**Whistle-Blowing**

Table of Contents

[Guidelines for Whistle-Blowing 3](#_Toc63377950)

Whistle-blowing is when an employee discloses abuses in a company in which they are employed without the consent of their superiors, in order to remedy these abuses and/or warn the public about them.

Abuses may include:

* Endangerment of public health, safety or the environment
* Chargeable offences
* Violation of the law and of legislation
* Deception of the public or of the government
* Corruption, fraud and destroying or manipulating information
* Abuse of power, including sexual harassment and discrimination

Note that someone giving a reporter an anonymous tip does not count as whistle-blowing. The important part here is that someone directly related to the organization being reported must reveal themselves, so as to mitigate any doubts about the reliability of the information.

## Guidelines for Whistle-Blowing

Whistle-blowing is most definitely not a pleasant experience for anyone involved. As such, there are a few prerequisites that must be met before this approach is taken.

* The organization is doing serious and considerable harm to the public.
* The exact threat of harm has been reported to immediate superiors, making both the threat and the harm it could cause clear, and the immediate superiors have done nothing.
* All internal procedures of the organization to deal with this have been exhausted. This includes attempts to reach all possible people in a position to deal with the situation.
* There is reasonable evidence that can be revealed so as to convince a reasonable, impartial observer that the threat exists. Without evidence, the accusation would just be a rumour.
* There is good reason to believe that revealing the threat would prevent harm at a reasonable cost.

Even with hard evidence, if the actual source chooses to remain anonymous, the effects of whistle-blowing tend to be less effective. This is because the company can easily discredit an anonymous source. In a court of law, it is called hearsay, and it has very little impact on the final verdict.

It is important to understand all of these prerequisites and to understand the consequences of whistle-blowing. There are many cases where whistle-blowers have had to lose their jobs, their friends and family, and have even had to leave their country for fear of persecution. Whistle-blowing is not a decision to be taken lightly.