

WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

DOCUMENT CLASSIFICATION	Internal
VERSION	V1.3
DATED	12 December 2024
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Approval

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This policy supersedes and replaces all previous versions of this policy.

Revision history

VERSION	DATE	REVISION AUTHOR	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
1.1	23/01/2023	Human Resources	First Edition
1.2	15/05/2023	Yameer Noor Mahomed	Reviewed and updated contact details to report
1.3	12/12/2024	Nerisha Naidoo	Reviewed, document owner and approvers updated

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	3
2	Description	3
2.1	What is whistle blowing?	3
2.2	Why is whistle blowing important to Digicall?	3
3	Scope.....	4
4	Purpose	4
4.1	Who can raise a concern?	4
4.2	Adopting a culture of openness	5
4.3	Our assurance to you	5
4.4	Your protection	5
5	Process	6
5.1	How to report a suspicion	6
6	Response and time scale	7
6.1	How we will handle the matter	7
7	Protection.....	7
8	Confidentiality and anonymity	7



1 Introduction

This Whistle Blowing Policy is applicable to Digicall Holdings (Pty) Ltd and its subsidiary and affiliated companies, collectively referred to as (“Digicall”).

Since February 2001 South Africa has had the most far-reaching, state of the art whistle-blowing legislation in the world. Understood and applied effectively, the new legislation known as the **Protected Disclosures Act no 26 of 2000** will help to deter and detect wrongdoing in the workplace, acting as an early warning mechanism to prevent impropriety and corruption within the public and private sector. Essentially the law harnesses a common interest between responsible individuals who raise concerns they may have in the workplace with accountable organisations and managers prepared to respond to the bona fide concerns of their employees.

The Digicall Group aims to encourage protected disclosures, in line with the Protected Disclosures Act 2000, which sets out a clear and simple framework to promote responsible whistleblowing by:

- reassuring workers that silence is not the only safe option
- providing strong protection for workers who raise concerns internally
- protecting more general disclosures provided that there is a valid reason for going wider and that the particular disclosure is a reasonable one.

2 Description

The Digicall Group Code of Conduct stipulates that all employees are expected to uphold, contribute to and promote the company’s values, integrity and responsibility. The Digicall Group is thus committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability. We expect our employees who have concerns about the company, colleagues or any associated party, to report all concerns, primarily to the respective manager but, if this is not possible, in the way stated in this policy.

2.1 What is whistle blowing?

Understood correctly, whistleblowing is not about informing in the negative, anonymous sense but rather about raising a concern about malpractice within an organisation. Whistle-blowers act in good faith and in the company’s best interest to raise concerns around suspected impropriety within their place of employment. However, they often risk victimisation, recrimination and sometimes dismissal.

2.2 Why is whistle blowing important to Digicall?

Whistle blowing is an early warning system to avert possible risks to the organisation. An effective policy to encourage whistle blowing enables employers to find out when something is going wrong in time to take necessary corrective action. A positive whistle blowing culture is a critical element in the success of any risk management system. By promoting better risk management, it can also help you prevent the need for more regulation and intervention by regulators and legislators. An organisation that positively encourages whistle blowing stands a far better chance of demonstrating that it is properly run and managed. The existence of a working whistleblowing policy can be pivotal in legal

proceedings. This is because, in determining liability and in setting the penalties, the courts may well take account of whether a whistle was blown and, if not, why not.

3 Scope

The policy is designed to deal with concerns raised in relation issues relating to fraud, corruption, misconduct and malpractice within the Digicall Group. The policy will not apply to personal grievances, which will be dealt with under existing procedures on grievance, discipline and misconduct. Details of these procedures are obtainable from the Human Resources Department.

The policy covers all genuine concerns raised including:

- Financial misconduct
- Health and safety risks
- Environmental damage
- Unfair discrimination
- Corruption and misconduct
- Attempts to suppress or conceal any information relating to any of the above.

If in the course of investigation any concern raised in relation to the above matters appears to the investigator to relate more appropriately to grievance or discipline, those procedures will be evoked. If you come across positive or negative remarks about Digicall online that you believe are of importance, you should share them with the Brand and Marketing department.

4 Purpose

The purpose for this policy is to encourage Employees to report matters without being fearful of the risk of victimization, retaliations or discrimination.

The policy also provides a means by which staff are able to raise concerns with the appropriate line management, or specific appointed persons in the Digicall Group, where they have reasonable grounds for believing that there is fraud and corruption within a specific Department. The Protected Disclosures Act, Act 26 of 2000, which became effective in February 2001, provides protection to employees for disclosures made without malice and in good faith, in defined circumstances.

In terms of the Protected Disclosures Act employees can now blow the whistle on fraud and corruption in the working environment without the fear of suffering an occupational detriment as defined by the Act. Management encourages staff to raise matters of concern responsibly through the procedures laid down in this policy document.

4.1 Who can raise a concern?

Any member of staff who has a reasonable belief that there is corruption or misconduct relating to any of the protected matters specified above may raise a concern under the procedure detailed. Concerns must be raised without malice, in good faith and not for personal gain and the individual must reasonably believe that the information disclosed, and any allegations contained in it, are substantially true. The issues raised may relate to a manager, another member of staff or a group of staff. The perpetrator can be an outsider, an employee, a manager, a customer or an ex-employee.

You may even be aware of a system or procedure in use, which may cause Digicall Group to transgress its legal obligations.

