

## AUTHORITY AND STANDARDS

§ 20.055, Florida Statutes (F.S.), creates in each state agency, the Office of Inspector General (OIG), charged with the responsibility for promoting accountability, integrity, and efficiency in government. In carrying out the duties and responsibilities specified in this section, each inspector general shall initiate, conduct, supervise, and coordinate investigations designed to detect, deter, prevent, and eradicate fraud, waste, mismanagement, misconduct, and other abuses in state government.

The Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) OIG conducts investigations in accordance with the *Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspectors General* (Green Book), as published by the Association of Inspectors General. These standards require investigators to:

- Collectively possess the knowledge, skills, and experience required for the investigative work.
- Be free from personal or external impairments to independence and constantly maintain an independent attitude and appearance.
- Conduct investigations and issue reports in a timely manner.

In addition to Green Book, investigative work is also conducted in accordance with the accreditation standards set forth by the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation, Inc. (CFLA). The FDEM OIG is accredited by the CFLA, which means that the OIG's investigative work products meet or exceed the highest professional standards for Offices of Inspectors General.



Report Fraud, Waste, Abuse,  
Misconduct, or Mismanagement.

FDEM OIG

## Accountability Hotline

CALL: (850) 815-4151

COMPLAINT EMAIL:

[COMPLAINT@EM.MYFLORIDA.COM](mailto:COMPLAINT@EM.MYFLORIDA.COM)

### Call when you...

- **Think someone is violating laws, rules, or FDEM directives.**
- **Think someone is receiving a benefit to “look the other way.”**
- **Suspect gross mismanagement or gross waste of FDEM funds.**
- **Think someone is using FDEM property or people for personal gain.**



Preserve Our Culture of Accountability,  
Integrity, and Transparency



## INVESTIGATIONS

## OIG Mission

*To promote integrity and efficiency through independent and objective assessments of FDEM's programs and operations.*

## Vision

*Enhancing Public Trust in Government.*

MELANIE YOPP  
CHIEF OF INVESTIGATIONS

MANDI MITCHELL  
INSPECTOR GENERAL

## WHAT PROMPTS AN INVESTIGATION?

An investigation is typically initiated when the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) Office of Inspector General (OIG) receives a **complaint**.

A **complaint** is an allegation of misconduct, violation of law or agency directives against any staff member of FDEM or for which the OIG has jurisdiction.

We accept complaints via telephone, email, letter, in person, referral from an external entity, or any other form of communication. We encourage complainants to submit a written complaint, when possible, and to include all pertinent information and contact information in the complaint.

## DOES THE OIG ACCEPT ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS?



We accept anonymous complaints. However, not having contact information for the complainant may limit our ability to act upon the complaint. It is helpful to have the ability to contact you for additional information, or for clarification on the issues reported. If you wish to remain anonymous, please be as specific as possible in your submission to us.

## IS AN INVESTIGATION ALWAYS INITIATED?

After receiving a complaint, we make an initial determination of what action is required. Based on the severity of the complaint, an investigation may be initiated, or the complaint may be referred to management for appropriate action. In any case, complaints are documented, numbered, and maintained on file.

## AM I REQUIRED TO COOPERATE?

State officers, employees, agencies, special districts, boards, commissions, contractors, and subcontractors are required by § 20.055, F.S., to cooperate with OIG investigations.

As a **Witness**, you may be asked questions about another person or situation. While it may be uncomfortable answering, the investigator needs the most accurate information possible. The information you provide can influence the outcome of the case. Being cooperative and truthful, and keeping the contents of the discussion confidential, will assist the investigative process.

As a **Subject**, your cooperation, honesty, and discretion in keeping the contents of the discussion confidential will assist the investigation process. Our objective is to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to objectively substantiate an allegation, and to provide management with a report clearly outlining the evidence supporting that determination.

## WHAT IS THE WHISTLE-BLOWER'S ACT?

The Whistle-blower's Act (§ 112.3187-112.31895, F.S.) provides protections for state employees and employees of state contractors who blow the whistle on fraud or abuse within state government.

Under the Whistle-blower's Act, you may qualify for protections, *including protection of your identity and against retaliation*, when you disclose qualifying information to the OIG.



For more information about the FDEM OIG, please visit our website at: <https://www.floridadisaster.org/dem/directors-office/inspector-general/>.

In order to qualify for whistle-blower protection, the information disclosed must include:

- ❖ A violation or suspected violation of federal, state, or local law, rule, or regulation committed by an employee or agent of an agency or independent contractor which creates and presents a substantial and specific danger to the public's health, safety, or welfare; **or**
- ❖ An act or suspected act of gross mismanagement, malfeasance, misfeasance, gross waste of public funds, suspected or actual Medicaid fraud or abuse, or gross neglect of duty committed by an employee or agent of an agency or independent contractor.

If you wish to report information that you think may qualify you for whistle-blower protection, please contact us immediately. Alternatively, you may call or write to the Whistle-blower's Hotline operated by the Governor's Chief Inspector General:

**Whistle-blower's Hotline**  
P.O. Box 151  
Tallahassee, FL 32302  
(800) 543-5353 toll-free  
(850) 922-1060 in Tallahassee

## DOES THE OIG CONDUCT CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS?

We do not conduct criminal investigations, rather we notify the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, or other law enforcement agencies, as appropriate, when there are reasonable grounds to believe there has been a violation of criminal law.