

GENERAL PRINCIPLES★

The following general principles apply to every employee and may form the basis for the standards contained in this part. Where a situation is not covered by the standards set forth in this part, employees shall apply the principles set forth in this section in determining whether their conduct is proper.

1. **MAINTAIN PUBLIC TRUST:** Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws and ethical principles above private gain.
2. **AVOID CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** Employees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty.
3. **PROTECT NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION:** Employees shall not engage in financial transactions using nonpublic Government information or allow the improper use of such information to further any private interest.
4. **DO NOT ACCEPT GIFTS:** 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.
5. **PERFORM YOUR JOB:** Employees shall put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties.
6. **NO UNAUTHORIZED PROMISES:** Employees shall not knowingly make unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the Government.
7. **DO NOT USE PUBLIC OFFICE FOR PRIVATE GAIN:** Employees shall not use public office for private gain.
8. **NO PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT:** Employees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.
9. **PROTECT FEDERAL PROPERTY:** Employees shall protect and conserve Federal property and shall not use it for other than authorized activities.
10. **OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT:** Employees shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with official Government duties and responsibilities.
11. **REPORT WASTE, FRAUD, ABUSE AND CORRUPTION:** Employees shall disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities.
12. **OBEY THE LAW AND PAY YOUR TAXES:** 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.
13. **DO NOT DISCRIMINATE:** 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.
14. **AVOID THE APPEARANCE OF BEING UNETHICAL:** 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.

Contact your local ethics office at:
