

THE NATIONAL SMALL-BORE RIFLE ASSOCIATION

Lord Roberts Centre, Bisley Camp, Brookwood, Woking GU24 0NP



Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

Whistle-Blowing Policy

August 2016 (V02)

NSRA Whistle-blowing Policy and Procedures

What does 'Whistle-blowing' Mean?

Whistle-blowing occurs when a person raises a concern about dangerous, illegal activity or any wrongdoing within their organisation's jurisdiction. The NSRA is committed to encouraging a culture of openness: to uphold the reputation of the organisation, maintain confidence in the sport both internally and amongst the general public and to protect its members and affiliated organisations.

This policy provides a mechanism by which serious concerns may be raised within the NSRA and addressed correctly. Anyone approaching the NSRA, in good faith, with information regarding matters of wrongdoing, such as fraud, misappropriation, bad practice in child protection or safety, discrimination or breach of codes of conduct, by staff or volunteers working for the NSRA, or within its affiliated organisations will have the matter dealt with in a positive manner.

Whistle-blowers are witnesses to a malpractice and must not be penalised for any disclosure of information. To this end certain categories of whistle-blowers are protected by the law.

It is in the interests of the NSRA that concerns are raised internally rather than disclose them to the press or other external bodies. However, in some instances, particularly those involving child safety or firearms law, it may be necessary to refer the matter to an external authority, for example the Police or Social Services. More information on the reporting procedure for Child Safety issues is contained in the NSRA Safeguarding Policy.

How to 'Blow the Whistle'?

Every situation is different but generally, remain calm, consider any risks and the next steps, concentrate on facts, don't make up allegations, don't pursue the allegation and remember you are the witness.

Then:

Members, Volunteers, Club Members and Other Participants If it is necessary to 'Blow the Whistle' within a club or other organisation it is usual to refer the matter to the Club Committee in the first instance. In many cases the matter may be resolved locally before the need to involve the NSRA. However, if this is not possible, the issue is beyond local resolution or you are unsure any wrongdoing should be reported to the relevant NSRA Manager, the CEO of the NSRA or a Member of the Board (preferably the Vice Chairman). Concerns will initially be considered by the Manager with responsibility for that area (if appropriate), who will make preliminary enquiries. They will investigate the matter and take any action necessary to rectify the situation or, where such action is not in the power of the Manager, they will make recommendations to the CEO who will authorise appropriate action.

If it is a Safeguarding issue please refer to the procedure in the Safeguarding code of practice. This usually involves informing the Club Child Protection Officer or if inappropriate the NSRA National Child Protection Officer

Employees

Public Disclosure Act 1998 – This offers a framework of protection against victimisation or dismissal for staff (and other workers) who 'blow the whistle' on criminal behaviour or other wrongdoings within the workplace.

The various categories of information covered by the Act (qualifying disclosures) are very wide and include criminal offences, failure to comply with legal obligations, miscarriages of justice, health and safety dangers, damage or likely damage to the environment and concealing information about any of these matters.

An employee need only show that he/she had a 'reasonable belief' that a qualifying offence has been committed. However, in order to gain protection, the employee must follow the procedures laid down in the legislation in disclosing any of the above categories of malpractice.

The intention is that the employee should, in the first instance, raise his/her concerns with his/her employer.

However it is permissible to go directly to the appropriate regulatory body, such as the Health and Safety Executive if they believe they would be victimised or evidence would be concealed or destroyed.

Furthermore, if they believe a serious criminal offence has been or is about to be committed, they may wish to call the police.

The employee must also make the disclosure in good faith reasonably believe that the information is true, act reasonably and not for personal gain.

Process

For NSRA Staff the correct route is to first raise the issue with the line manager. If this is not appropriate then the issue should be raised with the CEO or if still inappropriate a Board Member (preferably the Vice Chairman) should be contacted.

The NSRA (via the appropriate person - normally the CEO) will arrange for an investigation into the allegations to be carried out.

Nothing in this policy will prevent an employee contacting Public Concern at Work for confidential and independent advice on 020 7404 6609.

In all cases

As far as possible, confidentiality will be respected but there may be occasions when there is no alternative but to take action, which may break that confidentiality. However, the individual who has raised the issue will be fully informed in advance if possible, of any such action.

In order to ensure fair treatment of all concerned, if someone is potentially being accused of misconduct, the investigation will involve taking statements from those involved. During our investigation, the NSRA will respect any fears that the individual who has raised the issue may express about his/her own or their family's physical and/or emotional safety and/or career.

The investigations may involve other regulatory bodies such as the Police, the Health and Safety Executive etc. If this is the case both the complainant and the person against whom the complaint has been made will be notified of this, unless the NSRA is prohibited from doing so by law or at the direction of the external authority. The NSRA expects the individual who has raised the issue to co-operate fully with all of these outside agencies in assisting with their investigations. In some circumstances it may be necessary for parties to be removed from the work place and suspended from duty until the investigation is complete.

Once the investigation is complete, the Chief Executive Officer will agree a course of action (the Vice Chair will be involved if necessary). If the individual who raised the issue wishes to receive details of the result of the investigation and any proposed action, this information will be provided however, we do have to respect the right to confidentiality of other employees or the other parties and it may not be possible to provide all the details.

After the Whistle is Blown

Any investigation will not, at any stage, be carried out by any person against whom allegations are made. The investigation will be done promptly, although more complex matters may require a longer and more thorough investigation. The Manager (or other appropriate person) will advise the whistle-blower of the outcome of any enquiry and any action taken.

If the Situation is not dealtwith

If the issue is not resolved satisfactorily by the Manager (or other appropriate person), then it may be raised directly with the CEO, the Vice Chair or another member of the Board (as appropriate).

The CEO or Board will make enquiries and, if appropriate, investigate the matter and take any action to rectify the situation. Investigations will not be carried out by any person previously involved in the matter and at no stage will they involve any person against whom allegations are made. Again, any investigation will be done promptly, although more complex matters may require a longer and more thorough investigation. The Board will advise the whistle-blower of the outcome of any enquiry and any remedial action taken.

Generally

Any person approaching NSRA with genuine concerns will not be disadvantaged or discriminated against in any way because of the disclosure. However, NSRA will take a serious view and act accordingly, including taking disciplinary action against appropriate parties, should it be found that the allegations are untrue or have been raised maliciously.

Individuals are encouraged to put their name to any disclosure. Allegations raised anonymously may be investigated depending on the seriousness of the issues raised, the credibility of the concern, and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from other sources.

Where possible confidentiality will be maintained, although it must be stressed that in serious cases of fraud and in cases of child protection it will be not always be possible to maintain strict confidentiality if the concerns reach the investigation stage.

Monitoring the Policy and Procedures.

The Chief Executive Officer will actively monitor the Policy and Procedures relating to Whistle-blowing and will update all employees, members and clubs/associations on any changes that arise in this respect.



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