



U.S. Government Ethics Standards

[Introduction](#)

[Gifts from Outside Sources](#)

[Gifts Between Employees](#)

[Conflicting Financial Interests](#)

[Frequent Flyer Benefits & Bumping](#)

[Impartiality in Performing Duties](#)

[Misuse of Position](#)

[Representation to Government Agencies](#)

[Outside Activities](#)

[Financial Disclosure](#)

[Honoraria](#)

[Supplementation of Salary](#)

[Seeking Other Employment](#)

[Post-Employment](#)

[Informal Advisory Letters and](#)

[Memoranda and Formal Opinions](#)



Introduction

The Office of Government Ethics has established Standards of Conduct that apply to all US government employees. Within the Department of Defense, these Standards of Conduct are implemented by the Joint Ethics Regulation, DOD 5500.7-R. Enlisted members of the uniformed services are subject to regulations issued by each service.

You should be familiar with your responsibilities under these regulations and Federal conflict of interest laws. All of the rules are derived from the following fourteen principles of ethical conduct in Executive Order 12731.

- Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws, and ethical principles above private gain.
- Employees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty.
- Employees shall not engage in financial transactions using nonpublic Government information or allow the improper use of such information to further any private interest.
- An employee shall not, except pursuant to such reasonable exceptions as are provided by regulation, 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.
- Employees shall put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties.
- Employees shall make no unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the Government.
- Employees shall not use public office for private gain.
- Employees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.
- Employees shall protect and conserve Federal property and shall not use it for other than authorized activities.
- Employees shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with official Government duties and responsibilities.
- Employees shall disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities.
- 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.
- 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.
- Employees shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law or the ethical standards promulgated pursuant to this order.

Here's the bottom line? Ask yourself if a reasonable person who knew the relevant facts may think that the law or ethical standards had been violated. You should do okay if you avoid even the appearance that you are violating the law or any ethical principles. Remember, violations may subject you to administrative, civil, or even criminal penalties.

If the more detailed ethical rules described elsewhere in this module don't cover a specific situation you are concerned about, or if you have a question as to how any of the restrictions apply to your particular situation, please contact your organization's ethics counselor. It is much easier to get advice before you act, than it is to try to undo the damage after a rule has been broken. Advice from ethics counselors is advisory only. Ethics counselors are acting on behalf of the Government, not as your personal representative. Your consultation with a counselor does not create an attorney-client relationship.

Additional information on ethics issues is available on the United States Office of Government Ethics web site at www.usoge.gov and the DoD Standards of Conduct website at www.defenselink.mil/dodgc/defense_ethics. Except for this introduction and the topic on Frequent Flyer Benefits, all topics in this module are quoted verbatim from *Ethics Program Topics* on the Office of Government Ethics web site.

Reference:

Executive Order (E.O.) 11222, E.O. 12674, as modified by E.O. 12731, 3 C.F.R., 1990 Comp., pp. 306-311; 5 C.F.R. § 2635.101.

[Next -->](#)

[SECURITY BRIEFING TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)