

● Ethics Officer's March 2009 Monthly Report

Summary

This report provides a general update on the progress and activities for the Ethics Office for March 2009.

Attachments

None

Detailed Report

Activities

1. The Ethics Officer is working with External Affairs and the Legal Department in revising Operating Policy H-03 Ethics Policy – Involvement in Community or Political Activities.
2. The Ethics Officer is working with General Counsel to revise the Administrative Code regarding Ethics Office investigation and enforcement processes.
3. The Ethics Office distributed bookmarks to all employees. The bookmark contains our core values and acts as a reminder that the Ethics Office is here to serve our employees.
4. The Ethics Educator gave ethics presentations to 297 employees and managers at Lake Mathews, Weymouth and Jensen.
5. The Ethics Office staff conducted Day 1 employee orientation for two new hires and Day 2 orientation for two employees.
6. The Ethics Office Web site logged 1,031 visitors from March 1-31, 2009.

Logged Questions and Matters of Concern

1. **February 5, 2009 – Issue: Nepotism**
A query was received from an employee regarding whether his/her relative was eligible to do business with Metropolitan. Metropolitan's policies were reviewed as it applies to this specific situation and it was found that Metropolitan may contract with the relative of an employee as long as usual procedures are followed and the employee has no involvement in attaining or monitoring the contract or business transaction. (342)
Disposition: Closed
2. **February 25, 2009 – Issue: Favoritism**
An anonymous concern was received regarding the alleged distribution of interview questions to potential candidates applying for a position at Metropolitan. The investigation of the matter is complete. It was found that all of the interviewees were given the interview questions 10 minutes prior to their interview. (346)
Disposition: Closed
3. **March 5, 2009 – Issue: Conflicts of Interest/Commitment**
A query was received from an employee regarding whether Gil Garcetti's book, "Water is Key" may be offered for sale at an event sponsored by six Metropolitan employee associations. Metropolitan is not benefiting monetarily from the sale of the book and there is no conflict of interest. (347)
Disposition: Closed

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4. **March 9, 2009 – Issue: Outside Employment**

A query was received from an employee regarding whether he/she could serve as an expert witness in litigation case unrelated to Metropolitan. The matter was reviewed by the Ethics Office and the Legal Department and the employee may serve as an expert witness. (348)

Disposition: Closed

5. **March 18, 2009 – Issue: Outside Employment**

A query was received from an employee regarding whether he/she could provide services to a member agency on his/her own time. The employee has been asked to provide further information regarding the nature of the services. (349)

Disposition: Pending

6. **March 18, 2009 – Issue: Policy Issues**

A query was received from an employee regarding the alleged mishandling of medical benefits claims. The employee was referred to Human Resources. (350)

Disposition: Closed

7. **March 18, 2009 – Issue: Procurement**

A query was received from an employee regarding employee discounts from Grainger. Grainger offers discounts as part of a wider government program. Metropolitan employees are not targeted or given exclusive discounts. Metropolitan employees may accept Grainger's discount. (351)

Disposition: Closed

8. **March 19, 2009 – Issue: Outside Employment**

A query was received from an employee regarding whether he/she could provide consulting services for a company located outside of the United States. It was found that Metropolitan does not contract with this company. There is no conflict of interest. (352)

Disposition: Closed

9. **March 19, 2009 – Issue: Outside Employment**

A query was received from an employee regarding whether he/she could provide consulting work to a local company on issues unrelated to Metropolitan. As the employee does not represent Metropolitan, completes the work on his/her own time, and Metropolitan does not contract with this company, there is no conflict of interest. (353)

Disposition: Closed

10. **March 19, 2009 – Issue: Theft of Time**

An anonymous concern was received from the hotline regarding a co-worker who allegedly misreports his/her work time. The matter is under investigation. (354)

Disposition: Pending

11. **March 19, 2009 – Issue: Policy Issues**

An anonymous concern was received from the hotline regarding a co-worker who allegedly smokes in non-smoking areas. The matter is under investigation. (355)

Disposition: Pending

12. **March 24, 2009 – Issue: Outside Employment**

A concern was received regarding an employee's outside business activities. The employee may not imply in any way that he/she represents Metropolitan, its technology, or anything that Metropolitan has approved. He/she may not use anything that has any Metropolitan identification on it, including PowerPoint presentations. The employee must adhere to Operating Policy H-03. (356)

Disposition: Closed

13. **March 24, 2009 – Issue: Favoritism**

A concern was received from an employee that a co-worker was allegedly given the opportunity to obtain skills necessary for a special project while other employees who had the necessary skills for the special projects were overlooked. The matter is under investigation. (357)

Disposition: Pending

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14. **March 26, 2009 – Issue: Conflicts of Interest/Commitment**

Two queries were received from an employee regarding Gil Garcetti's presentation on the World Water Crisis. The employee inquired if a conflict of interest existed between the participating organizations and if there is an obligation to allow each organization equal time. No conflicts were found and allowing one organization venue does not create an obligation to offer similar venues to everyone. (358)

Disposition: Closed

15. **March 30, 2009 – Issue: Conflicts of Interest/Commitment**

A query was received from an employee if a conflict of interest exists if he/she provides expert advice regarding the effectiveness of a residential water controller. Metropolitan does not have a business relationship with the company and the employee will work on this project on his/her own time. There is no conflict of interest. (359)

Disposition: Closed