

# WHISTLEBLOWING AND PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION



World Health  
Organization

[www.who.int/about/ethics](http://www.who.int/about/ethics)

The WHO policy on Whistleblowing and protection against retaliation applies to all those (staff or others) who report, in good faith, suspected wrongdoing to WHO and find themselves the target of retaliation as a result.

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### **EXAMPLES OF WRONGDOING THAT IMPLY A SIGNIFICANT RISK TO WHO**

- Fraud
  - Corruption
  - Waste of resources
  - Sabotage
  - Substantial and specific danger to public health or safety
  - Sexual exploitation and abuse.
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### **WHO'S WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY TAKES THE FOLLOWING APPROACH**

- Staff members have an obligation to report wrongdoing
- Retaliation is misconduct
- The Organization has a duty to:
  - protect whistleblowers against retaliation
  - address wrongdoing by taking disciplinary action as appropriate.

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## WHAT IS RETALIATION?

- A direct or indirect adverse administrative decision and/or action that is threatened, recommended or taken against an individual who has:
    - reported suspected wrongdoing that implies a significant risk to WHO; or
    - cooperated with an authorized audit or an investigation of a report of wrongdoing
  - Retaliation is determined based on the relationship between the report of suspected wrongdoing and the adverse action/ threat.
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## EXAMPLES OF RETALIATION

- Harassment
- Discrimination
- Unsubstantiated, negative performance appraisals
- Unjustified contractual changes: termination, demotion, reassignment or transfer
- Unjustified modification of duties
- Unjustified non-authorization of holidays and other leave types
- Malicious delays in authorizing travel or the provision of entitlements
- Threat to the whistleblower, their family and/or property including threats that may come from outside WHO.

The Ethics team in the Office of Compliance, Risk Management and Ethics receives allegations of retaliation. The Ethics team provides confidential advice and conducts a preliminary review to establish a relationship between previous whistleblowing and the alleged retaliation ("prima facie"). If prima facie is established the matter is referred to the Office of Internal Oversight Services (IOS) for investigation. The Ethics team also makes recommendations for complainants' protection.

# **SPEAK OUT! AGAINST MISCONDUCT**

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## **IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO.**

WHO staff, collaborators and non-staff members are encouraged to report any suspicious wrongdoing to WHO. The identity of a whistleblower that comes forward for advice regarding suspected wrongdoing is protected. Confidentiality will only be waived with their express consent.

By providing protection to staff, collaborators and non-staff members, WHO is able to learn about and respond to wrongdoing. This enhances our accountability and supports the integrity of WHO's operations and programmes.

### **RAISE A CONCERN CONFIDENTIALLY:**

For more information, contact the Ethics team in the Office of Compliance, Risk Management and Ethics [ethicsoffice@who.int](mailto:ethicsoffice@who.int)

You can raise a concern confidentially through the Integrity Hotline: <http://wrs.expolink.co.uk/integrity>. You can also raise a concern anonymously.