



Department of Commerce ★ Office of Inspector General

How Commerce OIG Supports and Protects Whistleblowers

Commerce OIG's mission—to improve Department of Commerce programs and operations through independent and objective oversight—is aided greatly by whistleblowers' protected disclosures.



Whistleblower Disclosures Assist Commerce OIG Oversight Efforts

Whistleblowers make important contributions in keeping our government honest, efficient, and accountable.

Whistleblower reports can save lives, protect taxpayer funds, and help stop fraud, waste, abuse, and gross mismanagement, among other types of wrongdoing.



Commerce OIG Supports Whistleblowers

To support whistleblowers, OIG:

- ✓ Operates a **"24/7," publicly available hotline** for anyone to report suspected violations
- ✓ **Investigates whistleblower retaliation complaints** from Department personnel and employees of federal contractors and grantees, referring complaints to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) when appropriate
- ✓ Maintains a **Whistleblower Protection Program**, in accordance with OSC's 2302(c) Certification Program
- ✓ **Educates Department employees about protections for whistleblowers** against reprisal, as well as rights and remedies for those who experience retaliation



Commerce OIG Takes Allegations of Whistleblower Retaliation Seriously

OIG can investigate allegations of whistleblower retaliation brought by Department employees, uniformed NOAA Corps officers, federal contractors, and recipients of federal grants.



Whistleblower Protections, Rights, and Education

Retaliation against whistleblowers is unlawful. Commerce OIG works to ensure all Department employees know the rights and the remedies available to whistleblowers who make protected disclosures.

Commerce OIG's Whistleblower Protection Program:

- Educates Department personnel about prohibitions on retaliation for protected disclosures
- Educates Department employees who have made or are considering making a protected disclosure about the rights and remedies available to them
- Helps ensure that OIG promptly reviews complaints and communicates effectively with whistleblowers throughout the process



Regulations Governing Whistleblower Protections

- The Whistleblower Protection Act (5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(8)-(9)) protects federal employees.
- The Military Whistleblower Protection Act (10 U.S.C. § 1034) protects uniformed service members, including NOAA Corps officers.
- The National Defense Authorization Act for 2013 (41 U.S.C. § 4712) protects federal contractors, subcontractors, grantees, subgrantees, and personal service contractors.
- Presidential Policy Directive 19 (PPD-19) protects federal employees from whistleblower retaliation in the form of any action affecting an employee's eligibility for access to classified information.



Contact the Whistleblower Protection Coordinator

Contact Commerce OIG's Whistleblower Protection Coordinator at WBCoordinator@oig.doc.gov with questions about employee, contractor, grantee, or subcontractor/subgrantee rights under whistleblower protection laws and for more information.

The Whistleblower Protection Coordinator can provide information but is not permitted to act as a legal representative, agent, or advocate for employees or former employees.

REPORT suspected fraud, waste, and abuse through Commerce OIG's hotline:

<https://www.oig.doc.gov/Pages/Hotline.aspx>

Toll-Free 800-424-5197

Allegations can be reported anonymously.