

Key Quotes from Ethics Resource Center's 2007 National Government Ethics Survey

Poor perceptions of management increase the likelihood that employees will not report. The two primary reasons employees do not report misconduct are fear and futility. Fifty-eight percent of those who observed misconduct did not report because they doubted that appropriate corrective action would be taken by management if provided information. Similarly, three in ten employees did not report because they feared retaliation from management.

Many reporters are retaliated against. More than one in six (17 percent) employees who reported the misconduct they observed experienced retaliation as a result.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The federal government seems to do better when it comes to workplace ethics. Nevertheless, more than half of federal employees observed misconduct, and twenty-five percent of employees still don't report.

Just over half of federal employees observed misconduct in the past year. In the past twelve months, 52 percent of federal government employees observed at least one type of misconduct. Of this 52 percent of employees, 70 percent observed more than one type of misconduct.

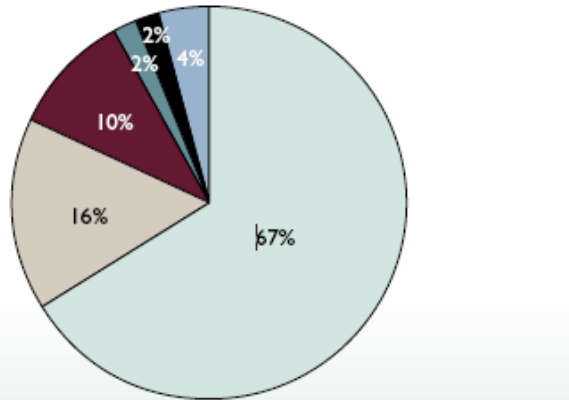
The four types of misconduct observed most frequently by federal government employees are:

- *Abusive behavior — observed by 23 percent of federal government employees;*
- *Safety violations — observed by 21 percent of federal government employees;*
- *Lying to employees — observed by 20 percent of federal government employees; and*
- *Putting one's own interests ahead of the organization (conflicts of interest) — observed by 20 percent of federal government employees.*

Senior managers may be unaware of misconduct taking place. One in four federal government employees who observed misconduct did not report it. When they did report, federal employees were not likely to use established channels.

Only 2 percent of federal government employees made use of whistleblower hotlines to report their observations of misconduct; employees overwhelmingly reported to supervisors, who may or may not identify the situations described as misconduct and pass it along to top management.

Federal Government Employees Overwhelmingly Chose to Report Observations of Misconduct to Direct Supervisors



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93% of federal employees use internal whistleblowing

Two in ten federal government employees work in environments conducive to misconduct.

In environments conducive to misconduct, employees are introduced to situations inviting wrongdoing and/or they feel pressured to cut corners to do their jobs. Further, employees may feel that work values conflict with personal values. In such contexts, employees are 63 percent more likely to observe misconduct.

Thirteen percent of federal government employees feel pressure to compromise the organization's standards.

Many of those who reported the misconduct they observed were retaliated against. This is troubling on two fronts: reporters are punished for their responsible, courageous decision at the same time that future reporting is discouraged.

- More than one out of ten (11 percent) of federal government employees who reported their observations of misconduct have experienced retaliation as a result of their reports.
- Almost a quarter (24 percent) of federal government employees who observed misconduct but chose not to report it feared retaliation from management.
- Also, 16 percent of non-reporters within the federal government feared retaliation from their peers.

Most federal employees recognize that their workplace has a full ethics and compliance program. Just under two out of three federal government employees identified existence of ethics and compliance program standards and resources in their organization.

Fewer federal employees are evaluated based on their ethical conduct in performance reviews, and this is the primary reason that more employees of the federal government do not acknowledge the presence of a comprehensive ethics and compliance program at work.

Only 30 percent of federal government employees say their agencies have well-implemented programs. Employees in agencies without wellimplemented programs are more likely to refrain from utilizing program resources, and they are more likely to express that they are illprepared to handle situations inviting misconduct.

At the federal level, three types of behavior fall into the **severe risk** category.

- *Abusive or intimidating behavior;*
- *Lying to employees; and*
- *Putting one's own interests ahead of the organization's.*

Several kinds of misconduct pose a **high risk** among federal government employees: *Safety violations; Misuse of the organization's confidential information; Internet abuse; Misreporting of hours worked; Improper hiring practices; Lying to stakeholders (customers, vendors, or the public); Sexual harassment; Discrimination; and Provision of low quality goods or services.*

10 Percent of Federal Workplaces Have a Strong Ethical Culture. Strong ethical cultures are essential to the reduction of ethics risk, and it is discouraging that so few federal government workplaces have a strong culture.

Importantly, more than one in four federal employees indicated that leadership and supervisors demonstrated a strong commitment to ethics — roughly 67 percent more than at state and local levels. Given the impact that strong ethical culture has on observed misconduct, this accounts for the lower levels of misconduct observed at the federal level.