



Team Activity: Release of Information

10–15 mins



Internal fraud and corruption: release of information case study

Activity overview

Release of information is the unauthorised access, use, disclosure or manipulation of official information.

This case study gives staff the opportunity to consider how they might respond to fraud – specifically the release of information.

Learning outcomes

- Staff understand an example of the release of information
- Staff know when and how to report internal fraud they witness or suspect.

Instructions

Read the scenario to your team and discuss. Ensure you include the key talking points in your conversation.

Scenario

Ms Unnamed worked for the ATO. She attended multiple meetings with senior staff discussing sensitive 'in-cabinet' issues. Her role included summarising the discussion and action items from the meeting. To remember the content of the meetings and plan what needed to be done afterwards, she used her personal mobile phone to record the meetings and take pictures of official documents. She didn't inform the other staff members attending the meetings that she was recording them or that she was taking photos of official documents.

Discussion questions

1. Why are Ms Unnamed's actions fraudulent?
2. What do you think the consequences were for Ms Unnamed?
3. Would this have been fraud if the meetings being recorded did not contain sensitive information?
4. If you saw this happening, what would you do?

Talking points

1. Ms Unnamed recorded official meetings and took photos of official documents on a non-work device. Even though she intended to use the photos and recordings for her work, this is 'release of information' because the device she used was personal, not work issued. Release of information is a type of fraud.
2. Ms Unnamed had her contract terminated. The release of information will be on her personnel file permanently, which could negatively impact her future job prospects.
3. This is unauthorised release of information because the information was not 'unofficial'. As per the [Security CEI](#) you must classify, share, store and dispose of official information correctly according to its protective marking. Information should only be shared with people who have a need to know, and using an appropriate, secure channel. Recording internal ATO meetings using your personal mobile phone is not a secure channel to record official ATO information.
4. If you witness or suspect internal fraud or corruption, report it to your manager or Speak Up. Not only is reporting an obligation for each of us, reporting helps maintain the high integrity environment we have at the ATO. Do not seek further evidence – it is Fraud Prevention and Internal Investigations job to investigate!

Next steps for you and your team to take

- You can find more information about your responsibilities in the [Internal Fraud and Corruption CEI](#)
- Contribute to a positive workplace integrity culture by modelling your preferred workplace behaviour in your team
- Report any suspected or witnessed fraud and corruption to Speak up or using Anonymous Fraud Alert Form.

For more information and resources

- You can head to our [SharePoint](#) site
- You can use our [facilitator guide](#)
- Call the [Speak Up hotline](#) on **1800 061 187** to speak to FPII
- Search [Anonymous Fraud Alert Form](#) on myATO to report anonymously
- Email SpeakUp@ato.gov.au for advice or to lodge an allegation
- Email PublicInterestDisclosure@ato.gov.au to lodge a disclosure.