

Ethics at a Glance GIFTS

Personal Gifts to Employees – Commerce employees generally cannot accept a gift from someone who has interests in matters before the Department or if offered because of the employee's Federal position or, if a supervisor, from a subordinate, but some exceptions apply.

GIFTS FROM SOMEONE WITH INTERESTS BEFORE COMMERCE

- plaque or other item of little intrinsic value
- a discount for all Federal employees
- gift from a friend or relative
- meal in connection with a speaking engagement
- social invitations if offered because of your Government position from someone with no matters before Commerce
- gift from a foreign government of \$390 or less (if more than \$390, can be accepted on behalf of the U.S. Government)

OK TO
ACCEPT

GIFTS FROM SUBORDINATES

- gift of \$10 or less
- gift for a major life event (wedding, serious illness, new child, etc.)
- personal hospitality at a home
- host/hostess gift
- food shared in the office

- gift of \$20 or less (or agency- or profession-related book of \$100 or less)
- a public service award (with approval from an ethics official)
- gift based on an outside business
- invitation to a "widely-attended gathering" (with supervisor's written approval)
- business meals overseas (if a non-U.S. citizen is present and less than *per diem*)

OK TO
ACCEPT
IF NOT TO A
POLITICAL
APPOINTEE
FROM A
LOBBYIST*

** but OK for a political appointee to accept from a lobbying organization that is a 501(c)(3) organization or a media company*

- a bribe
- payment for performing Federal duties (unless to a special Government employee)
- a gift that was solicited

NEVER OK
TO ACCEPT

- payment for performing Federal duties
- a loan or on-going financial dealing

Gifts to Commerce – Gifts to an agency may be accepted if they support agency activities and acceptance will not create an appearance problem (not from a contractor, grantee, licensee, or regulated entity, or someone with controversial matters pending). Travel gifts cannot be solicited.

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