

COMPLIANCE & COMPLAINTS

Ethics Commission Rules have the full force and effect of statutes and the Commission is required to enforce its rules. The process is summarized below. For more information, see the *Enforcement and Compliance Guide* at www.ethics.ok.gov.

PAST DUE REPORTS, FORMAL COMPLAINTS & INVESTIGATIONS

Compliance Orders. This process is an enforcement mechanism of the Commission to resolve compliance issues not requiring a formal investigation. The Executive Director oversees this administrative process for matters such as reporting errors, straightforward compliance issues, and late filings. The Director may direct action, including payment of fees *no higher than \$1,000*. Any entity assessed a Compliance Order has the opportunity for a hearing before an administrative law judge to show “good cause” why the Compliance Order should be modified or set aside. The request must be received by the Commission in writing within 30 days of the date the Proposed Compliance Order was issued. Second and subsequent late filings are deemed an intentional violation of the rules.

The Complaints process arises via (1) complaints filed with Commission by a member of the public or (2) internal complaint filed by the Commission staff. This process is typically used for more serious violations of the Rules not appropriate for the administrative process and includes repetitive violations such as repeatedly failing to file reports. The complaint coversheet must be completed and submitted. It is found under the “*Enforcement*” page on the Ethics Commission website.

Investigations and Complaints. A written complaint filed is considered by the Commissioners of the Ethics Commission. At Commission meetings, the Commission will decide whether to open investigations for alleged violations of the Ethics Rules. Once an investigation is opened, the Commission has the power to issue subpoenas to further its investigation. A formal investigation may be resolved through dismissal, a Settlement Agreement, or may be prosecuted as a civil case in District Court. The Commission will not take action, other than dismissal, until the Respondents have been notified of the alleged Rule violations and provided 20 days to respond to the allegations.

COMPLAINTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED DURING THE “BLACKOUT PERIOD”

The Commission will not accept complaints that allege a candidate or a candidate committee violated the Ethics Rules during an election cycle. This complaint “**Blackout Period**” begins April 3, 2024 and ends November 5, 2024. The Commission will begin accepting complaints for 2024 candidate committees on November 6, 2024. **This provision is intended to prevent the complaint process from being used for political purposes during a campaign.**

The blackout period does not prevent the Commission from engaging in investigations during the complaints blackout period. [Rule 6.4](#).

If there is a conflict between information on this form and the Ethics Rules, the Ethics Rules control.