

# Directive

FGIS 4135.1

12/27/90

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## CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

I.                                This Directive provides policy and guidance on ethics and  
PURPOSE                       standards of conduct, and supplements U.S. Department of  
Agriculture (USDA) regulations contained in the employee handbook  
entitled "Employee Responsibilities and Conduct." The USDA employee  
handbook can be obtained from your supervisor.

II.                                This Directive cancels the following:  
REPLACEMENT               FGIS Inst. 360-2, Acceptance of Miscellaneous Favors and Gifts from  
HIGHLIGHTS                   Nongovernmental Sources, dated 8/6/79.

FGIS Inst. 360-3, Foreign Gifts and Decorations, dated 7/18/83.

FGIS Inst. 362.1, Political Activity, dated 10/5/88.

FGIS Inst. 363-1, Financial Interests and Outside Employment, dated  
11/16/83.

AMS Inst. 363-2, Obtaining Approval for Outside Employment, .dated  
6/6/75.

FGIS Inst. 363-3, Conflicts of Interest, dated 4/14/78.

AMS Inst. 365-1, Types of Misconduct Which Subject an Employee to  
Disciplinary Action, dated 3/10/54.

AMS Inst. 365-1, Aux. 3, Purchasing Products from Private Business  
Enterprises Regulated, Inspected, or Serviced by AMS, dated 12/16/65.

AMS Inst. 365-1, Aux 4, Debt Complaints, dated 3/6/69.

AMS Inst. 365-2, Use of Market Information, dated 5/16/62.

AMS Inst. 365-3, Conflicts of Interest -PT or Intermittent Consultants or Advisers, dated 7/23/62.

AMS/FGIS Inst. 365-5, Rev. 1, Conflicts of Interest in Duty Assignments, dated 7/24/81.

III.  
POLICY

Agency employees are expected to maintain high standards of honesty, integrity, and impartiality, as well as high standards of ethical and moral conduct, in order to ensure maximum efficiency in their Federal employment.

IV.  
SPECIFIC  
GUIDANCE

The Supervisor's Desk Guide (SDG) and Personnel Manual (PM) on "Conduct and Responsibilities" contain specific guidance, requirements, and procedures on standards of ethical conduct. All supervisors have a copy of the SDG. and all Employee Relations Specialists have a copy of the SDG and PM. Section A of the SDG (attached) consists of Agency supplemental regulations and contains specific guidance to all employees.

V.  
RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Employees are required to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects favorably on the Federal government so as to strengthen and maintain public confidence and trust. All employees are required to:

1. Comply with the regulations governing employee conduct and responsibilities, and the lawful instructions given by a supervisor or person acting in that capacity;

2. Consult with their supervisor to resolve any questions or clarify any regulation(s) or procedure(s) concerning conduct and responsibilities;

3. Report for duty on time and render full, honest, and industrious service in the performance of their assigned duties;

4. Adhere to the principles of ethical conduct and exercise courtesy and tact in dealing with co-workers, supervisors, subordinates, people in other governmental entities, and the public;

5. Obtain prior supervisory approval before accepting or engaging in outside employment or activity (whether paid or unpaid) so as to avoid a conflict of interest situation (see attached Section A for an explanation of outside employment or activity);

6. Adhere to all laws, rules, and regulations that provide for equal employment opportunity and civil rights for all individuals regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability. (discrimination on the basis of these prohibited factors is unlawful); and

7. Report suspected conduct and responsibility violations to your supervisor or as follows:

a. Report bribery (or attempted bribery) to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) on Area Code (202) 447-7257. To report fraud, waste, or abuse in an Agency program or mismanagement/misconduct of Agency employees, send a Whistleblower's Complaint to USDA OIG Hotline, P.O. Box 23399, Washington, DC 20026. The OIG telephone number is (800) 424-9121 or FTS 472-1388 (or within the Washington, DC metropolitan area, call 472-1388); or

b. Report violations of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws and regulations to an EEO Counselor. Questions may be directed to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights.

B. Supervisors are expected to set an example for their employees, and maintain high standards of ethical conduct. They must know and follow the conduct standards and requirements in order to properly apply them. Supervisors should counsel employees in a timely manner, resolve conflicts appropriately, and develop and foster an effective working environment. Supervisors are required to:

1. Ensure that all of their employees have access to the USDA employee handbook, "Employee Responsibilities and Conduct," and the Agency's supplemental regulations (attached);

2. Explain to new employees the pertinent policies and regulations pertaining to employee conduct and responsibilities;

3. Answer questions from their employees and continually keep them informed of conduct requirements and regulations; and

4. Report violations to their servicing Employee Relations Specialist who provides advisory and consultative service to assist in carrying out policy, regulations, and procedures pertaining to employee conduct and responsibilities.

C. APHIS, Management and Budget, Human Resources Division will:

1. Coordinate the development of policy with FGIS management;

2. Interpret, define, and prepare changes and/or revisions to the Directive, SDG, and PM on Agency policy and procedures relating to employee conduct and responsibilities;

3. Provide advice and guidance, and consult with management on employee conduct and responsibility matters; and

4. Administer the financial interest and outside employment/activity reporting requirements, and adjudicate conflict of interest situations.

## VI. INQUIRIES

Inquiries on employee conduct and responsibilities should be directed to your supervisor. Further questions may be directed to your servicing Employee Relations Specialist.

/s/ John Foltz  
Administrator

See SDG - Section A