

ETHICS STANDARDS IN BRIEF SPECIAL STATE EMPLOYEES

This pamphlet summarizes ethics law provisions that you need to know if you are a part-time State employee (Special State Employee).

If you have questions, contact your Ethics Liaison Officer ("ELO"). An ELO list is available at <http://nj.gov/ethics/agency/>.

You may also call the New Jersey State Ethics Commission ("SEC") at (609) 292-1892 or 1-888-223-1355 or visit our web site at <http://nj.gov/ethics/>.

You should **always** seek the advice of your ELO **before** engaging in any activity that may violate the Conflicts of Interest Law or the Uniform Ethics Code.

Gifts, Services, Favors & Other Things of Value

There is a zero tolerance policy towards accepting gifts, favors, or any thing of value related in any way to your official State position. The only exceptions:

- Snacks such as coffee, soda, cookies, bagels, or doughnuts offered at meetings and conferences.
- Logo items or trinkets of nominal value such as pens or calendars available to the general public.
- Trophies and plaques awarded to the employee
- Employee discounts offered to all State or government employees.
- A gift from a co-worker, provided that the gift is not excessive or inappropriate for a business environment.

Outside Employment and Activities

You must complete an Outside Employment Questionnaire (OEQ) and disclose all employment and volunteer activities to ensure that your employment, volunteer activities and personal business interests are compatible with your agency's rules and your State responsibilities. You must contact your ELO and fill out a new OEQ if there are any changes to your non-state employment, volunteer activities or personal business interests. You must not use State time, personnel, or resources for any outside activity or employment.

Compensation for Official Duties

Your paycheck is your only permitted compensation for performing your official State duties.

Exploitation of Official Position

You may not use your position to secure unwarranted privileges, benefits or advantages such as jobs, contracts, governmental approvals or special benefits for yourself, your family, your friends or others.

You may not use your State issued identification, business card or your agency's letterhead for any purposes that are not related to your official State duties.

You may not disclose confidential information or information that is not generally available to the public except in connection with your official State duties.

Attendance at Events

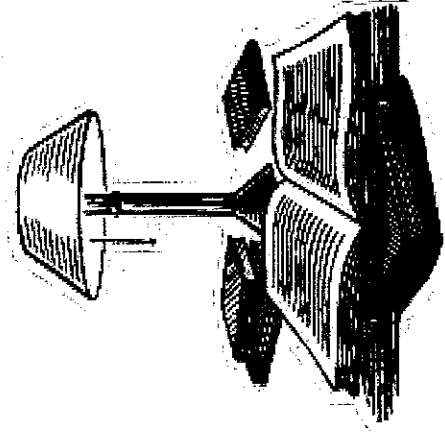
You must obtain approval from your agency's ELO before you attend events that you are invited to because of your official State position, if the event takes place away from your work location and is sponsored or co-sponsored by an entity other than a State academic institution or State government.

Political Activity

You are permitted to be involved in partisan political activities, as long as your agency does not prohibit such activities.

You must not use State time or resources for political activities.

If you are an announced candidate for elective public office, you may solicit and accept campaign contributions. You cannot, however, accept a campaign contribution if you know it is given to substitute for a payment that you would otherwise not be permitted to accept pursuant to the zero tolerance gift policy.



Conflicts of Interest/Recusal

You may have no official involvement in a matter when you have a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest.

You have a conflict of interest when you have an outside financial or personal interest that is incompatible with the performance of your official State duties. Some examples of outside financial and personal interests that might pose a conflict with your official State duties include other employment, sources of income, investments, leadership roles in professional and trade organizations, campaign contributors and matters related to business associates, friends or family members.

If you have a financial or personal interest that impairs your objectivity and independent judgment or creates the appearance of impropriety in any matter, you must recuse yourself from any involvement in the matter.

If you think you may have a conflict of interest, promptly seek advice from your ELO, agency counsel or the SEC to determine whether recusal is required.

Representation of Businesses or Individuals Before Your State Employer

You are prohibited from personally representing a party other than the State before the agency that employs you. This prohibition includes making personal appearances on behalf of a party other than the State, making phone calls, sending e-mail or signing documents on behalf of a party other than the State on any matter pending before the agency that employs you. This prohibition also applies to any partnership, firm or corporation in which you have an "interest," as that term is defined in the Conflicts of Interest Law.

Contracting with Your State Employer

Under most circumstances, you cannot enter into a contract to provide goods or services to the agency that employs you. This prohibition extends to any business partners you have and to any corporation that you control or in which you own or control more than 1% of the stock.

Post Employment Restrictions

After you leave State service, you are prohibited from representing a party other than the State in connection with a matter in which you were substantially and directly involved when you were in State service. If you have questions regarding post-employment restrictions, see your ELO before leaving State service. If you have questions regarding post-employment restrictions after you leave State service, contact the SEC.

Penalties

If you violate the Conflicts of Interest Law, the Uniform Ethics Code or your agency's supplemental ethics code, if applicable, you may be fined from \$500 to \$10,000 for each violation. You may also be suspended from your job for up to one year. If you willfully and continuously violate the Conflicts Law or any ethics codes, you may be removed from public employment and prohibited from holding any public employment for up to five years. You may also be subject to suspension, demotion or other discipline.

When in Doubt, Ask!

If you think you have a conflict of interest or are unsure of any of these rules, ask your Ethics Liaison Officer or the SEC.

Allegations of a violation of the Conflicts Law or the Uniform Ethics Code should be forwarded to the SEC.

Helpful Resources

Uniform Ethics Code:

<http://nj.gov/ethics/docs/ethics/uniformcode.pdf>

Plain Language Ethics Guide:

<http://nj.gov/ethics/docs/ethics/plainlanguage.pdf>

New Jersey State Ethics Commission

P.O. Box 082

Trenton, NJ 08625

(609) 292-1892

<http://www.nj.gov/ethics>

