



THE HIGH ROAD

"Preserving public confidence in public servants."

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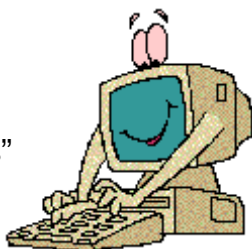
What's New On Our Ethics Web Site

The Hawaii State Ethics Commission recently expanded its web site by adding the following public records online:

Gifts disclosure statements. The Commission added to its web site the gifts disclosure statements filed in 2003 by state officials and employees. The State Ethics Code (Chapter 84, Hawaii Revised Statutes) requires state officials and employees to file a gifts disclosure statement with the Commission if they receive, from any source that may be affected by their official action, gifts whose single or combined value is greater than \$200. Gifts disclosure statements must disclose the person or organization from whom a gift was received; the value of the gift and a description of the gift; and the date on which the gift was received.

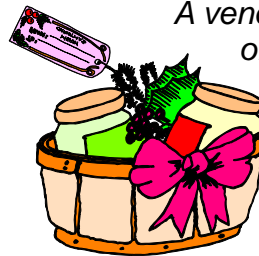
Lobbying expenditures reports. Also recently added to the Commission's web site were the lobbying expenditures reports filed in 2003 by organizations that employed or hired lobbyists. The Lobbyists Law (Chapter 97, Hawaii Revised Statutes) requires organizations who employ or contract for the services of lobbyists to file periodic reports with the Commission disclosing information about expenditures made, and contributions received, for the purpose of lobbying.

Visit our web site at www.hawaii.gov/ethics and click on "Public Records" to view any of these records on the internet.



Ethics During the Holidays

Gifts. Parties. Shopping. The holidays are here. During the holidays, state employees sometimes find themselves in need of ethics advice. For example, what would you do in the following situations?



A vendor delivers a gift basket to a state office before Christmas with a note that reads, "Happy Holidays!" The gift basket looks expensive. The office supervisor feels a little uneasy and wonders whether it is appropriate to accept the basket.

This situation involves an ethics question about gifts to state employees. The State Ethics Code contains a gifts law, HRS section 84-11. This law prohibits an employee from accepting a gift if it is "reasonable to infer" that the gift is intended to influence or reward official action. Employees who receive holiday gifts at work should contact the Hawaii State Ethics Commission for advice about the gifts law, especially when gifts are received from companies or persons with whom employees transact State business.

Are all holiday gifts to state offices prohibited by the ethics code? No. A box of chocolates, a small poinsettia plant, holiday cookies – these are modest expressions of holiday goodwill that are not likely to raise ethics concerns. In general, these kinds of gifts may be accepted under the State Ethics Code. Other more expensive gifts – including gift certificates and gift baskets – that are given to employees at state offices may raise ethics concerns and should be cleared with the Commission.





A company that has a contract with a state agency invites several employees from the agency to the company's holiday party. The party is being held at a restaurant in Waikiki. Last year, one of the employees attended the company's party and won a fantastic door prize.

Vendors, contractors, and other companies who transact business with state offices sometimes invite state employees to holiday parties. In some cases, this can raise gifts questions under the ethics code. For example, holiday parties sometimes are hosted at hotels, restaurants, or private clubs, where guests are treated to food, entertainment, and occasionally, expensive door prizes or gifts. Employees who are invited to attend such parties as guests of private companies should contact the Commission for ethics advice.



An employee is selling holiday crafts and jewelry in a state office to co-workers, who enjoy the convenience of doing their holiday shopping at work. A few employees, however, are

bothered by having private business take place in the office. They wish they could check with someone to see whether this should be going on.

This situation involves a possible violation of the State Ethics Code. HRS section 84-13(3) prohibits the use of state facilities for private business purposes. Employees sometimes use their state offices to sell crafts, clothing, jewelry, food, and other holiday items to co-workers. The State Ethics Code prohibits these private business activities in state offices.

Situations like these can be easily handled with a call to the Hawaii State Ethics Commission. The Commission's attorneys will provide confidential advice to employees who have ethics questions or concerns. Don't hesitate to call us if you find yourself in need of ethics advice during the holidays.

Ethics Quiz

Question: How old is the Hawaii State Ethics Commission? Pick the correct answer.

- A. The Hawaii State Ethics Commission is the oldest state ethics commission in the United States.
- B. The Hawaii State Ethics Commission is the youngest state ethics commission in the United States.
- C. The Hawaii State Ethics Commission is the tenth oldest state ethics commission in the United States.

Answer: If your answer is A, you are correct! The Hawaii State Ethics Commission, established in January of 1968, is the oldest state ethics commission in the United States!

The Hawaii State Ethics Commission wishes you a . . .



The High Road is a publication of the Hawaii State Ethics Commission.

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