



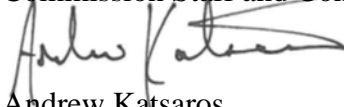
Office of Inspector General

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20580

July 2, 2018

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Commission Staff and Contractor Personnel

**FROM:**   
Andrew Katsaros  
Acting Inspector General

**SUBJECT:** What You Need to Know about the FTC Office of Inspector General

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) is an independent organization within the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) charged with protecting the integrity of agency programs and operations. We strive to ensure that the FTC is carrying out its mission to protect consumers and maintain competition in the most effective and efficient manner. The purpose of this memo is to inform you about our office and of the important role each of you play in alerting the OIG of suspected wrongdoing and assisting us with our work.

***Who Are We and What Do We Do?***

The FTC OIG is an independent office established pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended. Our function is to prevent and detect fraud, waste, abuse, misconduct, and mismanagement in the government, and to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in our agency's operations and programs. The OIG accomplishes its work through audits, evaluations, and investigations conducted by our professional staff of auditors, program analysts, investigators, attorneys, and other personnel. While we have a unique role, we have a shared responsibility with the rest of the agency to advance the FTC's important mission.

OIG auditors perform objective audits, evaluations, and reviews of FTC programs and activities to determine whether these programs are achieving their intended results, and to identify ways to improve performance and management in the future. In performing audits and evaluations, we analyze and verify agency records, obtain information through interviews and questionnaires, and conduct physical inspections. Our office is committed to giving full consideration to management's views as part of the processes. We keep agency management informed of emerging findings and allow managers to comment on our draft reports and proposed

recommendations. At the completion of an announced assignment, the OIG issues a final report, which we provide to the FTC Chairperson and Commissioners and other management officials. Our audit and evaluation reports are available to the public.

Our office also investigates allegations of fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, and misconduct. At the conclusion of an investigation, our investigators prepare a report of the allegations and findings, some of which may require additional action. Substantiated allegations of criminal activities are referred to the Department of Justice for potential criminal prosecution or civil remedies. If allegations of administrative misconduct are found, the OIG forwards the matter to management for potential action. When our investigations reveal systemic or policy concerns, we issue Management Advisories with recommendations to address these issues. Our reports on investigation are generally not made public.

The OIG keeps the FTC leadership and Congress fully informed about weaknesses and deficiencies identified through our oversight work and makes recommendations to improve the FTC's economy, efficiency and effectiveness. We also provide a semiannual report to Congress describing our current audits, investigations, evaluations, and other activities, as well as the status of unimplemented recommendations.

### ***Obligation of Public Service***

We all have a responsibility to report suspected fraud, waste, abuse, and misconduct involving FTC operations, employees, contractors, or programs to the OIG or other appropriate authorities. Not only is this reporting required by regulation and Executive Order, it is also the right thing to do. It is important that we hear from you if you have information or concerns about possible wrongdoing at the agency.

### ***Why It's Important to Cooperate with the OIG***

To accomplish our mission, it is imperative we have prompt and complete access to personnel, facilities, and any records relating to matters the OIG is investigating or reviewing. You have a duty to assist and cooperate with OIG personnel in the course of an investigation, audit, evaluation, or other OIG review. This means that all employees, managers, and staff are required to respond to OIG requests for information, including providing statements to OIG representatives (unless they have been advised that they are the subject of a criminal investigation). Employees are also required to provide OIG representatives with access to records—including reports, databases, documents or other material—or facilities, upon request.

If the OIG asks an FTC employee to provide information, records, or other materials, the employee must do so promptly, completely, in the requested manner, and directly without going through an intermediary (such as a manager or supervisor) for review prior to disclosure. Employees must also not impose burdensome administrative requirements or screening procedures that could impede the OIG's access to people, documents, or facilities, or otherwise

attempt to limit access to required information. In turn, OIG personnel will respect the multiple demands made upon FTC employees and, to the extent possible, accommodate scheduling difficulties or other time constraints employees might face when responding to OIG requests.

FTC staff are not required to obtain permission or inform managers before speaking with OIG representatives during investigations, audits, evaluations or other OIG reviews. However, employees may contact a manager with questions regarding their responsibility to assist and cooperate or schedule meetings with the OIG, unless, in the context of an investigation, they are instructed not to do so by OIG personnel. Under these circumstances, managers should not question staff about their interactions with the OIG.

Failure to cooperate with an OIG request for information or records is serious misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including removal. Further, furnishing false information or concealing any type of information from the OIG or obstructing OIG investigations, audits, or other inquiries could constitute a violation of law and result in disciplinary action or criminal prosecution.

### ***Your Right to Contact the OIG***

FTC employees and contractors have a right to direct, unrestricted access to the OIG. You can contact the OIG in person, by fax, email, regular mail, or by calling the OIG Hotline at (202) 326-2800. If you have a question about whether a particular matter should be reported to the OIG, you may contact our office. Managers who have questions about what matters should be reported to the OIG may consult with me or members of my staff, the FTC Office of General Counsel, or the Human Resources Management Office. We are committed to honoring requests for confidentiality of individuals who contact our office to the extent permitted by the law. We will handle all documents and information in an appropriate and professional manner.

The OIG is committed to protecting the rights of employees and contractors who complain, cooperate, disclose information, or make protected disclosures (*i.e.*, whistleblowers). Federal law prohibits government personnel from retaliating against employees who report to the OIG or management any of the following: a violation of any law, rule, or regulation; gross mismanagement; gross waste of funds; gross abuse or authority; or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety. Federal law further prevents contracting companies from committing acts of reprisal against contractors who report to the OIG or management evidence of any of the aforementioned violations related to a federal contract or grant.

Whistleblower retaliation/reprisal may include adverse employment actions (or threats to take such actions), such as a non-promotion; a disciplinary action; reassignment; an unfavorable performance evaluation; a significant change in duties, etc. Retaliation/reprisal is strictly forbidden, and the OIG will take all appropriate steps to protect the rights of individuals who contact us with such allegations. Additional information on your whistleblower rights and protections is available at <https://www.ftc.gov/about-ftc/office-inspector-general/whistleblower-protection>.

We invite you to browse all of our online content for additional information about our activities. Our contact information is provided below.

**OIG Hotline:** (202) 326-2800  
**Fax:** (202) 326-2034  
**Online:** <https://www.ftc.gov/about-ftc/office-inspector-general>  
**E-Mail address:** [OIG@ftc.gov](mailto:OIG@ftc.gov)  
**Mailing Address:** Federal Trade Commission  
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