



## U.S. Office of Government Ethics General Things You Should Know About Ethics Employee Crossword Puzzle Answers

### Across

1. Violating the standards of conduct can get you fired; breaking a conflict of interest law can get you \_\_\_\_\_

Breaking a conflict of interest law can get you jailed and/or fined. If you violate the standards of conduct your agency can take disciplinary actions against you. Disciplinary actions include such things as letters of reprimand, withholding of promotions, and firing.

An excerpt from 18 U.S.C. § 216 states:

The punishment for an offense under [the conflict of interest statutes] § 203, 204, 205, 207, 208, or 209 of [18 U.S.C.] is the following:

(1) Whoever engages in the conduct constituting the offense shall be imprisoned for not more than one year or fined in the amount set forth in this title, or both.

(2) Whoever willfully engages in the conduct constituting the offense shall be imprisoned for not more than five years or fined in the amount set forth in this title, or both.

3. When a situation is not covered specifically by the standards of conduct, check your behavior against the 14 general \_\_\_\_\_

The 14 general principles are the cornerstone for determining whether your conduct is ethical. So, when you are not sure whether a situation is prohibited by the standards of conduct, check the 14 general principles. If you still aren't sure, check with your ethics official.

5 C.F.R. § 2635.101(b) states:

*General principles.* The following general principles apply to every employee and may form the basis for the standards [of conduct]. Where a situation is not covered by the standards set forth in [the standards of conduct], employees shall apply the principles set forth [below] in determining whether their conduct is proper.

(1) Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws and ethical principles above private gain.

(2) Employees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty.

(3) 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) An employee shall not, except as permitted by subpart B of this part, 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) Employees shall put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties.

(6) Employees shall not knowingly make unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the Government.

(7) Employees shall not use public office for private gain.

(8) Employees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.

(9) Employees shall protect and conserve Federal property and shall not use it for other than authorized activities.

(10) Employees shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with official Government duties and responsibilities.

(11) Employees shall disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities.

(12) 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) 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) Employees shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law or the ethical standards set forth in this part. Whether particular circumstances create an appearance that the law or these standards have been violated shall be determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts.

## 7. This group trusts you to serve their best interests

The American public trusts you to serve their best interests. The public pays your salary and expects you to make government decisions that are good for them. Abiding by the standards of conduct is one way to make sure you serve the public's best interests. Your agency may also have some additional standards of conduct you must follow. Check with your agency ethics official to see if you have additional ethics standards.

5 C.F.R. § 2635.101(a) states:

*Public service is a public trust.* Each employee has a responsibility to the United States Government and 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...as well as in supplemental agency regulations.

## 8. Once you receive ethics advice, \_\_\_\_\_ it

It is very important to follow the advice of your ethics counselor. You might not always like the advice – for example, you might really want to keep those “free” concert tickets or attend that all-expenses-paid conference. Experience shows that it is better to err on

the side of caution than to face a situation that harms you or the agency in the sight of the public. Your ethics counselor is skilled in navigating the waters of ethical dilemmas. Follow your ethics counselor's advice.

**9.** The name of the rules that tell you what you can and cannot do ethically: 3 wds

The standards of conduct, written by the U.S. Office of Government Ethics, describe which actions are ethical and which are not. Even though the formal title of the rules is the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, most people just call the rules the standards of conduct. Your agency may also have some additional ethics rules that tell you what you can and cannot do. Ask your ethics official if you need more information about these rules.

**11.** Office that investigates you when you violate the standards: 2 wds

The Office of the Inspector General investigates allegations of ethical violations. While investigators in the Inspector General's office are good people, you want to avoid meeting them because you are being investigated! This highlights another reason why it is so important to see your ethics counselor first.

**12.** This U.S. agency establishes ethics policy for the executive branch: abbr.

The U.S. Office of Government Ethics, commonly referred to as OGE, is the agency responsible for policies involving ethics. OGE wrote the standards of conduct and other ethics rules. Chances are you are most familiar with the standards of conduct, because those are the ethics rules executive branch employees receive or have access to when hired. Some employees are trained on the standards of conduct every year. Your ethics official is an excellent resource for all the ethics rules, not just the standards of conduct.

## **Down**

**2.** See this person when you have an ethics question: 2 wds

See your ethics official when you have an ethics question. In some agencies, you may know him or her as an ethics counselor. It is not necessary for you to understand all the details of every ethics rule. However, when you do not know how or whether a principle or rule applies, you need to ask for help from your ethics official. Be sure to talk to him or her before you take action on something you think is an ethics issue.

An excerpt from 5 C.F.R. § 2635.107(b) states:

Employees who have questions about the application of [the standards of conduct] or any supplemental agency regulations to particular situations should seek advice from an agency ethics official.

**4. Public service is a public \_\_\_\_\_**

Public service is a public trust. As a federal employee the public trusts you to be loyal to the Constitution, laws and ethical principles above your own gain or the gain of others.

An excerpt from 5 C.F.R. § 2635.101(a) states:

*Public service is a public trust.* Each employee has a responsibility to the United States Government and its citizens to place loyalty to the Constitution, laws and ethical principles above private gain.

**5. One goal of the ethics program is to strengthen the ethical \_\_\_\_\_ in your agency**

One of the goals of the ethics program is to strengthen the ethical culture in your agency. Ethics is more than rules and regulations. Every employee plays a part in making his or her agency an ethical workplace. Everything you say and do has an impact – either positively or negatively. Consider ethics when making decisions. Talk about ethics in the work you do. Set a good example of ethical conduct. An ethical culture starts with you.

**6. The highest law of the U.S. and you are to pledge your loyalty to it**

You are to pledge your loyalty to the Constitution, the highest law of the land. You are also to place your loyalty to the laws and ethical principles above private gain. The goal is to ensure the public's confidence in its government. How you conduct yourself and the government's business is a major ingredient in obtaining the public's confidence in the integrity of the government.

5 C.F.R. § 2635.101(a) states:

*Public service is a public trust.* Each employee has a responsibility to the United States Government and 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 [the standards of conduct], as well as the implementing standards contained in [the standards of conduct] and in supplemental agency regulations.

**10. Seek ethics advice \_\_\_\_\_ you take action on something that might involve an ethics issue**

Seek ethics advice before you take action on something on the job that you think might involve an ethics issue. Seeking advice protects you and the agency. As long as you tell all the details of the situation to the ethics official, his advice can protect you from disciplinary action.

An excerpt from 5 C.F.R. § 2635.107(b) states:

Disciplinary action for violating this part or any supplemental agency regulations will not be taken against an employee who has engaged in conduct in good faith reliance upon the advice of an agency ethics official, provided that the employee, in seeking such advice, has made full disclosure of all relevant circumstances.