

A Word About Ethics

GIFTS

GIFTS FROM OUTSIDE SOURCES

WHAT GIFTS MAY I NOT ACCEPT?

- You may not accept a gift:
 - that is offered because of your Government position, or
 - from someone:
 - with business (or seeking business) before the Department,
 - regulated by the Department, or
 - with interests that could be affected by performance of your duties unless acceptance is permitted under exceptions in ethics gift regulations.

WHAT GIFTS ARE ACCEPTABLE?

- Exceptions in the gift rules permit you to accept:
 - gifts from relatives and friends,
 - gifts of \$20 or less (if not in cash and limited to \$50 per year from the same donor) and agency- or profession-related books of \$100 or less,*
 - invitations to "widely-attended" gatherings *if a supervisor approves in writing based on an agency benefit*,* and
 - gifts from a foreign government of \$390 or less (above that amount you can accept for the U.S. Government).

* You may not use this exception if:
(1) you are a political appointee and
(2) the gift is from a lobbyist or registered lobbying organization.

GIFTS BETWEEN EMPLOYEES

ARE THERE ANY LIMITS ON GIFTS BETWEEN EMPLOYEES?

- Yes. You may not give a gift to a supervisor or accept a gift from a subordinate, unless the gift is:
 - \$10 or less (on an occasional basis);
 - for a major life event, such as a wedding, birth or adoption of a child, or retirement;
 - food shared in the office; or
 - personal hospitality at one's home or a gift to a host or hostess (of appropriate value).

MAY I GIVE A GIFT TO A SUBORDINATE?

- Yes. Ethics rules do not restrict gifts from supervisors to subordinates.

GIFTS TO THE GOVERNMENT

MAY I ACCEPT A GIFT ON BEHALF OF MY AGENCY?

- Yes, provided that you have authority to accept such gifts; the gift supports agency activities; acceptance will not create an appearance of loss of impartiality; and, if a travel gift, it was not solicited.
- Generally, a gift is not acceptable if from an agency contractor, grantee, or licensee or from someone in an industry sector regulated by the agency.