

Memorandum to All Employees

From: Mary Pletcher, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Capital and Diversity

Subject: Whistleblower Protection/Prohibited Personnel Practices

The purpose of this memorandum is to ensure that all Department of the Interior employees are aware of and understand the prohibited personnel practices and whistleblower protections available to federal employees.

The Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989 and the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012 provide the right for all covered federal employees to make whistleblower disclosures and ensure that employees are protected from whistleblower retaliation. Whistleblowing is defined as the disclosure of information that an employee reasonably believes evidences: a violation of any law, rule or regulation; gross mismanagement; gross waste of funds; an abuse of authority; a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety; or censorship related to scientific research or analysis. Employees may make lawful disclosures to anyone, including, for example, management officials, the Inspector General of an agency, or Congress. Employees can also make disclosures to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC). OSC is an independent agency that protects federal employees from prohibited personnel practices, including whistleblower retaliation and unlawful hiring practices. OSC also provides an independent, secure channel for disclosing and resolving wrongdoing in federal agencies.

You are encouraged to review "[Your Rights as a Federal Employee](#)," which provides detailed information on the thirteen prohibited personnel practices and employees' rights to file complaints with OSC and "[Know Your Rights When Reporting Wrongs](#)," which describes different avenues for making whistleblower disclosures as federal employees. These documents can also be found on the Department's website (<https://www.doi.gov/notices>). Additional information on this topic can also be found on the OSC website (<https://osc.gov/Pages/Outreach-2302Cert.aspx>).

Federal employees have the right to be free from prohibited personnel practices, including retaliation for whistleblowing. The Department of the Interior is committed to making sure that all employees are aware of their rights as well as the safeguards that are in place to protect them.