

## Hotline FAQ

When and what should I report to the OIG?

What if I am not sure whether to report something?

How do I file a complaint?

Must I cooperate with the OIG?

Can I have someone with me when I am interviewed by an investigator?

Is my identity confidential?

What if I have an ethics question?

What if I have a complaint about my Federal credit union?

What if my credit union is State chartered?

What if I become aware of fraud in my credit union?

What if I am not satisfied with the NCUA's response?

What is an investigation?

What if I believe I'm being retaliated against for whistleblowing?

When and what should I report to the OIG?

Employees should report any situation that involves suspected waste, fraud, abuse or mismanagement of NCUA programs, operations, or assets.

Examples of matters that should be reported include:

- Contract and procurement fraud and collusion;
- Bribery and acceptance of gratuities;
- Gross mismanagement;
- Misuse, embezzlement, or theft of government property or funds;
- Employee misconduct, such as misuse of official position or acceptance of unauthorized gifts and other illegal or unethical activities.

What if I am not sure whether to report something?

Call us to ask if it should be reported or to talk to us about your concerns. Many employees express fear that if they report something that only they know about, and an investigation begins, it will be obvious to everyone that they were the one who “told.” The OIG has had lots of experience in structuring investigations in such a way as to protect the person who comes forward. Remember, it is your duty as a federal employee to report misconduct.

Above all, please do not undertake your own investigation. The OIG has trained personnel on staff who can do this.

Must I cooperate with the IG?

NCUA Instruction 1910.8, signed October 14, 2003, provides that all NCUA employees must cooperate to the fullest extent with OIG investigators. If the investigator requests either your statement or documents you have access to, you must provide them. With regard to administrative matters, you must cooperate fully and answer all questions fully and truthfully, regardless of how your answers may impact upon you. An employee who fails to cooperate with an official OIG administrative investigation or inquiry may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. If the matter is criminal and you may be subject to criminal prosecution, you retain your Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate yourself.

It is also important not to discuss an investigator’s questions and your answers with any other agency employee. This could interfere with the conduct of the investigation.

Can I have someone with me when I am interviewed by an investigator?

If you are being questioned by the OIG investigator and your answers may result in your being prosecuted criminally, you have a right to be represented during your interview. In an administrative matter, employees do not have a right to be represented. However, it is the general practice of the NCUA OIG to allow employees to have someone else present with them, if employees expressly request it, so long as the individual does not interfere with the interview.

Is my identity confidential?

When you contact the IG you may ask to remain anonymous, or ask that your identity be kept confidential. Under Section 7(b) of the IG Act, the OIG must not disclose a complaining employee’s identity without his or her consent unless the IG determines that disclosure is unavoidable during the course of the investigation. Such disclosure is very rare and usually occurs when a court or Congressional committee requires it.

It is important to remember that if you ask to remain anonymous or to have your identity kept confidential, it may make it more difficult to investigate your complaint.

What if I have an ethics question?

All ethics questions should be directed to the Designated Agency Ethics Official, the Deputy General Counsel, or his/her designee. However, if your ethics question involves alleged misconduct, you should consult with the IG investigator or other OIG employee.

What if I have a complaint about my Federal credit union?

NCUA Instruction No. 12400.05, "Compliance Activities: Complaint Handling and Documentation of Violations," dated September 19, 2003, sets forth NCUA's policy on processing complaints against credit unions. In general, if the complaint concerns fraud or another criminal act involving the credit union or its officials, then you should call the NCUA Office of General Counsel's Fraud Hotline at 1-800 827-9650 or, in the DC Metro area at 703 518-6550.

If the complaint involves the credit union's treatment of you or another member, and does not involve fraud, you should contact appropriate credit union officials. If your problem does not get resolved by the credit union, you may contact the NCUA Regional Office that has jurisdiction over the credit union. A designated employee in each regional office will observe established procedures to respond to your complaint including, if appropriate, initiating an investigation. To determine which NCUA Regional Office has jurisdiction over your credit union, go to the Regional Offices Map and click on your state.

What if my credit union is State chartered?

If your complaint concerns a non-Federal or State chartered credit union, the NCUA does not have regulatory jurisdiction. In that case, you must complain to the State Supervisory Authority (SSA) in the State that chartered the credit union. For a list of SSA's, go to the Regional Offices Map and click on your state. If the SSA information is not there, call the NCUA Regional Office that represents your state and they will provide you with that information.

What if I become aware of fraud in my credit union?

If the alleged fraudulent activity involves an NCUA employee, you must contact the OIG. If the alleged fraud in a credit union does not involve an NCUA employee, please call the NCUA Office of General Counsel's Fraud Hotline at 1-800 827-9650 or, in the DC Metro area at 703 518-6550.

What if I am not satisfied with the NCUA's response?

You may always contact the OIG, either before or after you have contacted the credit union or offices within NCUA, including the NCUA Ombudsman in the Office of Human Resources. If you are not satisfied with the OIG's response, you may always contact your Senator or Representative.

What is an investigation?

We define it as a formal fact-finding inquiry into an issue that includes a suspicion of wrongdoing by the subject of the investigation. It is important to understand that the goal of an IG investigation is not solely to determine wrongdoing. It is to determine the facts of a situation, regardless of outcome. An IG investigation leads to a formal determination that an employee has committed wrongdoing or that the allegation cannot be substantiated or has been disproven. If the investigation determines that the employee has committed misconduct, then NCUA may begin a process to take disciplinary action, however, the agency may not take action before the investigation is completed. The OIG plays no role in determining what action is taken against an employee in an administrative matter.

Instruction 1910.8, issued by the Executive Director on October 14, 2003, directs all NCUA employees to report known or suspected misconduct to the IG. You may call the IG Hotline (1-800-778-4806) or in the DC metro area (703-518-6357). The IG Hotline **does not** have caller-ID. You may also write to the OIG at NCUA headquarters, 1775 Duke Street, Alexandria, Va. 22314-3428 or at the OIG mailbox, P.O. Box 25705, Alexandria, Va. 22313-5705. OIG wants to hear from you.

What if I believe that I am being retaliated against for whistleblowing?

Federal employees have the right to be free from retaliation for whistleblowing. 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b). Additional information concerning your whistleblower protection rights and the Office of Special Counsel, which receives, prosecutes and in some cases investigates prohibited personnel practices such as whistleblower reprisal, can be found on OSC's website at <http://www.osc.gov/wbdisc.htm>