



WHAT EVERY NEW EMPLOYEE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT GOVERNMENT ETHICS

Whether you realize it or not, as a federal employee, you come into contact with taxpayer resources every day. From the time you clock in and out for lunch to the supplies in your work area or the funds spent on policy and program implementation, your position at the CDC means that you have a responsibility to its constituents. Maintaining the public's trust—knowing what you can and cannot do and being fiscally responsible—is a top priority for this agency. The following guidelines will put you on the path to understanding the basics of the laws, policies and principles that govern ethical activity.

1. When in doubt, contact the [CDC's Ethics Program Activity](#) for advice.

All employees are strongly encouraged to contact the Ethics Program Activity with questions or for more information about the [Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch](#), the [HHS Supplemental Standards of Ethical Conduct](#) and conflict of interest rules. Government ethics is a set of specific rules, and these rules may seem counterintuitive at times. Contacting the Ethics Program Activity is the best way to ensure compliance.

2. Avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest.

Generally a conflict of interest exists when a CDC employee has a personal financial interest (e.g., owning stock in a company) that is affected by the outcome of a matter he/she is officially assigned to work on. There are a variety of interests that may give rise to an actual or apparent conflict of interest. In most cases, employees can avoid a conflict of interest by disclosing it and disqualifying him/herself from taking any official action in the matter. If disqualification is not feasible, he/she also may resolve the conflict by disposing of the financial interest (e.g., selling the stock). The [financial disclosure reporting system](#) helps to identify and resolve conflicts of interest. If you are required to file a public (OGE-278) or confidential financial disclosure (OGE-450) report, be sure to complete the form accurately and in a timely manner.

CDC ETHICS PROGRAM ACTIVITY

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3. [Beware of Supplementation of Salary.](#)

Federal employees may not be paid by someone other than the U.S. government for doing their government job. For example, a highly paid executive of a corporation, on entering government service, could not accept an offer from her former employer to make up the difference between her government salary and the salary she received from her former employer.

4. Refrain from engaging in prohibited political activities.

The [Hatch Act](#) prohibits most federal employees from engaging in partisan political activity while on duty and while in a federal building. The Hatch Act defines political activity as an activity directed toward the success or failure of a political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group. For example, employees are strictly prohibited from displaying partisan political materials (e.g., campaign buttons) at work. Be sure you understand the Hatch Act rules before you agree to participate in partisan political activities outside of work.

5. [Promptly seek approval for certain outside activities.](#)

New employees often arrive with longstanding external professional relationships in place (e.g., serving as an adjunct professor for a local university or as a member of the board of directors for an organization, or working part-time for a textbook publisher). Employees are required to obtain approval for certain outside activities, including but not limited to: teaching, speaking, or writing; clinical practice, consulting or other professional services; or services provided as an officer, board member or advisory committee member for an organization.

This list is a summary of several main concepts and does not represent a comprehensive description of the ethics rules and laws applicable to federal employees.