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 <p>STATE OF WASHINGTON Department of LICENSING</p>	<p>AGENCY POLICY/PROCEDURE</p>	<p>POLICY/PROCEDURE NUMBER PER.11D</p>
<p>SUBJECT Ethics in Public Service</p>		
<p>CONTACT PERSON Human Resource Director</p>	<p>REFERENCES RCW 42.52 WAC 292-110 Supersedes: PER.11C (11/94)</p>	
<p>EFFECTIVE DATE</p>		
<p>APPROVAL</p>		

Ethics. It is defined as the system or code of morals or principles that guide the actions of an organization and its members.

In 1994, the legislature approved and the Governor signed into law (RCW 42.52) a set of principles and standards by which the ethical actions of all state employees are judged with the intent to:

- Promote public trust and confidence in government.
- Serve the best interests of all citizens by exercising fair, independent and impartial judgment.
- Place the public's interest before any private interest or outside obligation.
- Protect public resources and funds against misuse and abuse.
- Practice open and accountable government.

Adherence to these principles/standards, as well as other ethical standards set forth in this policy, is critical to maintaining the trust of the public and the integrity of the agency. This policy serves as formal notice that employees at every level and location in the Department are expected to abide by these principles/standards and the mandate set forth in this policy. Those who violate this expectation will be held accountable.

Policy

Each and every employee in the Department of Licensing shall act in accordance with provisions set forth in RCW 42.52 (Ethics in Public Service) and WAC 292 - 110 (implementing regulations) that govern behavior or action of state employees and elected officials in the use of state resources, acceptance of gifts, conflict of interests, political campaigning, disclosure of records, and outside employment.

The governing ethic principle declares that the proper stewardship of state resources, including funds, facilities, tools, property and employees and their time, is a responsibility that all state officers and employees share. An employee may not use his or her position for personal benefit or gain. General ethical principles declare that an employee:

- May not have a financial or other interest, or engage in any activity that is in conflict with his or her official duties.

- May not use his or her official position to secure special privileges for himself or herself or any other person, except as required to perform duties within the scope of employment.
- May not receive any compensation or gift from any source, except the State of Washington, for performing or deferring the performance of any official duty.
- May not receive a gift or favor if it could be reasonably expected to influence or reward his or her vote, judgment, action, or inaction.

In addition, the following principles shall also guide employee actions in the Department:

- Act with honesty.
- Conduct business in good faith, free of intentional misrepresentation.
- Do not discriminate unfairly by giving special favors or privileges to anyone, whether for remuneration or not.
- Put forth honest effort in the performance of public duties, remaining impartial and responsible to the public.
- Adhere to laws, regulations, and policies that provide equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, age, veteran's status, or disability.
- Treat fellow employees and customers with dignity and respect.
- Refrain from any activity that is incompatible with a professional workplace and/or detrimental to the public's perception of the agency.

To assist each employee in understanding her/his obligations in this regard:

- The Human Resources Office shall provide information about the law and implementing regulations in the New Employee Orientation program.
- Additional training requirements addressing the ethics law shall be included in the listing of required training for Department employees.
- Links to the ethics law (RCW 42.52), implementing regulations (WAC 292 – 110) and other clarifying information provided by the Executive Ethics Board will be posted on the Department's intranet home page.

It is the responsibility of the employee to understand the ethics law, implementing regulations and principles that establish what is/is not acceptable ethical behavior and act accordingly.

All employees shall acknowledge their responsibility under this policy by signing an "acknowledgement form" indicating that they have read and will abide by the expectations set forth in this policy. Once signed, the form, which shall be available via the Intranet, shall be forwarded to the Human Resources Office for placement in the employee's personnel file.

The Department of Licensing recognizes that occasional de minimus use of state resources may occur to promote good will and organizational effectiveness within the agency. The use of these resources must conform to this policy, the ethics law and implementing regulations.

Example of permitted activities:

- Using E-Mail for holiday messages, congratulatory messages, going away and retirement parties, agency picnics, and birth announcements.

Occasional de minimus use of state resources may occur in support of a charitable cause. However, that use must conform to the ethics law and the implementing regulations approved by the Executive Ethics Board.

Permitted uses in the Department of Licensing are limited to:

- General announcement of a blood and/or bone marrow drive.

- Solicitation of contributions to adopt-a-family programs
- Solicitation of contributions to the Red Cross
- Solicitation of contributions to AIDE (Association of Involved Department Employees)

The Director or designee must approve any other de minimus use of state resources in support of a charitable cause in advance.

Examples of activities involving the use of state resources that are not permitted are:

- Events or efforts that involve the expenditure of state funds.
- Fund raising for a charity or charitable cause, e.g., a school or youth organization, that directly or indirectly benefits an agency employee or employees. (The Director must approve fund raising activities in support of a fellow employee in advance.)

The Human Resources Office shall serve as the Department's resource in addressing questions regarding the ethics law and its applicability in the Department.

Accountability

The Department of Licensing and each of its employees is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the agency and for promoting public trust. Therefore, it is imperative that a system is in place to prevent inappropriate use or to expeditiously detect misuse of e-mail, Internet access, and other agency resources. For that reason, usage of these resources by employees may be reviewed by agency management, DOL's Office of System and Program Review, the State Auditor's Office and/or by their designees.

Suspected violations of this policy, RCW 42.52 and/or WAC 292 - 110 should be reported to the appropriate Assistant Director, the Deputy Director and/or the Director. Supervisors and managers shall report any suspected violation of this policy to the appropriate Assistant Director, the Deputy Director and/or the Director. Investigation of purported violations shall be initiated and conducted in a timely manner, with a copy of the report of findings filed with the Director.

Violations of this policy, WAC 292 - 110 and/or RCW 42.52 are considered to be a breach of one of the most important values of the Department. As such, any employee found to have violated this policy, RCW 42.52 and/or WAC 292 - 110 may be subject to corrective or disciplinary action (demotion, reduction in pay, suspension, dismissal or suspension followed by dismissal) as deemed appropriate by the appointing authority. Copies of the corrective or disciplinary action taken shall be placed in the employee's file and may only be removed with the approval of the Director.

Violation of WAC 292 - 110 and/or RCW 42.52 may be considered an ethics violation subject to civil damages or other penalties as imposed by the Executive Ethics Board.