

A Word About Ethics ENGAGING IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

ON-DUTY ACTIVITIES

IN WHAT POLITICAL ACTIVITIES MAY I ENGAGE WHEN ON DUTY?

- None. Federal employees (except Senate-confirmed Presidential appointees) may not engage in partisan political activities while on Government premises or when on duty.

WHAT OTHER LIMITS APPLY REGARDING POLITICAL ACTIVITIES WHILE AT WORK?

- You may not:
 - use Government property for political purposes, including using Government equipment to send political e-mails;
 - use your Government position or influence to interfere with an election or to coerce any person to participate in political activity;
 - wear a political button or clothing on duty;
 - display a political banner, sign, sticker, or poster in a Federal office; or
 - consider political affiliation or political activity with regard to a personnel action (except with regard to Schedule C employees and non-career SES appointments).

OFF-DUTY ACTIVITIES

ARE THERE ANY RESTRICTIONS WHEN OFF DUTY AND OFF FEDERAL PREMISES?

- Yes. You may not, even when not on duty or on Government premises:
 - ask for or accept a campaign contribution (including by hosting a fund-raiser or asking for contributions by telephone or in a speech) (except from a member of your union in some cases) or
 - run for office in a partisan election (an election that identifies candidates by party) (except as an independent in local races in some areas, such as in Washington, D.C. and its suburbs).
- Note that if you serve for 130 days or less in a 365-day cycle or are an intermittent employee, the off-duty restrictions do not apply to you.

IF I AM IN THE SES OR NOAA CORPS OR AN ALJ DO ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS APPLY?

- Yes. Career members of the SES, NOAA Corps officers, and administrative law judges also may not engage in any active campaign activities for a candidate or political party, such as by stuffing envelopes or asking for votes by telephone, and cannot serve as an officer in a political organization or a delegate to a convention.

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

202-482-5384 – ETHICSDIVISION@DOC.GOV – WWW.COMMERCE.GOV/ETHICS

JANUARY 11, 2017