



When You're Asked to Act Unethically

Everyone at some point in their career has been asked to do something at their workplace which they believe to be unethical. You may have been asked to lie to a client or someone else in your organization or were asked to overlook someone else's bad behavior.

When this happens the choices aren't good. Stay silent or go along and you become complicit with the behavior. Report the problem and you often worry about retaliation.

But there are certainly some options to consider in DeKalb County. First, the County has a hotline and you can report your concerns anonymously. Our hotline is run by a third party service, Navex Global, which services hotlines across the country. The hotline can be accessed either on a personal computer or by calling the hotline and speaking to a representative.¹ The only persons who have access to the complaints filed on the hotline are myself, Stacey Kalberman, and our Independent Auditor, John Greene. As many of you have heard me state in my class, both John and I work for independent boards which do not report to the administration of the County. We also never find out the name or any contact information (including a computer IP address) of the person making the report unless they voluntarily give it.

And before you decide to make any report – anonymously or not – make sure you don't have a misunderstanding about the request. Talk to your boss or the person who made the request and be certain you have a clear understanding of the request. If there is no misunderstanding then ask them if

¹Phone: 855-224-8216

Online: www.dekalbcountyga.gov/ethicspoint

Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

they agree that it could violate a policy and tell them why you believe it to be inappropriate under the circumstances.

At the very least, you might clear up a misunderstanding. At the very best, your conversation could stop unethical behavior. And, as always, if you believe retaliation results from your actions, please call the Ethics office or make a report on the hotline.

Last, you have the option of refusing to participate in the conduct you believe to be unethical. Before taking this step, we advise that you call the Ethics Office to discuss your situation. Both LaTonya Wiley (Deputy Ethics Officer) and I try to respond to all phone calls or emails within the same day. Please remember, the Ethics Office is here as a resource for all DeKalb employees and public officials.

