

The Foreign Service's whistleblowing poster

Guidelines for Notification of Unacceptable Circumstances in the Foreign Service, cf. section 2-4 of the Working Environment Act

What is whistleblowing?	Whistleblowing is reporting unacceptable circumstances in the organisation.
What are unacceptable circumstances?	Unacceptable circumstances are circumstances involving a breach of legislation, internal guidelines or ethical norms, e.g. bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination, drug abuse, a poor working environment, circumstances that endanger employees' lives or health, hazardous products, embezzlement, theft, fraud, corruption, breach of trust, etc.
Who can whistleblow?	The guidelines apply to all employees in the Foreign Service, including local employees and honorary consuls. They also apply to secondees, trainees and consultants. External persons who have no connection with the Foreign Service may also report any circumstances they find unacceptable. In such cases these guidelines apply insofar as they are appropriate.
How do I whistleblow?	You can whistleblow in writing or orally, e.g. by telephone, email or letter, or in person.
To whom should I whistleblow?	<p>As a general rule, you should contact your immediate superior or a more senior line manager. You may also whistleblow indirectly through an employee representative, health and safety representative, colleague, lawyer or other adviser.</p> <p>If you are not employed in the Foreign Service, or if you are a Foreign Service employee but prefer to notify through a channel other than your line management, you may report incidents directly to the Foreign Service Control Unit or the Foreign Service's external reporting channel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sentral kontrollenhet (Foreign Service Control Unit): email: s-kontrollenhet@mfa.no; telephone: +47-23950722, +47-23951167, +47-23951433, +4723951176, +4723950976; Utenriksdepartementet, Postboks 8114 Dep., 0032 Oslo; or office address: Kronprinsensgate 9, 0251 Oslo.• BDO AS: email: integrity@bdo.no; Telephone: +47 970 86 000; postal address: BDO AS, Postbox 1704 Vika, 0121 Oslo, mark the envelope 'Varsel'; or office address: BDO AS, Munkedamsveien 45, Vika Atrium, 0121 Oslo. <p>In addition, you always have the right to whistleblow to a supervisory body or other public authority (for example the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority, the Data Inspectorate or the Police).</p>
Do I have the right to whistleblow?	As an employee you have the right to report unacceptable circumstances in the organisation.
Duty to report! What do I have a duty to report, and to whom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ You have a duty to immediately notify the employer, the health and safety representative and, insofar as necessary, other employees of any defects or hazards that could pose a threat to life or health unless you are able to remedy the situation yourself.○ You have a duty to notify the employer or the health and safety representative of any harassment, bullying or discrimination at the workplace.○ You have a duty to notify the employer if an employee is injured at the workplace or contracts an illness you believe is due to his/her work or circumstances at the workplace.○ You have a duty to notify the employer of any circumstances that could cause loss or injury to the employer, employees or the local environment, see the ethical guidelines for the civil service.
As health and safety representative, do I have a special duty to report?	Health and safety representatives have a special duty to report under the Working Environment Act. If a health and safety representative learns of circumstances that could result in accidents or health hazards, he/she is to immediately notify the

	employees at the location. If the report is not followed up within a reasonable space of time, the health and safety representative is to notify the working environment committee or the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority.
What should the report include?	The report should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your full name (but you can choose to remain anonymous) • Your place of service (this may be omitted if you wish to remain anonymous) • Date of your report • The period, and date and time if applicable, of the circumstances concerned • Exactly what you have observed • The place where the incident occurred • Other witnesses • Any known previous incidents involving the same person(s).
What is required of the whistleblower?	You must proceed in a responsible manner. What is deemed to be a responsible manner depends on an overall assessment of the situation. This includes considering whether your criticism is well founded and whether you have given due consideration to the employer's legitimate interests in the way you proceed. <p>In any event, you always have the right to report in accordance with your duty to report or the organisation's whistleblowing routines; see section 2–4, subsection 2, second sentence, of the Working Environment Act.</p> <p>In addition, you always have the right to whistleblow to a supervisory body or other public authority (for example the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority, the Data Inspectorate or the Police).</p>
Can I go to the media? (public whistleblowing)	According to Article 100 of the Constitution, which concerns freedom of expression, you are entitled to speak your mind in the general public debate, including criticising circumstances related to your place of work. However, the non-statutory duty of loyalty dictates that you may not harm your employer's interests or activities by speaking negatively of them in public unless this is justified. The requirement that you must proceed in a responsible manner generally means that whistleblowing should be carried out through the organisation's internal channels and to public supervisory bodies. This requirement is more stringent with regard to public whistleblowing, i.e. via the media, blogs, websites, emails to multiple recipients outside the organisation and other communication channels that reach a large and open group of recipients.
What principles apply when dealing with such cases?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All reports are to be taken seriously • All reports are to be dealt with immediately • The whistleblower may choose to remain anonymous • Anonymous sources can be as valuable as open ones • The various methods of whistleblowing are to be given equal weight • Reports are to be dealt with confidentially • It must be possible to use the whistleblowing system without fear of the consequences • The whistleblower should be given feedback within reasonable time (unless he or she has chosen to be anonymous)
Who deals with the report? What is the procedure?	The employer decides who is to be involved in dealing with the case and what measures should be taken, according to the type of case and who it involves. <p>All documents relating to the case are to be registered and filed, and otherwise dealt with in accordance with the organisation's rules.</p>
Will I get any feedback?	The whistleblower will, if possible, receive confirmation that his or her report has been received. Any questions concerning access to information regarding the case are governed by the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, the Public Administration Act, the Personal Data Act and other relevant legislation.
Are there any restrictions with regard to whistleblowing?	The provisions concerning the duty of secrecy, defamation, etc., apply notwithstanding the right to notify pursuant to the Working Environment Act.
Will I put myself at risk?	Retaliation against an employee who whistleblows is prohibited.
Consideration for the	In cases where the employer decides to pursue the matter further, the person who

person who has been reported	has been reported should, as a general rule, be made aware of the report and the information it contains. This gives the person concerned the opportunity to present his or her version of the matter. When the case has been concluded, the person who has been reported is to be informed immediately, regardless of the outcome.
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