**SECTION: SAFETY AND HEALTH**

**POLICY:** Whistleblower Protection **EFFECTIVE DATE:** insert date adopted

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to encourage and protect employees who report misconduct, illegal activities, or violations of city policies without fear of retaliation. In accordance with Texas law, particularly the Texas Whistleblower Act, it is the intention of this organization to foster a transparent and ethical workplace environment. Employees who report suspected violations in good faith will be protected from adverse employment actions.

This policy applies to all employees, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and contract workers. It covers all reports made in good faith regarding suspected misconduct, including but not limited to:

* Illegal activities
* Fraud or financial misconduct
* Violations of safety or health regulations
* Discrimination or harassment
* Any violation of federal or state laws

**DEFINITIONS:**

1. Whistleblower: An employee who reports or intends to report a violation of law or regulation, or who provides information regarding such violations to the authorities.
2. Good Faith: Reporting with a sincere belief that the information disclosed is true and accurate to the best of the employee's knowledge, without malice or ulterior motives.
3. Retaliation: Any adverse employment action taken against a whistleblower for reporting misconduct, including but not limited to termination, demotion, harassment, or any form of discrimination.

**PROCEDURES:**

1. Employees should report suspected violations to their immediate supervisors, human resources, or through the designated whistleblower hotline. Reports can be made anonymously if desired.
2. Upon receiving a report, the city will conduct a thorough and impartial investigation. The identity of the whistleblower will be kept confidential to the extent possible, and only those involved in the investigation will have access to this information.
3. The city strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against an employee for reporting a violation in good faith. Any employee found to have retaliated against a whistleblower will face disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
4. Employees who report misconduct will be informed of the outcome of the investigation, provided it does not compromise the confidentiality of the parties involved or violate any laws.
5. The city will provide training and education to all employees regarding the whistleblower protection policy and procedures to ensure understanding and compliance.