

WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY**Purpose**

1. The Golf Association of Ontario, operating as Golf Ontario ("Golf Ontario") is committed to fostering an environment conducive to open communication within the organization regarding Golf Ontario's business practices and to protecting Workers from unlawful retaliation and discrimination for their having properly disclosed or Reported illegal or unethical conduct.
2. To further this commitment, this policy:
 - a. Establishes guidance for the receipt, retention and treatment of verbal or written Reports received by Golf Ontario from a Worker regarding actions that (i) are illegal, unethical or contrary to Golf Ontario's policies in respect of accounting, internal controls, disclosure, or business practices or (ii) constitute discrimination, harassment, violence or abuse, whether submitted by Golf Ontario Workers who make a Report;
 - b. Provides Golf Ontario Workers who make a Report with a means to make Reports in a confidential and anonymous manner; and
 - c. Demonstrates Golf Ontario's intention to discipline, any person who commits an act of retaliation or reprisal against a Worker up to and including termination of employment for just cause, in the case of Golf Ontario employees.

Application

3. This Policy only applies to Workers who observe or experience incidents of wrongdoing committed by other Workers.
4. Incidents of wrongdoing or misconduct observed or experienced by Participants, spectators, parents of Participants, or other individuals not employed or contracted by Golf Ontario can be Reported under the terms of the *Discipline and Complaints Policy* and/or Reported to Golf Ontario's President or CEO to be handled under the terms of the individual Worker's Employment Agreement or Contractor Agreement, as applicable, and/or Golf Ontario's policies for human resources.
5. Matters reported under the terms of this Policy may be referred to be heard under the *Discipline and Complaints Policy*, at the discretion of the Compliance Officer.

Retention

6. Reports filed under this policy will be controlled and documented by the Director and Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee who shall maintain all related documentation for six years (or such longer period as required by law). All Reports and related documentation shall be retained in secured files to which only the Finance and Audit Committee Chair, and any future Chairs and legal counsel shall have full access, subject to legal obligations to otherwise disclose. If a Report is submitted to the Alternate Liaison which names the Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee, the Alternate Liaison shall maintain all related documentation.

Wrongdoing

7. Wrongdoing can be defined as:
 - a) Violating the law;
 - b) Intentionally or seriously breaching of the *Code of Conduct and Ethics*;
 - c) Committing or ignoring risks to the life, health, or safety of a Participant, Worker, or other individual;
 - d) Directing an individual or Worker to commit a crime, serious breach of a policy, or other wrongful act; or
 - e) Fraud.

Pledge

8. Golf Ontario pledges not to dismiss, penalize, discipline, or retaliate or discriminate against any Worker who discloses information or submits, in good faith, a report against another Worker under the terms of this Policy.
9. All Reports will be taken seriously and addressed promptly, discreetly and professionally. Reports may be submitted anonymously or the individual submitting the Report may request to remain anonymous. Their desire for anonymity, discussions and any documentation related to the Reports will be respected to the extent appropriate or permitted by law.

Retaliation

10. Retaliation against any Worker that in good faith files a Report or participates in an investigation in connection with a Report is strictly prohibited. Anyone determined to have engaged in retaliatory behaviour or who fails to maintain a Worker's anonymity if requested (and as permitted at law) may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment for just cause, in the case of Golf Ontario employees. Any Worker who feels that he or she has been subjected to any behavior that violates this policy should immediately report such behaviour to his or her supervisor, the Human Resources Manager, or the Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee.
11. Anyone who knowingly files a misleading or false Report, or who does not have a reasonable belief as to the truth or accuracy of the Report, may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment for just cause, in the case of a Golf Ontario employee.
12. Any individual affiliated with Golf Ontario who breaks this **Pledge** will be subject to disciplinary action.

Whistleblower Policy Procedure**Reporting Wrongdoing**

1. A Worker who believes that another Worker has committed an incident of wrongdoing should prepare a Report (Appendix A to this Policy) that includes the following:
 - a) Written description of the act or actions that comprise the alleged wrongdoing, including the date and time of the action(s);
 - b) Identities and roles of other individuals or Workers (if any) who may be aware of, affected by, or complicit in, the wrongdoing;
 - c) Why the act or action should be considered to be wrongdoing; and
 - d) How the wrongdoing affects the Worker submitting the report (if applicable).

Authority

2. The following Compliance Officer and Alternate Liaison have been appointed to receive reports made under this Policy:
Recipient: whistleblower@gao.ca
Compliance Officer = Chair, Finance & Audit Committee
Alternate Liaison = Board President
3. After receiving the report, the Compliance Officer has the responsibility to:
 - a) Assure the Worker of the **Pledge**
 - b) Connect the Worker to the Alternate Liaison if the individual feels that he or she cannot act in an unbiased or discrete manner due to the individual's role with the organization and/or the content of the report.

