

• Ethics Officer's March 2006 Monthly Report

Summary

This report provides a general update on the progress and activities for the Ethics Office for March 2006.

Attachments

None

Detailed Report

Activities

1. The second AB 1234 workshop, Contracting and Conflicts of Interest, is scheduled for the April 10 Ethics Committee meeting. Directors and officers who are not able to attend may complete the requirement by reviewing a videotape of the presentation and handouts, which will be available within a week of the presentation. Member agency representatives will be invited to the workshop. CDs with accompanying materials will be available for self-study by the end of summer.
2. All workshop materials from the February 28 workshop have been posted on the Board of Directors' Web site and the Member Agency Web site. Materials from future workshops will be posted as well.
3. The Ethics Officer assisted in the preparation of a board letter in support of AB 2069, which clarifies that public agency job descriptions must indicate if a required degree or diploma must be from an accredited institutions as defined by Ed Code Section 94712.
4. A list of books and journals relating to ethics has been compiled and will be placed in the MWD library. Employees, officers and directors will be alerted to new titles as they arrive. A new link, Ethics Library Special Collections, will be available through Intranet.
5. The Ethics Educator and Assistant conducted two new employee orientations to 13 new hires.
6. The Ethics Office Web site logged 856 visitors from February 16, 2005 – March 15, 2006.
7. Members for the Ethics Office Strategic Planning Committee have been chosen by Ethics Committee Chair Jim Edwards. An initial meeting of the committee is planned for May.

Logged Questions and Matters of Concern

1. **February 9, 2006 – Issue: Customer Relations**
A letter was received from a member of the public who believes that he/she should be credited for the naming of Diamond Valley Lake and its description as a "jewel". Materials relating to the concern were reviewed. It appears that citizen's pick of "Diamond Valley Lake" was a popular choice among those familiar with the site. Referring to the named lake as a "jewel" is an obvious extension of the metaphor associated with the lake's name and does not constitute plagiarism. The member of the public was notified of this finding March 13, 2006. (147)
Disposition: Closed
2. **March 9, 2006 – Issue: Workplace Violence/Threats**
An employee called The Network and anonymously reported that his/her team manager became verbally abusive. The employee reported feeling physically threatened by the team manager's "angry, aggressive outbursts." The employee also noted that he/she has had such concerns since 2004. The Ethics Officer met with the Section Manager the day of the complaint. The Section Manager believed that the team manager was not verbally or physically violent and that the underlying matter was an employee concern

Board Report (Ethics Officer's March 2006 Monthly Report)

regarding overtime distribution. The Ethics Officer and Section Manager also had separate conversations with the Security & Emergency Manager that day, who agreed that his review indicated no evidence of impending threat. The Ethics Officer reported back to The Network that the matter was being reviewed and that the caller was instructed to call 911 and Metropolitan Security at 800-555-5911 in response to any acts or threats of violence.

The Section Manager met with the team to explain the overtime distribution and met privately with the team manager. The team manager denied yelling, using profanity or losing his temper. Nevertheless, the Section Manager emphasized that such behavior was unacceptable.

The Ethics Officer reported back to The Network regarding the meetings and noted that, lacking further follow up information, the matter would be considered closed.

As of March 31, 2006, the caller had not checked back with The Network. (148)

Disposition: Closed

3. **March 13, 2006 – Issue: Misuse of Position**

An employee had an encounter with another employee that he/she felt was "unprofessional." The employee felt that he/she was being inappropriately pressured to pass judgment on the action of another. The matter is under investigation. (151)

Disposition: Pending

4. **March 14, 2006 – Issue: Misuse of MWD Resources**

A concern was communicated to the Chair of the Ethics Committee that employees have been taking unfair advantage of the Ride Share program. The matter is under investigation. (149)

Disposition: Pending

5. **March 21, 2006 – Issue: Gifts**

An employee contacted the ethics office for guidance regarding the receipt of a \$50 gift certificate from a vendor who previously held a contract with Metropolitan. The employee was instructed to return the gift certificate as keeping it is a violation of Admin. Code § 7130. (150)

Disposition: Closed

6. **March 28, 2006 – Issue: Misuse of MWD Resources**

An employee contacted The Network with a concern that District funds and personnel were used to welcome a Director and a personal guest to a facility. The matter is under investigation. (152)

Disposition: Pending