

Policy statement

Leduc County is committed to the corporate values of effective leadership, integrity, accessible government and a safe environment for residents and staff. The municipality is further committed to creating and maintaining a working environment in which employees and/or contractors can, in good faith, report acts of wrongdoing without fear of retaliation.

Definitions

Employee means any person directly employed by Leduc County.

Contractor means an individual or company hired to perform work on behalf of Leduc County.

Independent third-party service provider means an independent service provider that accepts and reviews whistleblower complaints on behalf of Leduc County.

Retaliation means retribution or reprisal against any complainant as a result of their reporting an incident of wrongdoing, or against any employee that participates in an investigation relating to the allegation of wrongdoing.

Whistleblower administrative procedure means the processes and steps an employee and/or a contractor can take to register a whistleblower complaint.

Wrongdoing means an act or omission that constitutes one or more of the following:

- a contravention of federal or provincial legislation or regulations;
- misuse or gross mismanagement of municipal funds or assets, or civil fraud;
- an act or omission that creates a substantial and specific danger to life, health or safety of any person, or to the environment, other than a danger inherent in performance of a person’s duties as an employee or contractor;
- a serious breach of the Municipality’s Code of Conduct.

Policy authority

Legislative implications:

- All whistleblower investigations will be undertaken in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)*, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act* and other applicable legislation.

Other implications:

- All whistleblower investigations will be undertaken in accordance with the guidelines in the whistleblower administrative procedures.

Policy standards

1. Whistleblower investigations will be conducted in a professional, expedient, respectful and confidential manner.
2. Whistleblower complaints can be directed, as appropriate, by employees and/or municipal contractors to: supervisors, managers, directors, general managers, the deputy county manager, the county manager, or to human resources.
3. Whistleblowers will also have the option to present their complaint to an independent third-party service provider for review.

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4. The Whistleblower policy will not be used to bring fraudulent or malicious complaints. Any complaint made in bad faith, if demonstrated as being such through convincing evidence, will result in disciplinary action being taken against the individual or contractor.

Policy responsibilities

Council responsibilities:

Council will,

- Approve the Whistleblower Policy.
- Review this Policy at a minimum of once every four years to ensure that the policy complies with all current, relevant legislation, municipal policies and the spirit and intent of Whistleblower Policy.
- Promote and support the Whistleblower Policy.

Administration responsibilities:

The County Manager, or designate, will,

- Direct administration to develop the necessary administrative procedures to implement this policy; and approve those administrative procedures.
- Advise council if a whistleblower complaint has serious imminent risk to the municipality or may involve past, present or imminent criminal activity.

Department directors and managers will,

- Ensure staff understand the process for filing a complaint under this administrative procedure.
- Ensure that all whistleblower complaints that are filed are investigated in accordance with the whistleblower administrative procedures.
- Ensure that human resources is consulted for any complaints filed against an employee.
- Allow adequate time and resources to be dedicated to the investigation of a whistleblower complaint.
- Ensure the confidentiality of all whistleblower complaints.

Communications staff will,

- Provide communications support to council and/or the county manager with respect to the communication of a whistleblower complaint that has serious or imminent risk to the municipality.

Human Resources will,

- Receive allegations from a complainant or screened by the third-party service provider and investigate the allegations in a confidential, expedient and thorough manner.
- Inform administration, as appropriate, of the results of the investigation.
- Ensure all documents are filed confidentially.

Leduc County staff will,

- Seek to understand the process for filing a whistleblower complaint by reviewing the whistleblower administrative procedure.
- Report in good faith any acts of wrongdoing under the steps outlined in the Whistleblower administrative procedure.

Monitoring and updating

- This policy will be posted on Leduc County's website.
- This policy will be reviewed at least once every four years.

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