- c) Determine if the report is frivolous, vexatious, or not submitted in good faith (e.g., the submission of the report is motivated by personal interests and/or the content of the report is obviously false or malicious) and, if so, inform the Worker that no action will be taken on the report and the reasons why the report has been considered frivolous, vexatious, or not in good faith.
- d) Determine if the *Whistleblower Policy* applies or if the matter should be handled under the *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.
- e) Determine if the local police service be contacted.
- f) Determine if mediation or alternative dispute resolution can be used to resolve the issue.
- g) Determine if the President or CEO should or can be notified of the report.
- h) Begin an investigation.

Alternate Liaison

- 4. If the Worker feels that the Compliance Officer is unable to act in an unbiased or discrete manner due to the individual's role with the organization and/or the content of the report, the Worker should contact the Alternate Liaison who will act as an independent liaison between the Worker and the Compliance Officer.
- 5. The Alternate Liaison will not disclose the Worker's identity to the Compliance Officer or to anyone affiliated with Golf Ontario without the Worker's consent.
- 6. A Worker who is unsure if they should submit a Report, or who does not want to have their identity known, may contact the Alternate Liaison for informal advice about the process.

Investigation

- 7. If the Compliance Officer determines that an investigation should be launched, the Compliance Officer may decide to contract an external investigator. In such cases, the President or CEO may be notified that an investigation conducted by an external investigator is necessary without the nature of the investigation, content of the Report, or identity of the Worker who submitted the Report being disclosed. Golf Ontario's President or CEO may not unreasonably refuse the decision to contract an external investigator.
- 8. An investigation launched by the Compliance Officer or by an external investigator should generally take the following form:
 - a) Follow-up interview with the Worker who submitted the Report, unless submitted anonymously
 - b) Identification of Workers, participants, volunteers or other individuals that may have been affected by the wrongdoing.
 - c) Interviews with such-affected individuals.
 - d) Interview with the Worker(s) against whom the Report was submitted.
 - e) Interview with the supervisor(s) of the Worker(s) against whom the Report was submitted, if applicable.
- 9. The investigator will prepare an Investigator's Report – omitting names whenever possible and striving to ensure confidentiality – that will be submitted to the President or CEO for review and action.

Decision

- 1. Within fourteen (14) days after receiving the Investigator's Report, the President or CEO will take corrective action, as required. Corrective action may include, but is not limited to including:
 - a) Enacting and/or enforcing policies and procedures aimed at eliminating the wrongdoing or further opportunities for wrongdoing;
 - b) Revision of job descriptions; or
 - c) Discipline, suspension, termination, or other action as permitted by the By-laws, employment legislation, applicable policies for human resources, and/or the Worker's Employment Agreement or Contractor Agreement.

2. The corrective action, if any, will be communicated to the investigator who will then inform the Worker who submitted the report.
3. Decisions made under the terms of this Policy may be appealed under the terms of the *Appeal Policy* provided that:
 - a) If the Worker who submitted the initial report is appealing the decision, the Worker understands that his or her identity must be revealed if he or she submits an appeal, and
 - b) If the Worker against whom the initial report was submitted is appealing the decision, the Worker or Director understands that the identity of the Worker who submitted the report will not be revealed and that Golf Ontario will act as the Respondent.

Confidentiality

4. Confidentiality at all stages of the procedures outlined in this Policy – from the initial report to the final decision – is assured for all individuals (the Worker, the Worker(s), or Director(s) against whom the report is submitted, and the individuals interviewed during the investigation). An individual who intentionally breaches the confidentiality clause of this Policy will be subject to disciplinary action.
5. In all stages of the investigation, the investigator will take every precaution to protect the identity of the Worker who submitted the report and/or the specific nature of the report itself. However, Golf Ontario recognizes that there are some instances where the nature of the report and/or the identity of the Worker who submitted the report will or may be inadvertently deduced by individuals participating in the investigation.

APPENDIX A - Complainant Report Form**Whistleblower Policy**

The following form is recommended for use to Report under the terms of the Whistleblower Policy of Golf Ontario.

Name: _____
(Enter "Confidential" should you wish to submit a confidential Report)

Email Address: _____ Telephone: _____

Role or Position with Golf Ontario: _____

Description of Issue or Description of alleged Wrongdoing:

Other parties involved in the issue (with contact information, if known):

Do you wish to have the recipient keep your identity confidential?
