



Auditor's OpenCity Tipline

City of Portland



OpenCity Tipline Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the Auditor's OpenCity Tipline?

The City Auditor established the OpenCity Tipline (previously known as the Fraud Alert line) to provide City employees and the public with a method for reporting suspected fraud, waste or misuse of City resources, and abuse of position through the EthicsPoint system. Reports will be administered by the Office of the Ombudsman, a division of the City Auditor's Office. After an initial review, reports may be investigated further by the Ombudsman or may be referred to a more appropriate authority for resolution.

Q: What is EthicsPoint?

EthicsPoint is a private company that provides hotline and case management solutions for over 2200 clients in over 300 industries. Their comprehensive and confidential reporting tool allows employees and the public to report suspected fraud, waste or misuse of City resources, and abuse of position.

Q: What kinds of things should I report?

The Auditor's OpenCity Tipline was established to report suspected fraud, waste or misuse of City resources, and abuse of position. For a guideline to filing an Auditor's OpenCity Tipline report, review the reportable incident examples noted on the Office of the Ombudsman's website (www.portlandoregon.gov/auditor/ombudsman) or you may view the available report types at www.opencitytipline.com.

Q: May I report using either the Internet or the telephone?

Yes. By giving you choices, the EthicsPoint system helps ensure that individuals can file a report anonymously and in the manner most comfortable or convenient to them.

- Reporters can access the Auditor's OpenCity Tipline in a variety of ways:
- Proceed directly to the City of Portland EthicsPoint reporting page at www.opencitytipline.com to submit an online report.
- Access EthicsPoint at this address from any computer in the world www.ethicspoint.com. Follow the "File New Report" link and enter "City of Portland."
- Call EthicsPoint at 1-866-342-4148 (toll free) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Reports will be taken by a live intake specialist. Calls are not recorded and caller ID is disabled.

Q: Why do we need the Auditor’s OpenCity Tipline?

- The presence of a reporting system reinforces the message that all City officials, managers, and employees are expected to follow the highest standards of ethical and legal behavior and to act as stewards of public resources.
- A reporting system administered by the elected, independent Auditor ensures objective review of reports.
- An effective reporting system can be the most useful tool in reducing losses due to fraud, waste or misuse of City resources, and abuse of position.

Q: Do City officials and managers really want me to report?

Yes. In fact, the City needs you to report. You know what is going on in the City of Portland, both good and bad. You may have initial knowledge of an activity that may be cause for concern. Your reporting can minimize the potential negative impact on the City of Portland, its employees, and the public. Also, offering input may help identify issues that can improve the City’s organizational culture and performance.

Q: If I see a violation, shouldn’t I just report it to my supervisor or Human Resources and let them deal with it?

Many situations – such as general concerns about a co-worker or the work environment – are more appropriately discussed with your supervisor or a Human Resources official. However there are several reasons why you may choose to use the Auditor’s OpenCity Tipline.

The EthicsPoint system was selected to ensure that your report gets dealt with appropriately. That may or may not happen if you simply report something to your supervisor, Human Resources, or some other official, especially when dealing with issues not under his/her control.

Q: What if my boss or other managers are involved in a violation? Might they get the report and start a cover-up?

The Auditor’s OpenCity Tipline and the EthicsPoint system are designed so that implicated parties are not notified or granted access to reports they have been named in.

Q: It is my understanding that any report I send from a City computer generates a server log that shows every website my PC connects with, and won’t this log identify me as a report originator?

Most people prefer to report from home after hours and on the weekend. The EthicsPoint system does not generate or maintain any internal connection logs with IP addresses, so no information linking your personal PC to EthicsPoint is available. (The City of Portland has the ability to monitor Internet activity, although no Internet log would allow access to actual reports. However, if you are worried about the possibility of such an Internet log being reviewed, we recommend that no City computer be used to submit a report.)

Q: Can I file an Auditor's OpenCity Tipline online report from home and still remain anonymous?

A report from home, a neighbor's computer, or any Internet portal will remain secure and anonymous. EthicsPoint strips away Internet addresses so that anonymity is maintained. Plus, EthicsPoint is contractually committed not to pursue a reporter's identity.

Q: Can I file an Auditor's OpenCity Tipline report if I don't have access to the Internet?

You can file an Auditor's OpenCity Tipline report even if you don't have Internet access or are uncomfortable using a computer. The Auditor's OpenCity Tipline is toll free and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at 1-866-342-4148.

Q: Is the telephone toll-free Auditor's OpenCity Tipline anonymous and confidential too?

These reports have the same security and confidentiality measures as an Internet-based report and an interviewer will type your responses into the EthicsPoint reporting system.

Q: What if I was to be identified with my report?

You may choose to identify yourself when making your report to the Auditor's OpenCity Tipline through the EthicsPoint system. Information reported must be sufficient and credible before a preliminary review will be initiated by the Office of the Ombudsman, a division in the Auditor's Office already responsible for investigating complaints and concerns about city agencies. Having the name of the reporter and supporting documents or as much detailed information as possible included with a report can assist with expediting and facilitating a preliminary review and any subsequent formal investigation.

Q: Where do these reports go? Who can access them?

Auditor's OpenCity Tipline reports are entered directly on the EthicsPoint secure server to prevent any possible breach in security. The reports are screened by staff in the City Auditor's Office of the Ombudsman, who can then communicate with the reporter using the EthicsPoint system.

When you file a report at the EthicsPoint website or through the EthicsPoint call center, you receive a unique user name and are asked to choose a password. You can return to the EthicsPoint system again either by Internet or telephone and access the original report to answer questions posed by the Office of the Ombudsman and add further information that will help resolve open issues.

Q: Are follow-ups on reports as secure as the first report?

All subsequent EthicsPoint correspondence is as secure as the initial report.

Q: I am not sure what I have observed is a violation of City policy, or involves fraud, but it just does not look right to me. What should I do?

Review the reportable incidents examples noted on the Office of the Ombudsman's website (www.portlandoregon.gov/auditor/ombudsman) or you may view the available report types at www.opencitytipline.com as your guidelines for filing an Auditor's OpenCity Tipline report.