

# ETHICS COMPLAINT & WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

## A Guide to Understanding Mercy Corps' Whistleblower Policy

This document provides additional guidance around Mercy Corps' Ethics Complaint and Whistleblower Policy. This guide is not a replacement for the policy but is intended to clarify the process for reporting concerns and protections for whistleblowers.

Upholding Mercy Corps Code of Conduct is everyone's responsibility and all team members have an obligation to report. Mercy Corps expects all Team Members and Partners to adhere to the highest standards of accountability and that management will maintain a culture that supports and strengthens a commitment to these high standards.



View the Ethics Complaint & Whistleblower Policy in the Digital Library.



View the eLearning course in Talent Development at [Talent.MercyCorps.org](https://Talent.MercyCorps.org)



If you witness or learn of a suspected ethics or Code of Conduct violation, report it as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of all Team Members to comply with Mercy Corps' ethical principles as contained in the Code of Conduct policies. Mercy Corps expects Team Members to immediately report violations or suspected violations of policies.



You can report to the Integrity Hotline, a Safeguarding Focal Point, Human Resources, or a trusted leader. Anonymous reports to the Integrity Hotline are possible. It can however be more challenging to investigate anonymous complaints.



Mercy Corps **will not tolerate** any form of retaliation against team members, partners or participants who report information in good faith.



Mercy Corps is committed to ensuring the **highest levels of confidentiality** possible. Only people directly involved in an investigation will have information about a report. **If a team member tells you about a suspected violation listen and assist them with reporting.**

### IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE FOLLOWING KEY POINTS:



This policy and Mercy Corps' Integrity Hotline are not intended to address general complaints about the workplace, interpersonal issues, or other issues not related to violations as described above. **General complaints** should be raised with supervisors or other responsible members within Mercy Corps.



The safety and well-being of team members and program participants, especially victims or survivors, **is our first concern**. Mercy Corps will offer medical, psychosocial and/or legal support to survivors.



**It is not your role to investigate.** If you hear or see something that is concerning, report it immediately and do not discuss the information with other team members.

### REMEMBER!

[MercyCorps.org/integrityhotline](https://MercyCorps.org/integrityhotline)  
or  
[integrityhotline@mercyCorps.org](mailto:integrityhotline@mercyCorps.org)



# Policy Talk

## QUESTIONS

What happens once an allegation is made?

## ...AND ANSWERS

**Mercy Corps will first work to ensure the safety of everyone involved and the situation will be examined to determine if an investigation is warranted.** Once this step is completed, next steps in accordance with the policy will take place and the complainant will be notified. Refer to the Reporting Process diagram on the Safeguarding Hub page for details of next steps.

A woman in the community told me that a Mercy Corps partner team member is engaging inappropriately with a beneficiary. What should I do?

**Report it immediately** — partners are held to the same ethical standards as Mercy Corps team members and it is important that we follow up and ensure nothing exploitative is happening. There is a process in place to handle complaints about partners and employees of other humanitarian aid organizations.

What am I obligated to report and when?

You are expected to report any suspected ethical or Code of Conduct violations. You should report your concerns immediately to the Integrity Hotline, a Safeguarding Focal Point, Human Resources or a trusted leader or supervisor. **You are not required to report to your supervisor and can contact the Integrity Hotline directly.**

What happens if Mercy Corps decides that a report made will not be investigated?

Sometimes a report does not lead to a full investigation, for example, if it is not a Code of conduct violation, and other action is warranted. **When an investigation is undertaken, it will be fully documented and a final report will be filed by the Ethics or Human Resources team.**

How will I know that my report or complaint was received and is being reviewed?

The Ethics Team or Human Resources will send a notice to the person who submitted the complaint and acknowledge the report of a suspected violation.

I reported my suspicions about a violation to my Country Director but no one has contacted me and I don't think anything has been done. What should I do?

If you are concerned that a report you have made has not been followed up on, contact the Integrity Hotline.

