

A Word About Ethics

MISUSE OF GOVERNMENT PROPERTY AND RESOURCES

What constitutes a misuse of Government resources?

- Any use of Government equipment, supplies, or services for personal unauthorized purposes, including:
 - taking office supplies;
 - making personal telephone and fax calls (although limited personal use is permitted);
 - assigning staff to personal errands,
 - using duty hours for personal business; and
 - using or disclosing nonpublic information, such as personnel information, nonpublic trade data, economic analyses, census data, and classified national security information.

Are there any limits on the use of my Government position?

- Yes. You may not use your public office for personal benefit or for the benefit of friends, relatives, and others with whom you have a personal relationship. You may not refer to your Government position in connection with personal activities (unless it is part of general biographical information or for a professional journal).

May I use Government access to the Internet for personal purposes?

- Yes. The Department permits employees to access the Internet and e-mail from office computers for personal purposes, provided that such use does not interfere with office operations, and is not for:
 - obtaining or viewing pornography,
 - partisan political purposes,
 - operating a business or other venture for profit,
 - uses that cost the Government money,
 - engaging in prohibited discriminatory purposes, or
 - illegal activities or other activities that would bring discredit to the Department.
- You are also allowed minimal use of printers in connection with personal Internet and e-mail.

May I keep frequent flier benefits and other benefits I earned due to Government travel?

- Yes. Federal employees may use frequent flier miles and other benefits learned from Government travel for personal use.