



AUDITOR-CONTROLLER'S OFFICE

Employee Fraud Hotline Report

For the Period July through December 2020 Update #39

I am pleased to present the Semiannual Report of the Employee Fraud Hotline for the period July through December 2020. The Employee Fraud Hotline was established as an avenue to report fraud, waste, and abuse occurring at the County of Ventura. I encourage employees to resolve concerns through their normal administrative channels whenever possible. However, the Employee Fraud Hotline provides an alternative reporting mechanism to ensure that concerns about possible wrongdoing in our County government are properly addressed. This report reflects information provided to the Board of Supervisors on January 26, 2021.

Jeffery S. Burgh Auditor-Controller

THREE WAYS TO CONTACT THE HOTLINE

Call:

(805) 644-6019

Write:

Employee Fraud Hotline
Ventura County Auditor-Controller
Administration Building L#1540
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

E-Mail *:

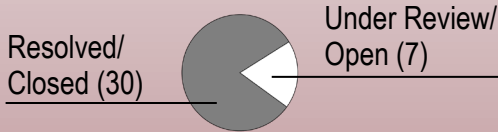
Fraud.Hotline@ventura.org

* E-mail is not confidential



HOTLINE ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE . . . During July through December 2020, the Employee Fraud Hotline received 37 new complaints, of which we pursued 15 (41%). We did not pursue 19 of the new issues because the complainants were redirected to other hotlines or other appropriate agencies, and we did not pursue 3 issues due to insufficient information.

As of December 31, 2020, most of the 37 new issues have been resolved/closed:



During July through December 2020, we resolved/closed 39 out of the 51 total Hotline issues that were under review/open. Specifically, we resolved/closed 30 out of 37 new complaints, and we resolved/closed 9 out of 14 open complaints from prior periods.

Summary Outcomes of 39 Hotline Issues Resolved/Closed during July-December 2020

Table with 2 columns: Outcome and Count. Rows include Substantiated (7), Unsubstantiated (3), Redirected to Other Hotlines/Agencies (19), and Insufficient Information (10).

Most of the new complaints were made by phone:

Contact Method

Table with 2 columns: Contact Method and Percentage. Rows include Phone (76%), U.S. or Interoffice Mail (13%), and Email (11%).

DESCRIPTION OF SUBSTANTIATED COMPLAINTS

- 1. Violation of Security Affidavit. Some employees in a County department shared generic work email addresses, which gave employees access to others' system logon IDs and temporary passwords in violation of signed system security affidavits. The shared email accounts were disabled and individual email addresses were created for all department staff.
2. Violation of Safety Protocols. A County employee did not check that a client's child was strapped properly in a car seat before the employee started driving, although the employee did stop the vehicle shortly thereafter so the child could be secured. The supervisor discussed the incident with the employee and provided the employee with training on proper safety protocols for car seats and safe driving guidelines.
3. Working Another Job While on Leave of Absence. A County employee was working another job while on leave of absence. The employee resigned from County employment.

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DESCRIPTION OF SUBSTANTIATED COMPLAINTS

4. **Theft of Food Intended for a Client.** A County employee assigned as a Disaster Service Worker took food intended for a client and gave the food to other County employees. The affected agency recovered what was left of the food, terminated the employee's assignment as a Disaster Service Worker, and notified the employee's primary department supervisor to handle the discipline.
5. **Violation of County Policy to Wear Face Coverings.** A County employee and some employees of a County contractor were not in adherence with the County's policy requiring the use of face coverings while working at a County facility. The agency took action to ensure all involved are wearing face coverings and sent an email to all of the agency's supervisors/managers reiterating the need for all employees to comply with the policy.
6. **Falsifying Timesheets.** A County program worker (Worker A) appeared to have signed the timesheets on behalf of another worker (Worker B) who may not have been present at work, for which Worker B was paid approximately \$2,630. Program management will handle this matter in accordance with the program's fraud referral process, which may involve referring this matter to the designated State of California department for further investigation.
7. **Excessive Personal Phone Calls.** A County employee spent excessive work time on personal calls using a County phone. The employee was issued a Confirmation of Counseling, reminded of the County policies, and notified that further misuse of equipment and/or waste of County time will lead to the next disciplinary action.