



# WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

## SANTROPOL ROULANT

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# Whistleblowing Policy

## Preamble

Santropol Roulant is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service, community care, and ethics within its public life and all of its practices. To achieve these ends, it encourages freedom of speech. It also encourages staff to use internal mechanisms for reporting any malpractice, illegal acts, or omissions by its employees or ex-employees. The word whistleblowing in this Policy refers to the internal disclosure by workers of malpractice, as well as illegal acts or omissions at work.

## Purpose

This section describes the provisions for employees, Board Members, and volunteers who file reports to signal harmful, discriminatory or unethical behaviours within the organization. Whether accusations are true or false, the Roulant aims to protect those making a report by preventing victimization and other retaliatory behavior against them. It is important to create an environment where members are not afraid to speak up about any issues, as it is to the benefit of the Roulant and its entire community to resolve them as soon as possible. Ultimately, the goal of this policy is to cultivate a culture of integrity within the Roulant.

A non-retaliation (whistleblowing) policy is necessary for two reasons:

1. When reports are supported by a solid basis, they must be considered and action should be taken. Retaliation against a staff, volunteer, or Board member who brings attention to inconsistencies or violations harms the Roulant's trustworthiness and reliability.
2. Any kind of retaliatory action, whether intentional or unintentional, may expose the Roulant to legal risk. This policy demonstrates the importance of following all legal prohibitions for retaliation, and grants employees and the Board the right to speak about misconduct if and when they believe it is taking place. Those who report misconduct or suspected violation must be protected from retaliation.

## Scope

This policy applies to all prospective, current, and former employees, contractors, volunteers, and Board members of the organization. For the purposes of this policy, the terms 'employee' and 'staff' will be used to lighten the text, while referring to the collective parties noted above. Actions that often bring about retaliation include but are not limited to:

- Complaints about workplace harassment or discrimination, such as racism;
- Complaints about the Roulant's actions that may harm the environment or society;
- Disclosures of illegal activity, such as fraud or embezzlement;

- Violations against rights protected in labour standards;
- Participation in a pending investigation of misconduct or other violations.

Retaliation is in general defined as any kind of negative action against a current or former employee that takes the form of punishment, and creates a hostile, threatening or uncomfortable environment as a result of their reported complaint. Employees that are found to have retaliated would be subject to disciplinary action that may also result in termination. In these instances, employees are encouraged to approach the Direction with this disclosure, or in incidents involving the Direction, they are encouraged to approach the Board of Directors.

It's important to note that this policy refers to any circumstances, both when an employee's report is found to be true as well as circumstances when the report is baseless. The Roulant shall not consider the report's validity when it comes to non-retaliation principles, however managers, the direction and the board of directors have a responsibility to inform the reporting staff member of the outcome of their analysis following the report.

## Out of Scope Elements

Whistleblowing signals gross mismanagement that poses a risk to the organization or the general public. In this way, a number of areas would not constitute whistleblowing and as such would not be subject to this policy:

- A dispute between a staff member and the organization (such as a disagreement about scheduling, a performance review, delegation of work, a dispute regarding paid time off, or any other element related to interpersonal conflict with the administration of the Roulant);
- A grievance about a manager or colleague, a workload, a third party;
- A concern about simple mismanagement (such as poor supervision, lack of vision, or a dissatisfaction with the direction of a program);

Ultimately, personal grievances are not covered by this policy unless the particular case is also in the public interest, which includes the health and safety of the Roulant's membership. The Roulant's non-retaliation policy focuses specifically on staff reports of gross negligence that jeopardize the organization, and as such cannot be used as an outlet to air grievances.

## Forms of Retaliation

Retaliation in the workplace may be expressed in a variety of ways. These include but are not limited to:

- Victimization;
- Termination with cause or illegal retraction of benefits;
- Threat of termination;
- Discipline or suspension or the threat of discipline or suspension;

- Reduction of compensation;
- Poor work performance evaluation;
- Exclusion from corporate events or meetings;
- Defamation of character (prominent in cases of former employees);

## Use of Policy

Employees have the right to communicate problems, suggestions or issues to any manager. In instances where they believe that discriminatory or unethical behaviors are taking place, employees are encouraged to approach the Direction with this disclosure, or in incidents involving the Direction, they are encouraged to approach the Board of Directors by contacting the Board members that sit on the Human Resources committee.

This policy applies to all official or unofficial reports. Managers and the Direction have a responsibility to ensure that complaints will be kept confidential and that the investigation is the least disruptive as possible, both to those making the report and other members of the community as well.

Whistleblowing does not protect staff from disciplinary action unrelated to the issue being reported, nor restrict the administration from bringing disciplinary action against a staff member for unrelated misconduct. In these cases, particular attention needs to be paid to demonstrate, with official documentation, the unique character of the disciplinary procedure against the staff member, be fairly adapted to the performance problem at hand, and follow the appropriate timelines and gradation of measures as outlined in the disciplinary policy.

## Malicious allegations and complaints:

Any individual covered by this Policy who makes an allegation or complaint under this Policy that is subsequently found to have been made in a deliberately malicious manner or otherwise to have been made in bad faith will be subject to the appropriate action which may include termination of employment for just cause, termination of a contract for service or of a volunteer opportunity, or legal action.

## Unsubstantiated complaints

If an investigation finds insufficient evidence to support the Complainant's allegation, the investigator will submit that finding. There will be no records of the complaint on the Respondent's file and there will be no sanction to anyone concerning the incident. A finding of no evidence is a simple reflection of the absence of evidence and nothing more.

## No reprisals or retaliation

Any reprisal or retaliatory action that is related, in any way, to the circumstances noted above against a Complainant (or person closely related to or associated with the Complainant), Bystander, Respondent, or employee responsible for implementing this Policy will not be tolerated.

Any individual covered by this Policy who is found to have engaged in any reprisal or retaliation in violation of this Policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. This action may include termination of employment for just cause, termination or a contract for service, or of a volunteer opportunity, or legal action.

END