



# Compliance - TODAY

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**To protect and serve,  
not police and intimidate**  
The importance of interpersonal skills  
for compliance professionals

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Vice President - Audit and Compliance,  
Corporate Compliance Officer  
Dignity Health

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Cornelia M. Dorfschmid  
and Lisa Shuman

by Roy Snell, CHC, CCEP-F

# Fire, heart attack, electrocution, rot, explosion, compliance

*Please don't hesitate to call me about anything any time.*

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**W**hat does the compliance profession have in common with other professions?

## Firefighters

When a serious legal or ethical problem occurs in a company, most people can be found out in the parking lot waiting for the "all clear." When the problem was discovered at Penn State, everyone ran away from the fire. Compliance professionals run toward the fire.



Snell

## Surgeons

They appreciate job specialization.

No physician would ever refer a patient to a podiatrist if the patient had a heart problem. In compliance, we will occasionally seek out legal advice for a specific problem from an attorney or firm that we know or trust rather than get a specialist. I would not take on a significant investigation that may result in a disclosure without finding an attorney who has handled that exact case and disclosure process 10 times before.

## Electrical powerline installers and repairers

These people work in a job that has many routine elements. The days can drone on without much excitement. But concern is always there. Compliance professionals spend days in routine activities such as educating, auditing,

answering complaints, etc. However, we stay awake at night worrying about responding to complaints properly. We worry about having a whistleblower go to the enforcement community to tell them we blew off their complaint. One wrong move and we will feel the pain.

## Roofers

The similarity here is really related to prevention. If you keep your roof in order, the rest of your building will not rot. We are constantly educating, developing policies, setting the tone, etc. All of it is designed to "put a roof" over the organization to prevent people or problems from rotting.

## Bomb squad technicians

While everyone else is hiding under their desks during an ethical and regulatory crisis, we are entering the room to diffuse the problem. Before our profession was created, business had all kinds of people with knowledge and responsibility for *one* of the elements of a compliance program. The problem was that they occasionally considered their role "advisory." They occasionally pointed to the bomb and left the room. Compliance professionals enter the room.

I looked at many job lists... best, worst, highest paying, most dangerous, etc. What's interesting is the parallels came most frequently to the most dangerous jobs. You could make a comparison of the compliance profession to any job, but the other comparisons seemed hollow. Our jobs are routine, occasionally high-risk, and we are constantly running toward problems. 📍