

PVFA Whistleblower Policy
December 11, 2013

A whistleblower, as defined in this policy, is an officer or member of the Ponderosa Volunteer Fire Association, Inc. of Texas, who reports an activity that he/she believes to be illegal or dishonest or violates the by-laws or policies of the organization. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the matter other than making himself/herself reasonably comfortable that the reported information is credible; or for determining fault or corrective measures. That is the responsibility of the appropriate officers and/or PVFA Board of Directors.

Examples of illegal or dishonest activities are violations of federal, state or local laws; requesting or accepting bribes, kickbacks or benefits from vendors, or other fraudulent financial reporting. Examples of violations of the by-laws or policies could be failure to enforce by-law provisions or refusing to comply with policies concerning travel and reimbursement.

If an officer, board member, or member has knowledge of such conduct, the officer, board member or member may report it to the fire chief or the PVFA president; or if the fire chief is thought to be involved to the PVFA president. The officer, board member or member should base his/her allegations on credible information and use sound judgment to avoid baseless allegations. Intentionally making a false report of wrongdoing may subject the individual to discipline.

Whistleblower protections are provided in two important areas—confidentiality and against retaliation. Insofar as possible, the confidentiality of the whistleblower will be maintained. However, identity may be disclosed in order to conduct a thorough investigation, comply with law or provide individuals their legal rights. The PVFA will not retaliate against a whistleblower.

Any whistleblower who believes he/she has been subjected to retaliation must contact the fire chief or, if the fire chief is thought to be involved, the PVFA president. The right of a whistleblower for protection against retaliation does not include complete immunity for any personal wrongdoing in which the whistleblower participated.