



The 14 General Principles of Ethical Conduct

5 C.F.R §2635.101 (b)

As an oversight agency, the OIG is committed to maintaining a strong ethics culture. While you will be subject to *all* federal ethics laws and rules, these fourteen principles distill those volumes into a more manageable collection of general guidance. As long as you're guided by these principles, you're unlikely to ever encounter ethical trouble.

1. Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws and ethical principles above private gain.
2. Employees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty.
3. Employees shall not engage in financial transactions using nonpublic Government information or allow the improper use of such information to further any private interest.
4. An employee shall not, except as permitted by subpart B of this part, solicit or accept any gift or other item of monetary value from any person or entity seeking official action from, doing business with, or conducting activities regulated by the employee's agency, or whose interests may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of the employee's duties.
5. Employees shall put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties.
6. Employees shall not knowingly make unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the Government.
7. Employees shall not use public office for private gain.
8. Employees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.
9. Employees shall protect and conserve Federal property and shall not use it for other than authorized activities.
10. Employees shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with the official Government duties and responsibilities.

11. Employees shall disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to the appropriate authorities.
12. Employees shall satisfy in good faith their obligations as citizens, including all just financial obligations, especially those—such as Federal, State, or local taxes—that are imposed by law.
13. Employees shall adhere to all laws and regulations that provide equal opportunity for all Americans regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicap.
14. Employees shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law or the ethical standards set forth in this part. Whether particular circumstances create an appearance that the law or these standards have been violated shall be determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts.

The principles of ethical conduct were issued by George H. W. Bush in Executive Order 12674, as amended by Executive Order 12731. The principles were subsequently issued in the *Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch* at 5C.F.R. § 2635.101(b). Contact the Office of General Counsel via our intranet Help Desk if you have ethics questions!