

## TITLE VII – DEPARTMENT PROCEDURES

### SECTION 700 – WHISTLEBLOWER HOTLINE

#### A. PURPOSE

The Whistleblower Hotline was established to provide a formal process for citizens and County employees to report concerns of illegal, fraudulent and wasteful activity by Santa Cruz County government employees, residents, vendors or contractors.

#### B. POLICY

Reports relating to violations of County personnel policies should generally be addressed through established policies and procedures as dictated in related Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) and Personnel Regulations. If such reports are received by the Whistleblower Hotline, they will generally be redirected to the Department Head and Personnel Department for appropriate action and shall not fall under the scope of the Whistleblower Hotline.

Reports relating to building code or zoning violations are accepted, however, they will not be investigated unless they include reporting party contact information.

Reports can be made in English or Spanish. The Auditor-Controller will review reports to the Whistleblower Hotline. Except as described above, reports shall be investigated by the Auditor-Controller or transferred to the appropriate Department Head for investigation, at the Auditor-Controller's discretion.

Reports are confidential and the County will keep the reporting party's identity confidential unless she or he agrees to disclosure, or disclosure is otherwise compelled by law.

#### C. PROCEDURES

1. Ways to report:
  - a. Calling the hotline telephone at 831-454-3333
  - b. Accessing the County Whistleblower Hotline web page and completing a report online. A link to this web page is located on both the County's main web page and the Auditor-Controllers' web page; or
  - c. Mailing a report to 701 Ocean Street, Suite 100, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
Attn: Whistleblower Hotline.
2. Statistical reports
  - a. The Auditor-Controller will report annually to the Board of Supervisors with statistics on the Whistleblower Hotline.

Persons reporting to the Whistleblower Hotline, including County officers and employees, shall be free from retaliation, reprisals, or threats of reprisals because they made a report, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under this policy, so long as their statements and/or actions are truthful and made in good faith.

#### D. RELATED FORMS

- County Whistleblower Hotline Form

[https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Government/WhistleblowerHotline/WhistleblowerForm\(English\).aspx](https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Government/WhistleblowerHotline/WhistleblowerForm(English).aspx)

#### E. HISTORY

Date	Changes Made
6/21/2005	Policy Adopted
6/24/2008	Policy Updated
11/29/2009	Policy Updated
6/25/2012	Policy Updated
6/13/2023	Policy Updated