

ETHICS POLICY

STATE OF CONNECTICUT CODE OF ETHICS

The State Code of Ethics for Public Officials and State Employees covers state officials and state employees. The ethical rules are contained in Connecticut General Statutes sections 1-84 through 1-90a. The Department of Consumer Protection expects all agency employees to adhere to the provisions of this Code of Ethics.

Employees receive a copy of the "Guide to the Code of Ethics for Public Officials and State Employees" at initial employment orientation, and at other times as is necessary or appropriate. Management assumes that the employee reads and adheres to the code. Alleged violations of the State Code of Ethics will subject the employee(s) to investigation and possible disciplinary action.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION CODE OF ETHICS

In addition to the State Code of Ethics for Public Officials and State Employees, the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) expects all employees to adhere to the following:

(a) No employee of the Department of Consumer Protection shall willfully or knowingly use or distribute state information or use state equipment, state assigned vehicles, state identification or badges, or any other state supplies or materials for any purpose other than official state business.

Much of the information received at or in the possession of the agency is confidential. Employees shall not use any information, whether available from computer printouts, computer terminals, investigative or client records, microfiches, microfilms or any other source, except when directly connected to the administration of agency services and program activities.

(b) No employee of the Department of Consumer Protection shall willfully or knowingly use his/her position in this agency to enable himself/herself, family members or friends to benefit from departmental programs or services where an identical benefit or opportunity is not open, available or provided to the general public.

(c) No employee of the Department of Consumer Protection shall willfully or knowingly, in the role of his/her position or position duties and responsibilities, either individually or as a member of a group, directly or indirectly, solicit or accept any gift or gratuity from any person, group, business or organization that is a recipient of services from departmental programs or an applicant for such services.

Any gift or gratuity received must be refused, returned, or turned over to the employee's supervising manager for appropriate administrative action, so as not to benefit the employee or create the appearance of a conflict with, or appearance of influencing the performance of the employee's duties at the Department of Consumer Protection. The only exception recognized is for items that are open, available and/or provided to the general public or that have negligible monetary value (e.g., a soda, a coffee or a danish) or gifts received directly from immediate family members, blood relatives or relatives-in-law. Any question regarding either what types of items are acceptable and/or what types of items are not acceptable should be directed to the agency's Ethics Liaison Officer, Elisa Nahas at (860) 713-6088.

(d) No employee of the Department of Consumer Protection shall willfully or knowingly, in the role of his/her position or position responsibilities, either individually or as a member of a group, directly or indirectly, solicit or accept any gift or gratuity from any person or organization with whom he/she has had a financial, business or professional relationship since it could cause or create the appearance of a conflict with, or an appearance of influencing, the performance of the employee's duties at the Department of Consumer Protection.

Any gift or gratuity received must be refused, returned, or turned over to the employee's supervising manager for appropriate administrative action, so as not to benefit the employee or create the appearance of a conflict with, or appearance of influencing, the performance of the employee's duties at the Department of Consumer Protection. The only exception recognized is for identical items that are open, available and/or provided to the general public or that have negligible monetary value (e.g., a soda, a coffee or a danish). Any question regarding either what types of items are acceptable and/or what types of items are not acceptable should be directed to the agency's Ethics Liaison Officer, Elisa Nahas at (860) 713-6088.

(e) It is the policy of the Department of Consumer Protection that any of its employees who are engaged or may be engaged in an employment relationship or business partnership with another person, firm, organization, business entity or corporation must notify the agency's Ethics Liaison Officer, Elisa Nahas in writing at: Department of Consumer Protection, Legal Division, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106, e-mail at elisa.nahas@ct.gov or Fax at (860) 706-1284, of their prospective or actual employment or business partnership with such person, firm, organization, business entity or corporation.

The written notification will provide an opportunity for further review by agency officials and/or the Office of State Ethics of the degree of potential conflict of interest, if any, and permit appropriate actions where necessary. Agency employees may be asked to sign a statement indicating that there is no violation of the State of Connecticut and/or the Department of Consumer Protection's Code of Ethics or policies.

(f) No employee of the Department of Consumer Protection shall willfully or knowingly allow any private obligation or employment or enterprise to take precedence over his/her responsibility to the State of Connecticut and to the Department of Consumer Protection.

(g) Any provision of expenses for an employee's work-related travel, workshop, conference, seminar, or speaking engagement attendance which is not provided by agency funds or union funds must be reported immediately to the Commissioner's Office in advance of the employee attending the event.

Meals or non-alcoholic refreshments that are available or provided to attendees at such event need not be reported by the DCP employee attending the function in his or her official capacity (e.g., as a speaker; an instructor). However, the employee must not accept alcoholic refreshments at such work-related events.

Any gift or gratuity received by the employee for their participation at the event must be refused or turned over to the employee's supervising manager for appropriate administrative action, so as not to benefit the employee or create the appearance of a conflict with, or appearance of influencing the performance of the employee's duties at the Department of Consumer Protection.

(h) Any provision of expenses for an employee's travel, workshop, conference, seminar, or speaking engagement attendance which is contemplated or offered by any non-government agency, group, business or professional organization, or individual(s) must be reported immediately and in advance of the function to the Commissioner's Office. Participation of the employee(s) in or at said function shall be solely at the discretion of the Commissioner's Office after review and consideration of all relevant State and agency Ethics policies and provisions.

(i) The agency will make every good faith effort to ensure that any and all individuals, licensees, vendors, businesses, groups, organizations and other parties doing business with, seeking to or receiving business contracts or the services of the agency, are aware of the DCP Ethics Policy which prohibits DCP employees from accepting gifts or gratuities, financial benefit or outside employment. Each and every employee should make every effort to also convey this information to the above-referenced parties at such time of their interaction with the parties.

The aforementioned Ethics policies and provisions apply to all employees of the Department of Consumer Protection, and it shall be the responsibility of each employee to be familiar with them and to comply with them.

Evidence of non-compliance or violation of the Department of Consumer Protection's Ethics Policies may subject the employee(s) to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from State service.

Questions concerning the Department of Consumer Protection's Ethics Policies may be directed to:

Elisa Nahas, Ethics Liaison Officer
Department of Consumer Protection
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106
e-mail: elisa.nahas@ct.gov
telephone: (860) 713-6088

Questions about the State Code of Ethics for Public Officials and State Employees may be directed to:

Office of State Ethics
18-20 Trinity Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1660
e-mail: ose@ct.gov
telephone: (860) 263-2400