


<p style="text-align: center;">TOWNSHIP OF VERONA COUNTY OF ESSEX, NEW JERSEY</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</i></p>	Policy Title:	Protection For Whistleblowers
	Policy Reference No:	2-5
	Release Date:	5 January 2023
	Approved By:	Joseph D'Arco Township Manager
	Authority:	§ 36-1 (C)
	Revision History:	1
	No. of Pages:	2
	Applicability:	All Employees & Volunteers

Employees have the right under the Conscientious Employee Protection Act (CEPA) to complain about any activity, policy or practice that the employees reasonably believe is in violation of a law, rule, or regulation promulgated pursuant to law without fear of retaliation or reprisal. This right shall be communicated to all employees in an annual letter outlining the specific employee complaint procedure and in a posted notice. A written acknowledgement that the employee received, read, and understood this letter will be included in the employee's official personnel file. The annual notice shall be in English and Spanish and must contain the name of the person who is designated to receive written notification of policies or practices that might violate CEPA. This right will also be communicated in this Employee Handbook. All complaints will be taken seriously and promptly investigated.

The Township shall not take any retaliatory action or tolerate any reprisal against an employee for any of the following:

- Disclosing or threatening to disclose to a supervisor, the Township Manager, other official or to a public body, as defined in the Conscientious Employee Protection Act (*N.J.S.A. 34:19-1 et seq.*) an activity, policy or practice that the employee reasonably believes is in violation of a law, a rule or regulation promulgated pursuant to law;
- Providing information to, or testifying before any public body conducting an investigation, hearing, an inquiry into any violation of law, or a rule or regulation promulgated pursuant to law; or
- Objecting to, or refusing to participate in any activity, policy, or practice that the employee reasonably believes is a violation of a law, rule or regulation promulgated pursuant to law; is fraudulent or criminal; or is incompatible with a clear public policy mandate concerning the public health, safety, or welfare.

In accordance with the statute, the employee must bring the violation to the attention of the Township Manager or the Township Attorney. However, disclosure is not required where (1) the employee is reasonably certain that the violation is known to one or more officials; (2) where the employee reasonably fears physical harm; or (3) the situation is emergency in nature. Employees are encouraged to complain in writing using the Employee Complaint Form but may make a verbal complaint at their discretion. Under the law, the employee must give the Township a reasonable opportunity to correct the activity, policy, or practice. The administration of whistleblower complaints is not subject to the limitations in the Grievance Policy.

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No employee will be penalized in any way for reporting a complaint. If the investigation substantiates the complaint, appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary action will be swiftly pursued. Disciplinary action up to and including discharge will also be taken against individuals who make false or frivolous accusations, such as those made maliciously or recklessly. Any investigation may include interviews with the parties involved in the incident, and if necessary, with individuals who may have observed the incident or conduct or who have other relevant knowledge. The complainant shall be notified of a decision at the conclusion of the investigation within a reasonable time from the date of the report an incident.

The Township of Verona does not tolerate any form of retaliation against an employee who avails him/herself of this policy.

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Revision No.	Revision Date	Nature of Revision	Approved By
1	1/5/2023	Changed approver from Cavallo to D'Arco	JD