors.

Affiliated Individuals making a report of a violation of this Policy do not need to (and should not) investigate the matter of concern or determine fault or how to fix it. The Affiliated Individual does his or her part by making it known so the OVR can take action.

Acting in Good Faith

Just as we need to make sure that no one in our community is fearful of speaking up, we also need to make sure that no one in our community is fearful of false reports being made against them.

1. It is a violation of this Policy to knowingly or recklessly make a false report of an ethical, policy, financial, or legal violation. Making a false report is a violation of this Policy and the OVR Code of Conduct in the same way as retaliating against a good faith reporter. Such a violation may itself be reported under this Policy, and it may lead to serious consequences, including termination of employment or participation.

2. Investigation

When a report is made, the person receiving the report is responsible for communicating it within the OVR to the person who can best address the concern, based on the matter reported and in keeping with other OVR policies. In all cases, the OVR is committed to ensuring that no good faith report is ignored.

The OVR Commissioner is responsible for coordinating the appropriate investigation and/or response, so reporters can be confident that their reports will be addressed. The Commissioner will report every violation of this Policy to the OVR Board of Directors.

3. Confidentiality

In many cases, a reported matter will need investigation in order to reach the right resolution. Cooperation as a reporter or otherwise may be very helpful and much appreciated. Reports will be treated as confidentially as possible; some information may have to be disclosed to certain parties in order to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the law, and to provide accused individuals access to due process.

If a matter is reported anonymously it may limit the OVR's ability to conduct a full investigation (i.e. due to the inability to ask the reporter follow-up questions, etc.). The OVR's enforcement of its Conflict of Interest Policy will ensure that an investigation will not involve any conflicted individuals in the decision making process.

4. Follow Up

If after a reasonable time following the report, it appears to the reporter that appropriate action did not result, then the reporter may report that, too.

Thank you for helping to ensure that the OVR is a safe zone for speaking up in good faith on important matters.