

What is a Whistleblowing policy and why do you need one?

Whistleblowing refers to the anonymous disclosure of information by an employee or another stakeholder of a company about a perceived negligence or wrong-doing within the organisation. A Whistleblowing policy protects those individuals from retaliation or repercussion.

Any size company, regardless of whether it is publicly or privately owned, should implement a Whistleblowing policy. It encourages employees to communicate their concerns about illegal, unethical or questionable practices to the Board and/or senior management without fear of reprisal, and allows the company to take appropriate corrective actions. It reinforces ethical behaviour amongst employees.

A Whistleblowing policy may be used as part of a suite of policies or be incorporated within your Code of Conduct or employee handbook.

Example Template

Commitment / statement:

Define your commitment to upholding legal and ethical practices within your business and link these back to your values and principles.

Purpose / Scope of policy:

Describe the objective of the policy and whom and what it affects.

Whistleblowing

1. Who can raise a concern?
State who can raise a concern i.e all employees, suppliers, customers, stakeholders.
2. What type of concern can they raise?
State what type of disclosure of information the policy covers i.e criminal offences, miscarriage of justice, improper behaviour, a fall below established standards of practice.
3. What protection and support will be offered?
State the legal rights of the whistleblower. Describe how they will be supported and safeguarded against harassment and discrimination. State your commitment to confidentiality and protecting their anonymity.
4. How the whistleblower should report their concern
How should the whistleblower raise their concern and who should they raise it with? In what format should they do it? Are there helplines available if they are unsure what to do or would like external and confidential guidance?
5. What will the company do after a concern has been raised

6. *What process will the company follow to investigate the allegations? What should the whistleblower expect? What will happen if the whistleblower makes untrue allegations in good faith?*

Policy adherence:

All employees should be informed of the policy's existence, and if necessary be required to read it.

Policy approval:

Who is responsible for enforcing the policy? How is it monitored and how are records kept? How often is it reviewed?