

• Ethics Officer's September Monthly Report

Summary

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

Attachments

None

Detailed Report

Activities

1. Administrative Code changes that reflect new language regarding relationships with contractors and grantees were approved at the August Board of Directors meeting.
2. The HR Ethics Policy for Employees (H-03) has been revised for consistency with the Administrative Code and will be presented in the near future for Group Manager review.
3. The Ethics Office is developing an Employee Ethics Advisory Committee to assist in communication between the Office and employees; the first meeting will take place in December.
4. Ethics Office brochures have been distributed to Directors with the October Board mailing.
5. Ethics Office brochures, Network brochures and reminder magnets have been distributed to section managers for distribution to employees.
6. The Ethics Officer and Ethics Educator were escorted by Eddie Rigdon for a tour of DVL, Lake Skinner and Lake Mathews on September 19, 2005.
7. The Ethics Office staff will attend the Ethics Officer Association meetings in San Antonio, Texas, October 25-27, 2005.
8. The Ethics Office Web site had 622 visitors from August 16 – September 15, 2005, with an average of 61 visits per day during this period.

Ethics Education

1. The second of three Ethics Manuals, *Partnering: Ethics and Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Programs at The Metropolitan Water District* is in the vetting process.
2. The Ethics Educator has conducted three new employee orientations.
3. Informational packets from the Network, the new Ethics Office brochure and Ethics Concern reminder magnets are available for distribution to employees.
4. Ethics Office brochures have been distributed to Directors with the October Board mailing.
5. Ethics Office brochures, Network brochures and reminder magnets have been distributed to section managers for distribution to employees.
6. The Ethics Educator is attending a four-session contract administration training to enhance the knowledge base of contract process within the Ethics Office.

Board Report (Ethics Officer's September Monthly Report)

Ethics Questions and Concern

1. The Ethics Officer and Ethics Educator responded to questions regarding
 - MWD alcohol policy
 - conflict of interest (3)
 - gift policy (2)
 - employee relations
 - personnel matters (2)

Matters of Concern

1. June 23, 2005 – Issue: Product Quality Concerns (135)

A contractor expressed via The Network concerns that pressure testing on pipes is not being properly performed. The matter was reviewed. The Assistant Group Manager reported no indication that the contractor is manipulating test records. Metropolitan or consultant inspectors perform inspection of all pipe during fabrication at this facility. Inspection is performed on a surveillance level with critical hold points witnessed by Metropolitan's inspectors. Hydrostatic testing of all Metropolitan pipe is witnessed by the inspectors.

Disposition: Closed

2. July 28, 2005 – Issue: Grants (39)

A concern regarding alleged inappropriate use of grant funds, previously thought to be closed, has been reopened. The member of the public expressing the concern has been notified that the use of funding is being audited. The member of the public was notified that the audit showed no misappropriation of funds.

Disposition: Closed

3. August 22, 2005 – Issue: Falsification of Company Records (131)

Two employees separately expressed concern via The Network regarding the recording of the purchase of a new trailer. The matter was reviewed by the concerned supervisor and Group Manager with the Ethics Officer on September 6, 2005. The Group Manager explained that the supervisor received a refurbished trailer as the new trailer was needed at another facility. It was agreed that one business unit should not submit for replacement equipment using the equipment numbers of another business unit.

Disposition: Closed

4. August 26, 2005 – Issue: Customer Relations (129)

The Ethics Officer had a discussion with Legal Counsel and Executive Vice President regarding the alleged questionable conduct of an employee at an event, which Metropolitan assisted in sponsoring. The matter was reviewed. It was determined to be a personnel matter and forwarded to the employee's supervisor for further action.

Disposition: Closed

5. August 31, 2005 – Issue: Audit/Accounting Irregularities (133)

An employee reported to the Ethics Office a dispute with his supervisor regarding classification in an audit report. The disagreement was resolved and a report with a mutually agreed upon classification was to be issued.

Disposition: Closed

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6. September 7, 2005 – Issue: Policy Issues (130)

An employee expressed concern that another employee had been promoted into a position requiring a degree “from an accredited college or university,” claiming that the degree was not from an accredited college or university. Review by HR and the Ethics Officer with the concerned employee found that the college in question was accredited by the “Association for Online Academic Excellence.” The promoted employee had, therefore, met the requirements described in the minimum qualifications. If the intent is for degrees to come from colleges accredited through vehicles deemed appropriate by the U.S. Department of Education, HR was advised by the Ethics Officer to change the language in upcoming job announcements to specify that. However, because of continuing concern, this matter is referred to the October 3, 2005 Intake Committee.

Disposition: Pending

7. September 12, 2005 Contractor Relations (121)

This is a concern, previously thought to be resolved, regarding a potential subcontractor who was dropped by the prime contractor. The Assistant Group Manager’s belief is that the matter was handled appropriately by the prime, but that Metropolitan needs to be careful not to be perceived to be offering 'advice' as to who prime contractors should bring on with subcontractors. The Ethics Officer was approached by three employees with continuing concerns on this matter. The Assistant Group Manager has been approached with additional questions.

Disposition: Pending