

## OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR

## ETHICS LINE REPORT

November 2010

### Background

In November 2007, the Metro Auditor established an Ethics Line for Metro employees and citizens who use Metro services. The Auditor's Office contracts with EthicsPoint to operate the service that includes a 24-hour call center that can be accessed at a toll free number, 888-299-5460, and a web site, [www.metroethicsline.org](http://www.metroethicsline.org). Employees and citizens can anonymously report any concerns that they have by either method.

The Ethics Line is advertised on Metro's website in three locations: A widget on Metro's landing page, a widget on the page titled "How are we doing?" and on the Metro Auditor's page. Posters are also placed at Metro service locations and on employee bulletin boards. The Metro Auditor includes information about the Ethics Line when talking to new employees at the monthly orientation.

### Ethics Line Protocol

The Metro Auditor's Office administers the Ethics Line in consultation with a Steering Committee that includes the COO, Metro Attorney, Deputy COO, MERC General Manager, HR Director and Finance and Regulatory Services Director. When new cases arrive, the investigation is usually assigned to Metro management. At any time, the Auditor's Office can also initiate an independent audit. The Auditor's Office posts the results of the investigation on the Ethics Line system for the reporter to access.

### By the Numbers

#### NUMBER OF REPORTS

Forty-one reports have been received from the Ethics Line inception to June 30, 2010. (Exhibit 1). Of those, thirty-five reports were received via the web site, five were taken by the call center and one report was received anonymously by mail.

Fiscal Year	Number
2007-08	12
2008-09	6
2009-10	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>

#### TYPE OF CONCERNS

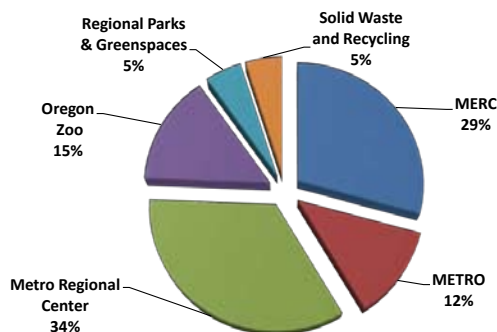
The two most frequently reported concerns were a violation of policy and waste, abuse or misuse of resources (Exhibit 2).

Case Type FY2008-10	Total
Violation of policy	7
Waste, abuse or misuse of resources	7
Misconduct or inappropriate behavior	5
Confidentiality and misappropriation	3
Time abuse	3
Accounting, auditing and internal financial controls	2
Conflict of interest	2
Improper supplier or contractor activity	2
Unsafe working conditions	2
Environmental protection, health or safety law	1
Other	7
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>41</b>

**LOCATION**

Reporters to the Ethics Line can choose a specific location where the incident occurred or the general location of Metro. In most cases (88%), a specific location other than Metro was reported).

**Location of Incident  
FY2007-08 to FY2009-10**



**ACTION TAKEN**

In 85% of the cases, a successful investigation was completed. There were twelve cases in which no action was taken. Reasons why an investigation was not completed were:

- an audit was conducted instead,
- unable to verify facts,
- withdrawn by reporter, and
- not in Metro jurisdiction.

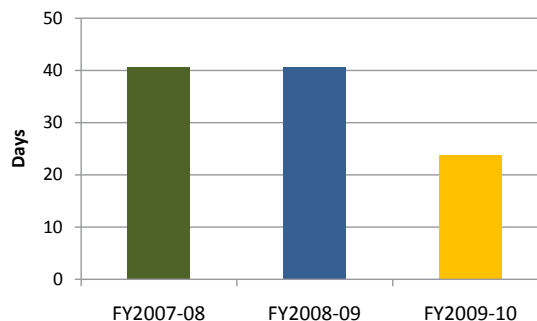
In the remaining cases, some action was taken, from specific employee discipline to improving policies and procedures.

Action Taken FY2008-10 to FY2010	Total
Employee action taken	6
Improvements in policy or communication	6
Referred to appropriate agency	1
Criticism noted	3
Management to make changes	4
Reporter notified of results	9
No action taken	12
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>41</b>

**AVERAGE DAYS TO CLOSE**

The average time to close an Ethics Line report has decreased from 40 days in FY2007-08 to 24 days in FY2009-10.

**Average Days to Close  
FY2007-08 to FY2009-10**



**Accomplishments**

Over the past 2 ½ years, the operation of the Ethics Line has been strengthened. Accomplishments include:

- Decision-matrix to determine the level of response based upon the quality of the information received from the reporter and the seriousness of the incident.
- Window stickers to place on points of service to customers.
- Procedure to respond to customer service complaints.
- Average case closure time was reduced from 40 to 24 days.