

CODE OF ETHICS




Willie A. Hopkins Jr., Director, GSA

Any person who is involved in the contracting process shall be bound by the following standards:

1. When conducting County business, use the highest level of honor and integrity in accordance with all laws striving to avoid the appearance of unethical or compromising practices in relationships, actions or communications.
2. Always act responsibly with confidential information received in the performance of County duties.
3. Treat all individuals encountered in the performance of your duties in a respectful, courteous and professional manner.
4. Recognize that private promises of any kind may conflict with one's County duties and responsibilities.
5. Constantly strive for the highest standards of ethical behavior, trust, respect, fairness, integrity and credibility.
6. Never solicit or accept money, loans, credits or prejudicial discounts, and avoid the acceptance of gifts, entertainment, favors, or services from present or potential customers and vendors which might influence, or appear to influence business decisions.
7. Uphold these principles being ever conscious that County employment is a public trust.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) OF SITUATIONAL ETHICS

The following questions and answers are intended to address specific circumstances where there is often uncertainty as to appropriate response. The GSA Office of Acquisition Policy (OAP) provides each response as a general "rule of thumb" in dealing with an issue. A policy of not accepting any gratuities ("zero tolerance") should be promoted. Fostering a situational environment of accepting gratuities is potentially troublesome.





Q. A customer or vendor has dropped off a platter of cookies at the receptionist's desk. Can we accept the cookies and place it in the common break room for everyone to enjoy?

A. *The only exception may be a token gift that can be shared and consumed within one day. The best practice is to call the customer or vendor and explain to them that your agency has a "zero tolerance" policy towards the acceptance of gifts, and with thanks, return the gift. You can also ask them for disposition instructions of the materials such as donating the gift to a charitable program.*

Q. A group of customers or vendors have invited me to lunch to discuss upcoming solicitations. Who pays for my meal?

A. *The best practice is not to conduct business over lunch with customers or vendors. If the situation makes it necessary to do so, be sure that you pay for your own meal. Employees must be aware of the perception generated by such actions.*




Q. Last week an incumbent customer or vendor dropped by our office and passed out coffee cups, sun visors and calendars engraved with their company logo. It just so happens that a solicitation for a new contract for these services is pending. Should I keep the items?

A. *The best practice is not to accept the items. Potential customers or vendors who visit your job site may take exception if the materials are being displayed. They may conclude that the incumbent customer or vendor will receive the contract.*

Q. As part of the solicitation evaluation process, I have to attend a demonstration at the customer's or vendor's facility. If offered coffee or juice, may I accept it?

A. *Yes, you may, just as we would offer the same to the customer or vendor. This is a situation where one needs to develop a relationship with the business community while staying within ethical bounds.*



When representing the County

County employees involved in the contracting process are required to maintain respectful, professional business relationships with the vendor community.

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