



- Ethics Officer's February 2010 Monthly Report

Summary

This report provides a general update on the progress and activities for the Ethics Office for February 2010.

Attachments

None

Detailed Report

Activities

1. Operating Policy H-03 Ethics Policy was sent out for the annual employee review in February 2010.
2. The Metropolitan Employee Ethics Manual and Ethics Manual for Contractors are being vetted by ethics office staff for policy updates.
3. The Ethics Educator gave a presentation on ethical considerations of District-sponsored inspection trips for inspection trip leaders on February 10, 2010 at Metropolitan's Headquarters.
4. The Ethics Office staff conducted Day 1 orientation for five employees.
5. The Ethics Office Web site logged 1,109 visitors from February 1-28, 2010.

Logged Questions and Matters of Concern

1. **January 18, 2010 – Issue: Theft of Time**
A concern was received from an employee through the Hotline regarding the alleged theft of time by an employee. Management was alerted and reviewed the situation. While no violations were noted, Management is committed to ensuring that District time not be abused and will monitor the situation closely. (441)
Disposition: Closed
2. **February 8, 2010 – Issue: Outside Employment**
A query was received from an employee regarding self employment. The work to be performed is not related to the employee's Metropolitan work; the work will be performed on the employee's own time, and will be performed outside of the State of California. There is no conflict with this outside work activity. (445)
Disposition: Closed
3. **February 16, 2010 – Issue: Policy Issues**
An employee expressed concern about a peer taking overly long breaks. As this matter, believed to be closed, was brought again to the attention of the Ethics office, the Ethics Officer again discussed the matter with management. The supervisor discussed the matter with the employee and will monitor the situation. (425)
Disposition: Closed
4. **February 16, 2010 – Issue: Retaliation**
A concern was received from an employee regarding alleged retaliation by his/her manager. The matter was referred to the EEO Office as this matter is currently under investigation. (446)
Disposition: Closed

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5. **February 16, 2010 – Issue: Director Conflict of Interest/Commitment / Conflict of Interest/Commitment**

Two queries were received regarding the board appointed Blue Ribbon Committee. In response to the first query, the Committee is subject to the Brown Act and will be agendized as a meeting open to the public. In response to the second query, the members of the Blue Ribbon are not subject to the same reporting requirements as Board members because they are not serving as statutory officers of the agency. However, members who believe that their actions might create the perception of a conflict of interest in particular situations are encouraged to recuse themselves from voting on those matters. (447/448)

Disposition: Closed

6. **February 16, 2010 – Release of Proprietary or Confidential Information**

A concern was received from an employee regarding the alleged release of confidential information. As the matter was simultaneously reported to other departments, the Ethics Office will not intervene until management has had an opportunity to address the situation. The Ethics Office does not double-handle concerns. (449)

Disposition: Closed

7. **February 17, 2010 – Issue: Gifts**

A query was received from an employee regarding whether or not to accept a gift card from a vendor. The employee was advised to return the card to the vendor with a short note advising the vendor that Metropolitan employees may not accept gifts for doing their Metropolitan work (Administrative Code § 7130(c)). (450)

Disposition: Closed

8. **February 18, 2010 – Issue: Nepotism**

A query was received from an employee regarding whether a relative of a current employee may be employed if the chain of command is the same but they would have different supervisors, work at different locations, and work with different teams. This is allowable under Operating Policy H-03, Nepotism. (451)

Disposition: Closed

9. **February 25, 2010 – Issue: Misuse of MWD Resources**

A query was received requesting clarification of “incidental use” of Metropolitan’s mail system by employees. The employee was informed that the incidental use should not disrupt work flow or place unnecessary burden on employees. What counts as “incidental use” is up to the discretion of the employee’s manager. A copy of the General Manager’s memorandum to all employees regarding incidental use was forwarded to the employee. (452)

Disposition: Closed

10. **February 25, 2010 – Issue: Policy Issue**

A query was received from an employee regarding whether an employee may participate in webinars (on line seminars) during work hours. If the training is work related and approved by the employee’s supervisor it is allowed. (453)

Disposition: Closed