



Creating or altering work information

You are responsible for handling all work information with integrity to maintain its accuracy and protect it from misuse.

Proper use of work information

As a public sector employee, you must correctly use your organisation's resources. Resources include all kinds of work information, including:

- ▼ tender submissions
- ▼ orders and invoices
- ▼ client's personal information
- ▼ licensing and registration details, and
- ▼ your timesheet.

You should only use work information for the purpose for which it was collected. You must never use it for personal purposes.

Recordkeeping

Creating and maintaining public sector records are critical elements of sound public administration and accountability. Good recordkeeping:

- ▼ assists the government and the public to scrutinise the decisions and activities of public sector organisations
- ▼ allows the community to retain and transfer knowledge, learn from experience, protect the public interest, and
- ▼ helps satisfy people's interest in the decisions and actions of government that affect their lives or shape the development of Tasmania.

Examples of recordkeeping are:

- ▼ minutes of a meeting
- ▼ a selection report prepared during a recruitment process, and
- ▼ recording allegations of misconduct on a register.

Your organisation should have clear policies and guidelines for managing information and good recordkeeping in your workplace.

Unauthorised use or misuse of work information

Public sector employees are trusted to handle work information appropriately. However, there have been instances where this trust was abused because employees inappropriately created or altered information for improper or even illegal purposes.

Creating or altering work information in error

Creating or altering information without authorisation can be done by mistake. While a genuine mistake may not be considered misconduct, your manager will likely investigate how it happened and seek to prevent it from happening again. The important thing is to report the error as soon as you become aware of it.

Inaccurate time reporting

Altering timesheets to be paid for time not worked is a misuse of work information and resources. It is potentially an offence, such as theft. It is essential that your timesheet accurately reflects the hours you worked and when you performed them.

See our separate fact sheet on time reporting.

Misusing digital information

The misuse of information and communications technology (ICT) can provide opportunities for personal or financial gain. In instances of serious misconduct, employees have manipulated accounting systems to commit fraud.



CASE STUDY

In 2010, a Centrelink employee was found to have altered information in the Centrelink database for personal gain.

The employee created 26 Centrelink customer accounts in false names, and ensured that benefits were paid into those accounts for a period of three months.

The prosecutor said most of the fraud happened after normal working hours and associated records were created in an effort to avoid detection. The employee had fraudulently received \$66,120.

Following an investigation, the employee was sentenced to four years imprisonment.

Extracted from ABC News report¹

Altering procurement information

Procurement is a high misconduct risk area, and public sector buyers must behave ethically and comply with policies and procedures and their code of conduct.

Examples of abuse of work information are:

- ▼ writing tender specifications in a way that favours a particular supplier
- ▼ not maintaining appropriate paperwork, including documentation of decisions
- ▼ raising purchase orders after invoices have been received, or not at all
- ▼ splitting contracts to avoid the need for a certain number of quotes or a tender process, or to keep purchases within a particular financial delegation
- ▼ varying contracts, for example, expanding projects to go well above expenditure thresholds, and
- ▼ over-ordering for personal gain.



CASE STUDY

An irregularity noticed while processing invoices was reported to the CEO at the Victorian City of Stonnington, who called in a consultant to investigate.

The investigation uncovered that an employee within the facilities team had been over-ordering alcohol, then on-selling the surplus stock for personal gain.

He did this by distributing alcohol costs across a range of council cost centres, deviating from procedure while keeping below his financial delegation of \$6,000 so as to not raise the alarm. The employee was suspended as soon as the fraud was detected.

The total detected frauds were more than \$620,000 over at least five years. In November 2014, the offender was sentenced to three years and 11 months jail (with a non-parole period of 18 months).

Extracted from IBAC website²

Information removal or loss

Another serious form of misconduct is the removal of information or deliberate data loss, including inappropriate or inadequate data disposal.

A high-risk time for this to happen is when an employee is departing. Misconduct may be in the form of emailing confidential information to a personal email address or using a USB to download communications or databases.



CASE STUDY

In mid-2015, the Victorian Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) received an anonymous complaint alleging a supervisor within the Sherriff's Office was misusing their position.

The allegations stated the supervisor and their domestic partner were the subject of numerous Sheriff's warrants, including through a company which had the supervisor listed as the Company Director.

It was alleged the supervisor had accessed the Sheriff's Office database to check on the warrants and upon discovering their name listed against the warrant, removed themselves as the Company Director.

IBAC referred the complaint to the former Department of Justice and Regulation (DJR). DJR responded to IBAC explaining the supervisor had been put on a performance management plan following the internal complaint to the Regional Director. The supervisor later resigned.

Extracted from IBAC report³

Follow your workplace policies, procedures and guidelines

You must always comply with the policies and procedures and any other guidance and training you receive concerning work information. If you feel uncertain about any matter, seek advice from your manager.

¹ www.abc.net.au/news/2010-03-23/centrelink-worker-created-dozens-of-false-accounts/376056

² www.ibac.vic.gov.au/preventing-corruption/are-you-vulnerable-to-corruption/procurement

³ www.ibac.vic.gov.au/docs/default-source/research-documents/unauthorised-access-and-disclosure-of-information-held-by-the-victorian-public-sector.pdf?sfvrsn=d76fc48_6



The Commission can help

We are available to provide support and assistance with identifying, reporting, investigating, managing and preventing misconduct: prevention@integrity.tas.gov.au or 1300 720 289.

For more Misconduct Prevention resources go to www.integrity.tas.gov.au/resources