Code of Ethics

The citizens of the United States have confidence that we will do our part to preserve the security and well being of this nation. The public expects us to conduct our mission honestly and with integrity. To ensure we do not betray or violate this public trust, we must adhere to the principles of the Code of Ethics.
For additional information on ethics laws, training materials, and current ethic issues, visit the U.S. Department of Defense Standards of Conduct Office. This site also houses, an ethics presentation, with explanatory script. We encourage managers and supervisors to view the presentation with their employees.

Conflict of Interest

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- You may not do government work on a particular matter that will affect the financial interest of you, your spouse, minor children, general partner, organization with which you are negotiating or have arrangement for future employment, or any organization for which you serve as an employee, officer, director, trustee, or general partner.

- You may not seek or accept anything of value, other than your salary, for being influenced in your official duties.

- You may not knowingly solicit or make solicited sales to personnel who are junior in rank, grade, or position (or their families).

- You generally may not represent anyone outside the Government before a Federal agency or court, or share in any compensation for such representation made by anyone else, if the government is involved in the matter.

- You may not accept compensation from any source except the Government for your services as a Government employee.

Army employees must refrain from any private business, professional activity or from having direct or indirect financial interest which would place them in a position where there is a conflict between their private interests and the public interests of the United States Government, particularly those related to their duties and responsibilities as Army personnel. Even though a technical conflict may not exist, they must avoid even the appearance of such a conflict from a public confidence point of view.

Additionally, employees may not engage in any private business, professional activity, or financial transaction that involves the direct or indirect use, or the appearance of such use, of inside information gained through an Army position. This includes engaging in any teaching, lecturing, or writing that is dependent on information obtained as a result of Government employment, unless that information has been published or is available to the public.

Off Duty Employment

Army personnel must not engage in outside employment that:

- Interferes with their ability to perform their government duties
- Appears to create conflicts of interest involving the Army or the United States Government
- May reasonably be expected to bring discredit or criticism against the employee or the Army

This restriction further disallows canvassing, soliciting and peddling of goods and products (AVON, school candy, etc.) by employees during working hours.

Civilian employees must normally obtain official permission before engaging in off-duty employment if the prospective employer transacts or is proposing to transact business with the Department of Defense or its Departments. Inquiries regarding the appropriateness of off-duty employment should be directed to the Judge Advocate's Office.

The U.S. Department of Defense Standards of Conduct Office maintains a website which contains information on employment restrictions.

Gifts

Federal employees may not solicit or accept anything of monetary value, including gifts, gratuities, favors, entertainment or loans from any individual or business who:

- Has or is seeking to obtain contractual or other business or financial relations with the Army or Department of Defense
- Conducts operations or activities that are regulated by the Army or Department of Defense
- Has interests that may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of an employee's official duties

Furthermore, Federal employees may not give a gift to or contribute to a gift for their supervisor (or a supervisor within their chain of command). Employees also may not solicit a contribution from another employee for a gift for either their own or that employee's supervisor. Finally, an employee may not accept a gift from someone who is paid less than them, unless that person is not a subordinate and a personal relationship justifies the gift. This does not apply to a voluntary gift of nominal amount (up to $10) or a donation of nominal amount made on a special occasion such as marriage, illness, transfer or retirement.

Financial and Legal Obligations

Federal employees are required to meet their financial obligations in a proper and timely manner. Failure to do so reflects adversely on them, the Army, and the Government and is considered improper conduct. Failure to honor valid debts or legal obligations may result in **disciplinary action**.

Employees should be counseled when complaints of indebtedness are received, especially when there are repeated instances or it impacts on the ability to perform his/her duties.

The Army does not take any part of an employee's salary to pay private debts except to enforce certain legal and financial obligations to the Federal Government or to make child support or alimony payments. Court-ordered wage garnishments, received by supervisors or the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC), must be referred to the Judge Advocate's Office.

Political Activity (The Hatch Act)

Under the 1939 Hatch Act, federal employees, employees of the District of Columbia (D.C.) government, and certain state and local government employees faced significant restrictions on their ability to participate in political activities. Congress amended the Hatch Act in 1993 to permit

more political activity by federal and D.C. government employees. (These amendments did not change the provisions applying to state and local employees.)

With the 1993 amendments, many federal employees (including Army civilian employees) are now permitted to take an active part in political management or in political campaigns. However, **certain federal agencies and categories of employees** continue to be subject to important restrictions on political activities (including partisan candidacy, solicitation of contributions, and on-duty political activity). The penalties for violating the Hatch Act restrictions are very severe. Most violations are subject to removal.

The U.S. Office of the Special Counsel (OSC) is responsible for enforcing the Hatch Act. The web site has a great deal of information on restrictions and on permissible activities. By law, the restrictions noted in the second paragraph above apply to classes of employees including career Senior Executive Service (SES) members, administrative law judges, members of board of contract appeals, and employees of the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). Further, by Department of Defense (DOD) policy, Presidential appointees confirmed by the Senate and non-career SES members may not engage in actions that could be interpreted as associating the DOD with any partisan political cause or issue. If you have questions concerning the appropriateness of certain activities you may contact the OSC directly at 1-800-85-HATCH. For information about DOD restrictions on activity that could be interpreted as associating the DOD with partisan political causes, you may contact the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center or your local legal office.

Prohibited Personnel Practices

Prohibited personnel practices are those things a Federal employee with personnel authority may not do. A Federal employee has personnel authority if they can take, direct others to take, recommend, or approve any personnel action. This includes appointments, promotions, discipline, details, transfers, reassignments, reinstatements, or any decisions concerning pay, benefits, training, and any decision to order psychiatric testing or examination, . Recent changes to the law were made to protect Department of Defense veterans. A personnel action now also includes any significant change in duties, responsibilities, or working conditions which is inconsistent with the employees salary or grade. People with personnel authority -- managers and supervisors - are charged with avoiding prohibited personnel practices.

Merit System Principles

Personnel management is based on and embodies the Merit System Principles. The merit system principles are the public's expectations of a system that is efficient, effective, fair, open to all, free from political interference, and staffed by honest, competent, and dedicated employees. As the Department of Army experiences continued change in the management of human resources (centralization, deregulation, delegation, etc.), it becomes increasingly important that line supervisors and managers incorporate the merit system principles into every decision process they use.

Dress and Appearance

Employees are expected to comply with reasonable dress and grooming standards based on comfort, productivity, health, safety, and type of position occupied. When clothing such as coats and ties create discomfort during hot weather and in places where cooling is minimized to conserve energy, the requirements should be modified or eliminated.

Any management requirement for specific civilian dress and appearance must be based on a clear showing that the prohibited dress contributes to an unsafe, unhealthy, nonproductive, or disruptive

work environment. Management disagreements with styles, modes of dress, and grooming now in fashion is not an adequate criterion for making such a determination.

Employees who wear standard uniforms (guards, firefighters, etc.) may be expected to comply with grooming and appearance standards that are more stringent than those required of other employees. These standards must be in line with job requirements and with like standards for employees in similar occupations employed by other Federal, state, or municipal governments.