



# HAWAII STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

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## THE STATE ETHICS CODE – A QUICK GUIDE FOR NEW EMPLOYEES AND BOARD/COMMISSION MEMBERS

Congratulations, and thank you for your service to the people of Hawai'i!

As a state employee or board/commission member (even if you aren't paid!), you must now follow Hawaii's Ethics Code, a set of laws designed to ensure integrity in state government. Here are some of the key things you need to know:

- 1.** The State Ethics Commission is here to help you! Any time you have a question about the Ethics Code – for example, if you're wondering whether you can (or should) do something – contact us! We have an attorney of the day ready to take your call or e-mail. You can reach us at [ethics@hawaiiethics.org](mailto:ethics@hawaiiethics.org) or **(808) 587-0460**.
- 2.** The Ethics Code has several major requirements, including:
  - **No "gifts" for doing your state job.** You may not accept any gifts where there is a reasonable inference that the gift is intended to influence you in the performance of your job. There are some times when you can accept gifts, but you may have to report them to the Ethics Commission. Contact us if you have questions!
  - **No extra "perks" for doing your state job.** You may not use your state position to gain "unwarranted" benefits for yourself or someone else. This means:
    - Don't use your state position to try to get employment for yourself;
    - Don't accept any extra pay or perks for doing your job (like an honorarium or any type of extra money or prize);
    - Don't use state time, equipment, or resources for private business purposes (for example, don't do any fundraising for a non-profit or a school group in the office, and don't engage in anything campaign-related using state resources);
    - Don't engage in substantial financial transactions with subordinates (for example, don't sell a car or rent an apartment to a subordinate).
  - **No conflicts of interest.** You may not take official action affecting a company in your state capacity where you, your spouse, or your dependent children have a financial interest in the company. For example, you can't award a state contract to a company that employs your spouse, and you can't be paid to represent a company on a matter before your state agency or board/commission. Contact us if you have questions!
  - **Financial disclosures.** Many state employees and board/commission members are required to file a financial disclosure within 30 days of taking office (and annually thereafter). If you don't know whether you're covered, please contact us and we can help!
  - **Restrictions on post employment.** There are laws that cover what you can (and can't) do once you leave your state office – in many instances, there is a one-year or two-year "cooling off" period before you can represent a private company before your former state agency.
- 3.** The Ethics Commission offers trainings at least once a month. Check <http://ethics.hawaii.gov> for the latest schedule. Some employees and board/commission members are required to attend training – ask your department or contact us to find out whether this applies to you.

More information is available on our website and at <http://bit.ly/hsec-board-commission>. Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions! We look forward to working with you – and more than 50,000 other state employees, board members, and commission members – to maintain the highest ethical standards in government!

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