



## Whistleblowing Policy

### 1. Scope

Whistle-blowing is not about informing in the negative, anonymous sense but rather about raising a concern about malpractice within an organisation. Whistle-blowing is therefore a key tool for promoting individual responsibility and organisational accountability. Whistle-blowers act in good faith and in the public interest to raise concerns around suspected impropriety within their place of employment.

Although this policy provides the internal rules and procedures applicable to employees (and other stakeholders) who wish to blow the whistle on any form of impropriety that may have occurred within Efficient Group Ltd or any of its subsidiaries (hereinafter referred to as "**Efficient Group**" or "**the Company**"), the provisions of the Protected Disclosures Act (26 of 2000) (hereinafter referred to as "**the Act**") remain authoritative in case of any conflict between the provisions of this Policy and those contained in the Act. Employees may also legally be entitled to follow other avenues in reporting suspected improprieties, but the Act clearly signals that it is safest to first raise concerns internally in terms of the employer's internal policy.

In essence this policy therefore applies to any concerns about crime, failure to comply with any legal duty (including negligence, breach of contract, breach of administrative law), miscarriage of justice, danger to health and safety, damage to the environment, discrimination and the deliberate cover-up of any of these, including concerns about past, present and future impropriety.

### 2. Purpose

Efficient Group and its subsidiaries are committed to the highest standards of transparency and accountability. It is therefore expected that all employees, clients and other stakeholders who have serious concerns about our business practices, come forward and voice these concerns.

This policy specifically aims to encourage employees, who will often be the first to suspect unlawful activities, to report such activities, and furthermore to make them aware of the fact that whistle blowing legislation offers protection for any disclosure made without malice and in good faith.

The purpose of this policy is therefore to provide a means by which employees are able to raise concerns, should they believe that there are serious grounds for suspecting misconduct within the company.

Employees should however keep in mind that these procedures are in addition to Efficient Group's grievance- and other statutory reporting procedures and should therefore not be used to report personal grievances.

### **3. The Policy**

#### **3.1 Harassment or Victimisation**

Efficient Group will not tolerate harassment or victimisation of any employees who blow the whistle and will take action where possible to protect employees when they raise a concern in good faith. This does not mean that, if an employee is already the subject of disciplinary or other action, any future action will necessarily be halted as a result of their whistle blowing.

#### **3.2 Confidentiality**

Efficient Group will take all necessary steps to protect an individual's identity when he/she raises a concern, but does not want their identity to be disclosed. It must be appreciated, however, that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement by the employee may be required as part of the evidence.

#### **3.3 Anonymous Allegations**

We encourage employees to put their names to allegations, as concerns expressed anonymously are difficult to investigate. Nevertheless, all allegations, including anonymous disclosures, will be considered and followed up on at the discretion of Efficient Group's **Audit and Risk Committee**. This discretion will be applied by taking into consideration:

- a. the seriousness of the issue raised;
- b. the credibility of the concern; and
- c. the likelihood of confirming the allegation.

#### **3.4 Untrue Allegations**

Employees and other stakeholders are discouraged from making allegations which are false and made with malicious intent. Where such malicious, vexatious or false allegations are discovered, the person who made the allegations will be subjected to firm disciplinary action, or other appropriate action in the case of external stakeholders or third parties.

### 3.5 Reporting of Concerns

- 3.5.1 The whistle blowing procedure is specifically provided for potentially more serious and sensitive issues (e.g. fraud and corruption) and accordingly minor issues (e.g. personal use of equipment etc.) should rather be referred to the employee's immediate manager or the relevant head of Department.
- 3.5.2 For purposes of reporting any disclosure in terms of this Policy, the Company has created a dedicated facility on its internal webpage through which concerns can be submitted anonymously. Any concern disclosed or submitted via this facility will be delivered exclusively and directly to the respective Chairmen of the Company's Board of Directors and Audit and Risk Committee. The Chairmen shall jointly act as the custodians of this Policy and shall ensure that all disclosures are treated with the utmost confidentiality and in conformance with the provisions of this Policy and of the Act.
- 3.5.3 In reporting concerns provided for in this Policy, the first step will be for the employee to approach the relevant department head, unless the said department head is the subject of the complaint, in which case the matter should be reported to senior management. If, however, a member of senior management is the subject of the complaint, or the employee believes in the circumstances that it is prudent to rather circumvent senior management, the concern must be submitted directly to the Audit and Risk Committee via the dedicated ***Whistleblowing facility***. In any event, all disclosures in terms of this policy, whether initially reported to the relevant head of department or senior management, as the case may be, must be formally submitted via the dedicated Whistleblowing facility.
- 3.5.4 External stakeholders and third parties who are not employees of the Company and who therefore do not have access to the Whistleblowing facility, may submit their concerns via the ***Anonymous Tip-offs facility*** on our websites.
- 3.5.5 Concerns must be raised in writing. The background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places, where possible, should be set out, as well as the reason(s) why the individual is particularly concerned about the situation.
- 3.5.6 Employees are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, but they will need to demonstrate to the Audit & Risk Committee that there are sufficient grounds for concern.
- 3.5.7 Advice and guidance on how matters of concern may be pursued can at any time be obtained from the Group Legal & Compliance Manager, who has a duty to keep confidential any correspondence or discussions in this regard.

### 3.6 How the complaint will be dealt with

- 3.6.1 The action taken by Efficient Group with reference to any matter raised by a Whistle Blower will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may, among other possible actions,
- a. be investigated and/or resolved internally; or
  - b. be referred to the relevant law enforcement agency for further action.
- 3.6.2 In order to protect individuals and the Company, initial enquiries will be made by the Audit and Risk Committee to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations, which fall within the scope of other policies, will normally be referred for consideration under those policies.
- 3.6.3 Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for further investigation.
- 3.6.4 The Audit and Risk Committee will confirm in writing to the complainant (if his/her identity is known):
- a. That the concern has been received;
  - b. Indicating how it proposes to deal with the matter and whether any initial enquiries have been made;
  - c. Giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response; and
  - d. Informing them whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not.
- 3.6.5 The amount of contact between the authority investigating the issues and the persons raising the concern will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought from the individual.
- 3.6.6 Efficient Group and its subsidiaries accept that employees need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. However, the progression of investigations will be handled in a confidential manner and will not be disclosed or discussed with any persons other than those who have a legitimate right to such information. This is important in order to avoid damaging the reputation of suspected persons who are subsequently found innocent of wrongful conduct.

### **3.7 Creating Awareness**

- 3.7.1 It is the responsibility of all managers to ensure that all employees are made aware of, and receive appropriate training and education with regard to the Whistle Blowing Policy.

### **3.8 Responsibility**

The Audit and Risk Committee has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy.