Memorandum to All Employees

From: [Insert Head of Agency/Unit]

RE: **Annual Notice on Whistleblower Protection Laws and Prohibited Personnel Practices**

In anticipation of National Whistleblower Day, celebrated each year on July 30, we wanted to take a moment to reaffirm the agency’s commitment to ensuring that all employees are aware of their rights, as well as the safeguards that are in place to protect them.

Federal employees have the right to be free from Prohibited Personnel Practices (PPPs), including retaliation for engaging in whistleblowing. The Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989, the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012, the Dr. Chris Kirkpatrick Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017, and other laws collectively provide rights for all covered federal employees to engage in whistleblowing and be protected from retaliation for whistleblowing. A federal employee authorized to take, direct others to take, recommend, or approve any personnel action may not use that authority to take, fail to take, or threaten (to take or fail to take) a personnel action with respect to a current employee, former employee, or applicant for employment because of whistleblowing.

For these purposes, whistleblowing is defined as ***disclosing information that the individual reasonably believes evidences***: (1) a violation of a law, rule, or regulation; (2) gross mismanagement; (3) a gross waste of funds; (4) an abuse of authority; (5) a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety; or (6) censorship related to scientific research if censorship meets one of the foregoing categories.

Whistleblowing also covers ***engaging in protected activity***. Protected activity is defined as: (1) filing a complaint, grievance, or appeal to remedy a violation of section 2302(b)(8); (2) testifying or assisting someone else with these activities; (3) cooperating with or disclosing information to the Special Counsel, Inspector General, or any other agency component responsible for internal investigation or review; or (4) refusing to obey an order that would require a violation of a law, rule, or regulation.

Employees may make lawful disclosures of wrongdoing to anyone, including, for example, management officials, the Inspector General of an agency, and the [U.S. Office of Special Counsel](https://osc.gov/Services/Pages/Outreach-2302Cert-Gov.aspx) (OSC). For disclosures involving classified national security information or other information protected from public release by law, individuals must use confidential channels—(1) OSC, (2) the OIG of an agency, or (3) another employee of the agency designated to receive such disclosures—to be protected from personnel actions related to their disclosures. Also, certain Members of Congress are authorized to receive disclosures of classified information.

This agency strives to make sure that whistleblowers feel safe to come forward, speak frankly, and do what is right without fear of retaliation or harassment. For more information about your rights, please review the fact sheet [Your Rights as a Federal Employee](https://osc.gov/Documents/Outreach%20and%20Training/Handouts/Your%20Rights%20as%20a%20Federal%20Employee%20%28v2024%29.pdf), which provides detailed information on the fourteen prohibited personnel practices and employees’ rights to file complaints with OSC. Additionally, you are encouraged to review [Your Rights When Reporting Wrongs](https://osc.gov/Documents/Outreach%20and%20Training/Handouts/Your%20Rights%20as%20a%20Whistleblower%20%28v2024%29.pdf), which describes avenues for making whistleblower disclosures and OSC’s role in accepting complaints from federal employees, including how to make disclosures of information protected from public release by law.

Thank you for your dedication and contributions to the agency.