

• Ethics Officer's April Monthly Report

Summary

This report provides a general update on the progress and activities for the Ethics Office for April 2005.

Attachments

None

Detailed Report

Activities

1. The renovation of the Ethics Office reception area is complete. An Ethics Office open house is planned for May 2005.
2. The HR Ethics Policy for Employees (H03) is currently in revision.
3. The Ethics Office has completed its business plan and proposed budget for 2005/06.
4. The Ethics Office followed up on missing Form 700s from Directors and Designated Employees. Currently, one Director form has not been received but all designated employees' forms have been received. The FPPC filing officer is in the process of being changed from Deni Elliott to Jeff Kightlinger.
5. A memorandum was sent by the Chief Operating Officer to employees April 6, 2005 regarding use of materials from District warehouses. This memorandum was the result of employee complaints about alleged thefts from the warehouses, investigation by Water System Operations and Corporate Resources, and the development of new operating policies and procedures to improve warehouse operations.
6. The Ethics Officer reviewed changes in the employee Travel Guide.

Ethics Education

1. Progress is being made on the Directors' ethics manual. It is expected to be ready for vetting by mid-May and is still on target for July publication. A memorandum from Ethics Committee Chairman Edwards was sent to Directors requesting input for the manual. The Ethics Officer has received four responses from Directors to that request.
2. The Ethics Officer and Ethics Educator investigated as necessary, and responded to questions regarding
 - Potential contractor conflicts of interest (7 potential conflicts reviewed);
 - An employee's concern regarding favoritism in the hiring of contractors;
 - An employee's concern that another employee was selling merchandise on District premises;
 - A concern about insensitivity on the part of some employees toward another;
 - An employee's concern about communication problems within a department;
 - Directors' requests for information regarding on-going and past controversies;
 - An employee's concern regarding alleged intimate relationships within a department.

Matters of Concern

Matters of concern pending that were received prior to April 1, 2005.

March 7, 2005 - Issue: Employee Relations

An employee expressed concern that some of his claims under workers compensation had been denied. Referred to appropriate department for action. HR will forward letters explaining what was declined and

why. Employee was advised that he or his doctor could use the appeal process if he felt that the claim was wrongly denied. (89)

March 14, 2005 - Issue: Misuse of Resources

An employee expressed concern that a lack of communication from security and supervisors resulted in unnecessary overtime and inconvenience of employees dealing with lock changes at a facility. Concern referred to appropriate department. (90)

March 15, 2005 - Issue: Misuse of Funds

An employee expressed concern that Metropolitan choices regarding construction of a building in 1999 resulted in unnecessary cost to the District, a matter referred to Legal Counsel and Ethics Office by Chairman of the Board Wes Bannister. A memorandum was sent to the employee explaining that review by Legal Counsel and Ethics Office determined that he has provided no new information since his complaint had been reviewed and dismissed in previous investigations by Legal Counsel, Ethics Office and Audit Department. Employee was advised that further time would not be spent on the complaint unless there is new information to consider. (91)

No new matters of concern were received in April 2005.