4.2 Adopting a culture of openness

Digicall commits itself to encouraging a culture that promotes openness.

This will be done by:

Involving employees, listening to their concerns and encouraging the appropriate use of this policy/process on whistleblowing promoted by Senior Management. This policy will be issued to all existing employees and to each new employee. Promoting awareness of standards of appropriate and accepted employee conduct and establishing a common understanding of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable behavior.

4.3 Our assurance to you

Management is committed to this policy. Digicall Group will ensure that any member of staff who makes a disclosure in the above-mentioned circumstances will not be penalised or suffer any occupational detriment for doing so. Occupational detriment as defined by the Act includes being dismissed, suspended, demoted, transferred against your will, harassed or intimidated, refused a reference or being provided with an adverse reference, as a result of your disclosure. If you raise a concern in good faith in terms of this policy, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any form of retribution as a result. This assurance is not extended to employees who maliciously raise matters they know to be untrue.

A member of staff who does not act in good faith or who makes an allegation without having reasonable grounds for believing it to be substantially true, or who makes it malicious, may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

4.4 Your protection

In view of the protection offered to a member of staff raising a bona fide concern, it is preferable that the individual puts his/her name to the disclosure. The Digicall Group will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern. However, we recognise that you may nonetheless wish to raise a concern in confidence under this policy. If you ask us to protect your identity by keeping your confidence, we will not disclose it without your consent. However, we do expect the same confidentiality regarding the matter from you. If the situation arises where we are not able to resolve the concern without revealing your identity (for example where your evidence is needed in court), we will discuss with you whether and how we can proceed. Accordingly, while we will consider anonymous reports, this policy is not appropriate for concerns raised anonymously.

5 Process

If an employee suspects serious disparities or a breach of policies or laws and it is not possible or suitable to report the situation to the respective manager, or if a report is ignored, the procedure stated in this policy can be used.

Examples of conditions which might be considered as serious disparities, but are not limited to the below, are:

- an unlawful act of either civil or criminal nature,
- breaching or violation of any local laws or regulations of any country,
- practices that risk physical harm or damage to a person or to property,
- questionable accounting, fraud or auditing practices,
- unfair discrimination,
- to offer, promise, give, request, agree to, receive or accept any kind of bribe.

5.1 How to report a suspicion

Option 1: If you have a suspicion that you would like to report, we hope you will feel able to raise it first with your manager/ supervisor. This may be done verbally or in writing.

Option 2: If you feel unable to raise the matter with your manager, for whatever reason, please raise the matter either with the Human Resources Manager OR Director. Please say if you wish to raise the matter in confidence so that they can make appropriate arrangements.

Option 3: Suspicions can also be reported anonymously via the **Digicall Whistle Blowing Hotline**, using the following channels:

Toll-free number:	0800 004 005
WhatsApp number:	0860 004 004
Email:	digicallsouthafrica@behonest.co.za
Website and chat link:	www.behonest.co.za

The Digicall Ethics & Fraud Hotline is hosted independently by Advance Call. Information reported via the Ethics & Fraud Hotline can be given anonymously and this will be treated with the highest confidentiality. Access to the information and conducting of the investigation is limited to the Company CEO and Chairman of the Board. Members of the Senior Management Team or external investigators will be read in on any reports only as and when necessary.

6 Response and time scale

The Company will act upon any concerns raised. Concerns will be investigated as quickly as is practicable. Whistleblowers have a right to receive feedback during the investigation and if feedback is not provided it may be requested.

6.1 How we will handle the matter

Once you have told us of your concern, we will look into it to assess initially what action should be taken. This may involve an internal inquiry or a more formal investigation. If it is requested, an indication of how Digicall management proposes to deal with the matter then a likely time scale could be provided. If the decision is made not to investigate the matter reasons will be given. We will tell you who would be handling the matter, how you can contact him / her and whether your further assistance may or will be needed. When you raise a concern, you may be asked how you think the matter might best be resolved.

If you do have any personal interest in the matter, we do ask that you tell us at the outset. If your concern falls more properly within the Grievance Procedure, we will tell you. While the purpose of this policy is to enable us to investigate possible malpractice and take appropriate steps to deal with it, we will give you as much feedback as we properly can. If requested, we will confirm our response to you in writing. Please note, however, that we may not be able to tell you the precise action we take where this could infringe a duty of confidence owed by us to someone else.

If you are unhappy with our response, remember you can go to the other levels and bodies detailed in this policy. While we cannot guarantee that we will respond to all matters in the way that you might wish, we commit ourselves to handle the matter fairly and properly. By using this policy, you will help us to achieve this.

7 Protection

The Company will not retaliate against any Employee who reports conditions that can be perceived as disparities if the Employee discloses the information in good faith.

Employees who are victimised in breach of the Act, whether they are dismissed or not, can refer a dispute to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration for conciliation and thereafter to the Labour Court. People who are dismissed for making a protected disclosure can claim either compensation, up to a maximum amount of two years' salary, or reinstatement. Employees who are not dismissed but who are disadvantaged in some other way as a result of making a protected disclosure can claim compensation or ask the court for any other appropriate order.

8 Confidentiality and anonymity

The Company will respect the confidentiality of any received concerns where the Employee requests confidentiality. It must however be noted, that should your tip-off lead to an investigation where the outcome is of a serious nature and needs to be attended to accordingly, you may be called upon as a witness in the case. In doing so, your anonymity may be compromised.