

A Word About Ethics HOLIDAY PARTIES AND GIFTS

INVITATIONS AND GIFTS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR

May I accept an invitation to a holiday party?

- Yes, provided that the invitation is:
 - based on a personal relationship,
 - \$20 or less in value,* or
 - to an event attended by a large range of private sector persons and your supervisor approves as benefitting the agency (using a form available from the Ethics Law and Programs Division).*

**except that you may not accept such an invitation if you are a political appointee and the invitation is from a lobbyist or from a lobbying organization that is not a 501(c)(3) organization or a media company*

Are there limits on holiday gifts I may accept?

- Yes; holiday gifts are no different than gifts offered at other times. They may not be accepted if given because of your Government position or from someone with interests before Commerce, unless an exception applies, such as for:
 - gifts based on a personal relationship or
 - gifts worth \$20 or less (and, if you are a political appointee, it is not from a lobbying organization).

GIFTS BETWEEN EMPLOYEES

May I exchange gifts with co-workers?

- Yes, if all persons are participating voluntarily. You may exchange gifts, but the value should be limited to no more than \$10 if subordinates will be exchanging gifts with supervisors. A gift to a supervisor must be \$10 or less (meaning the value of the gift, not of each employee's contribution).

May contract workers participate in office parties and gift exchanges?

- Yes. They may not be asked for a party contribution, but may voluntarily pay for their per person costs. You may give a gift to a contractor worker, but can accept only gifts totaling \$20 or less from all workers of the same contractor.

May employees collect money for an office holiday party?

- Yes, but participation must be voluntary—no one may be coerced. Those attending may be required to pay a reasonable set amount for the per person costs. Supervisors should not request funds and cannot require participation.

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