

# The 14 Ethical Principles



A publication from SAF/GCA

If you need advice on a particular situation please contact SAF/GCA at (703) 693-0417 or by email at [usaf.pentagon.saf-gc.mbx.saf-gca-ethics-workflow@mail.mil](mailto:usaf.pentagon.saf-gc.mbx.saf-gca-ethics-workflow@mail.mil) to set up an appointment with one of the attorneys. Please also view the website at:

<http://tinyurl.com/k4xjavg>

*References: 5 C.F.R. § 2635.101(b)*

Public Service is a public trust. Each employee has a responsibility to the United States Government and to its citizens to place loyalty to the constitution, laws, and ethical principles above private gain. To ensure that every citizen can have complete confidence in the integrity of the Federal Government, each employee shall respect and adhere to the principles of ethical conduct set forth in this brochure.

The following general principles apply to every employee and may form 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 brochure in determining whether this conduct is proper.

It is the responsibility of every employee to seek clarification from appropriate sources whenever there is doubt or misunderstanding regarding any situation.

- (1) Preserve 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) Financial Conflict of Interest:** Employees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty, or create the perception thereof.
- (3) Misuse of Information for Personal Financial Gain:** 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) Acceptance of Gifts:** 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.

- (5) **Honest Effort:** Employees shall put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties.
- (6) **Commitments and Promises:** Employees shall make no unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the Government.
- (7) **Misuse of Office:** Employees shall not use public office for private gain.
- (8) **Preferential Treatment:** Employees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.
- (9) **Protecting Federal Property:** Federal property is for official, authorized activities only.
- (10) **Outside Employment:** Employees shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, which conflict with official Government duties and responsibilities.
- (11) **Notification Responsibility:** Employees shall disclose waste,

fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities.

- (12) **Satisfy Obligations as Citizens:** 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) **Adhere to all laws:** 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 appearance of impropriety:** 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.

These principals are general and meant as an overall guideline. Whenever a specific question arises and you are unable to come to a conclusion on the problem there are plenty of resources available to assist you. First and foremost, your Ethics Counselor in the SJA office is the primary resource. Additional resources include the Air Force Ethics website: (<http://tinyurl.com/k4xjavg>) and the Ethics Team at the Pentagon (703-693-0417, DSN: 223-0417)

**When in doubt, ask!**