

Principles of Ethical Conduct for Government Employees

The following general principles apply to all executive branch employees in order to establish fair and exacting standards of ethical conduct. To ensure that every citizen should have complete confidence in the integrity of the Federal Government, each Federal employee shall respect and adhere to the fundamental principles of ethical service.

Principle		Which means . . .
1	Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws and ethical principles above private gain p 1	Employee loyalties go toward Federal service rather than personal benefits
2	Employees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty p 29	Employees cannot hold investments with businesses they interact with as part of their assigned duties
3	Employees shall not engage in financial transactions using nonpublic Government information or allow the improper use of such information to further any private interest	Specific information pertaining to the Federal Government or position shall remain confidential – it shall not be sold or released without authorization
4	An employee shall not, except as permitted by subpart B of this part, solicit or accept any gift or other item of monetary value from any person or entity seeking official action from, doing business with, or conducting activities regulated by the employee's agency, or whose interests may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of the employee's duties p 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gifts do not include: coffee, tea, donuts; discounts available to public or all Government employees; greeting cards and plaques of minor intrinsic value - 20/50 rule - \$20 per occasion, not to exceed \$50 per year per source - Never inappropriate & frequently prudent to decline gift offered by prohibited source
5	Employees shall put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties	Receive pay for 8 (or more) hours per day, so one must perform work during those hours
6	Employees shall not knowingly make unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the Government	Employees are prohibited from speaking for or obligating the government for profit for non-governmental entities
7	Employees shall not use public office for private gain p 53	Cannot use information received or developed in the course of your official duties to benefit outside financial interests

8	Employees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual p 39	No special favors for family, friends, or business associates
9	Employees shall protect and conserve Federal property and shall not use it for other than authorized activities p 56	Internet, telephones, computers, official time, copy machine, etc. Always get supervisory permission [See REE P&P 253.4 - Use of Information Technology Resources]
10	Employees shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with official Government duties and responsibilities p 45	Cannot receive compensation for performing same work in non-government capacity Negotiating employment - Do not discuss potential employment doing similar work with prohibited sources while still a government employee
11	Employees shall disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities	We are taxpayers as well as employees - let's not foot the bill for any abuse of principles
12	Employees shall satisfy in good faith their obligations as citizens, including all just financial obligations, especially those-such as Federal, State, or local taxes-that are imposed by law p 73	Failure to pay off debts could be grounds for disciplinary action [See REE Bulletin 99-302, Local Travel Expenses and Emergency Salary and Travel Advances]
13	Employees shall adhere to all laws and regulations that provide equal opportunity for all Americans regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicap	Familiarize self with all pertinent information regarding your actions. If unfamiliar, check with supervisor, Employee Relations, or designated Ethics Advisor
14	Employees shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law or the ethical standards set forth in this part. Whether particular circumstances create an appearance that the law or these standards have been violated shall be determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts	As federal employees, we must remain above reproach. Do not engage in any actions you would not want posted on the front page of the local newspaper

Related statutes. The full [Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch](#), 5 CFR § 2635, are available on the REE Ethics web site. In addition to the Standards of Ethical Conduct, there are conflict of interest statutes that prohibit certain conduct. Criminal conflict of interest statutes of general applicability to all employees, 18 U.S.C. 201, 203, 205, 208, and 209, are summarized in the appropriate subpart and must be considered in determining whether conduct is proper (p. 60). Because an employee is considered to be on notice of the requirements of any statute, an employees should not rely upon any description or synopsis of a statutory restriction, but should refer to the statute itself and obtain the advice of an agency ethics official as needed.