

CALLING ALL HEROES



How the
Whistleblower
Code protects
people like you

SEEC



SEATTLE ETHICS &
ELECTIONS COMMISSION

YOU'RE AN HONEST, DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVANT.

You've devoted your career to public service and take pride in what you accomplish. Hopefully,

you'll spend your whole career with the City

of Seattle

alongside

co-workers

who share

your

commitment

to honor and

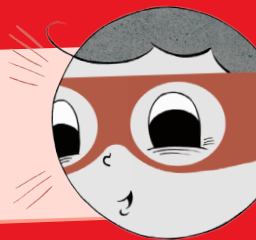
excellence.



But... What if you saw a co-worker doing their job in a way that endangered the public's health or safety? What if you saw a colleague wasting your department's budget? What if you saw a manager violating a law? What should you do?

Be brave and be smart: report any wrongdoing to the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission. It's part of what it means to be a public servant, taking pride in doing your part to protect the City and the people it serves.

*One person can
make a difference!*

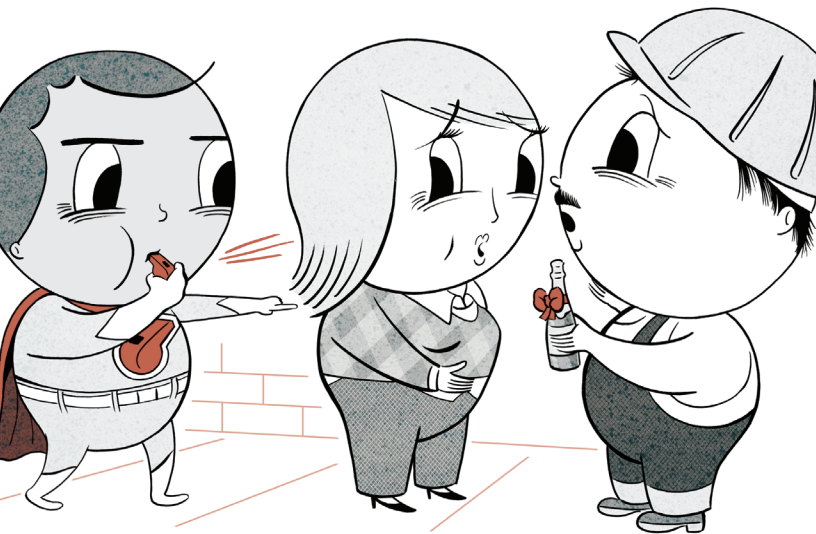


You're Right To Report a Wrong

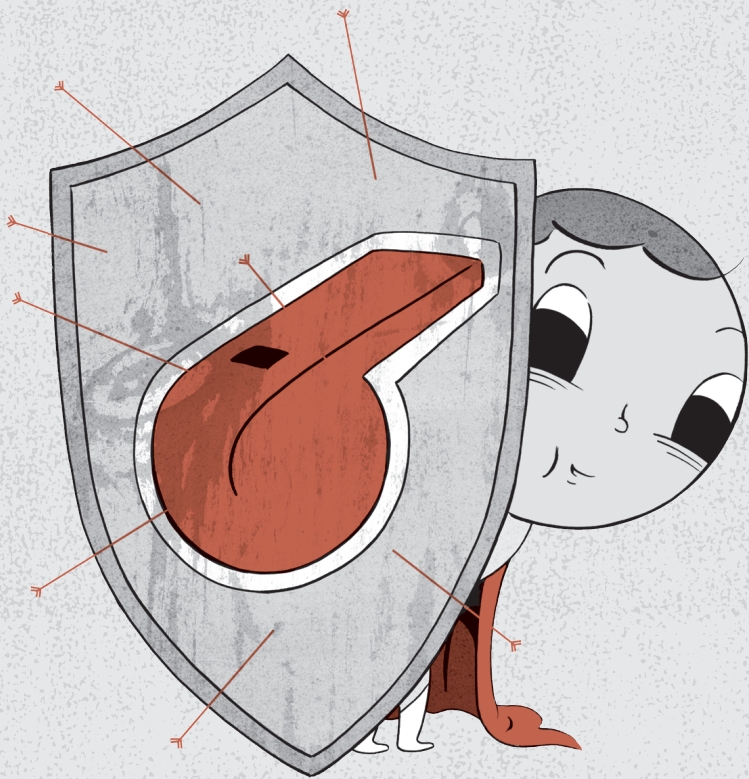
The City Can't Solve Problems It Doesn't Know About

YOU DON'T NEED SUPERPOWERS to do the right thing. If you suspect misconduct or know of wrongdoing, be part of the solution by making a report. Unsure whether to report? Get in touch with Ethics and Elections. It's simple: call us at 684-8500, e-mail us at ethicsandelections@seattle.gov, or stop by our offices on the 40th floor of the Municipal Tower. We can discuss your rights and responsibilities under the Whistleblower Code. We can answer questions, explain the process, and discuss ways to help you protect yourself under the Code. You are in the driver's seat, calling for information is not a report.

