

A Word About Ethics

CONDUCT RULES FOR EMPLOYEES OF CONTRACTORS

DO GOVERNMENT ETHICS RULES APPLY TO EMPLOYEES OF AGENCY CONTRACTORS (CONTRACT WORKERS)?

- No; most Government ethics rules do not apply to contractor employees.

WHAT CONDUCT RULES APPLY TO CONTRACTOR EMPLOYEES?

- Contractor employees may not accept bribes, misuse Government resources, use non-public Government information for personal purposes; use their Government affiliation to obtain personal benefits for themselves or others; or misrepresent their relationship with the Government.
- Other ethics rules may be imposed by the terms of the Government contract.

MAY FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ACCEPT GIFTS FROM EMPLOYEES OF CONTRACTORS?

- Yes, but only if the gift is based on a personal relationship or is less than \$20 in value (and all gifts from workers of the same company are less than \$20 per occasion and less than \$50 per year).

MAY FEDERAL EMPLOYEES GIVE GIFTS TO CONTRACTOR EMPLOYEES?

- Yes.

MAY A CONTRACTOR EMPLOYEE BE HIRED AS A GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE?

- Generally, yes. However, ethics rules bar the individual from working as a Government official on any matter in which the contractor company has a financial interest.

MAY FEDERAL EMPLOYEES WORK FOR CONTRACTORS AFTER LEAVING GOVERNMENT SERVICE?

- Generally, yes. However the type of duties the former Federal employee may perform for the contractor will be limited by Government ethics rules concerning post-employment activities. Employees should consult with an attorney from the Ethics Law and Programs Division (202-482-5384 or ethicsdivision@doc.gov) regarding how the rules will apply to a specific situation.

ETHICS LAW AND PROGRAMS DIVISION – OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL – UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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