When we receive your report, we take it from there. We take a preliminary look at your complaint and if it has merit we'll conduct a thorough, independent investigation. In a few cases we refer the complaint to another office. Regardless of what happens, we keep your name confidential.



Of course, there are some things the Whistleblower Protection Code doesn't cover. If you are reporting your own misconduct or making a report in bad faith, filing a report with us won't protect you. Or if you believe that a personnel action wasn't right—you were denied a promotion you should have received, or unfairly disciplined, or any similar workplace action unrelated to an ethics violation report—that can't be investigated by our office. (You may want to contact the Civil Service Commission with these kinds of issues.)

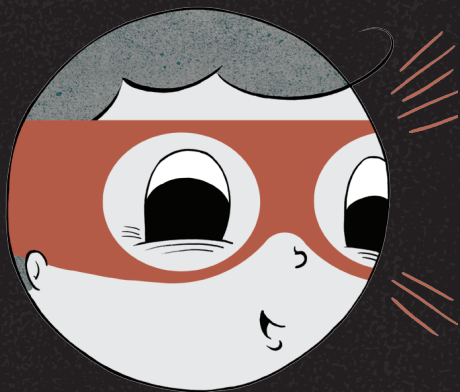


You're Protected When You Take a Stand

Zero Tolerance for Retaliation

Under the Whistleblower Protection Code, there is zero tolerance for retaliating against an employee who makes a good faith report to our office or to a person in their chain of command. But what do you do if after making a report, you suddenly find yourself demoted, reassigned, denied a promotion or face some similar adverse change in the terms of your employment?

You have 180 days from the date you believe you have been retaliated against to file a written complaint with the Seattle Ethics & Elections Commission specifying how you were retaliated against and what you would like done to rectify the situation.



YOUR SECRET IDENTITY

If you make a report to our office, we will keep your identity confidential unless we receive a court order requiring us to disclose your identity. We take our responsibility to protect whistleblowers very seriously.

OBSTRUCTION

If a fellow employee intimidates, obstructs or interferes directly or indirectly with your right to contact the Commission to report your concern or cooperate in an inquiry, they are violating the Ethics Code. Call us if you believe this is happening.

The time to bring a retaliation complaint is limited. If you believe you are being retaliated against, call us as soon as possible.

MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

Did you know statistics show that managers receive more reports from whistleblowers than any other person or outside agency? So, what do you do when you receive a report? What is your responsibility?

Take the report seriously. Listen carefully, and gather all of the information (ideally in writing). Ask lots of questions.

Thank the employee for bringing the matter to your attention. Let them know you value them for coming forward and that they need to come to you immediately if they believe that someone is retaliating against them for making a report.

Call Ethics or HR to get guidance on next steps. If you do nothing with the report, that could come back to bite you and your department.

WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO

The SEEC is an independent City Commission that administers and enforces four codes covering Whistleblower Protection, Ethics, Elections, and Lobbying. The six member SEEC staff investigates allegations of wrongdoing, and provides advice and training to all levels of government. The Commission has the authority to impose fines for violations of the Ethics, Elections, and Lobbying Disclosure Codes.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER!

The SEEC conducts regular trainings that are advertised through the Personnel Department. We're also happy to come to your office and discuss the Codes we administer with you or your entire team.

If you want to know more about how the Whistleblower Protection Code works for you, give us a call or stop by our office. If you'd like, you can review the Code yourself at SMC 4.20.800 through 4.20.860. You can also visit us at www.seattle.gov/whistleblower or via inweb at inweb/ethics.



MAILING ADDRESS:

P.O. Box 94729
Seattle, WA 98124-4729



STREET ADDRESS:

700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4010
Seattle, WA 98104

MAILSTOP: SMT-40-10

PHONE: (206) 684-8500 Fax: (206) 684-8590

E-MAIL: ethicsandelections@seattle.gov

WEB: <http://www.seattle.gov/whistleblower>

