

Ethics for Washington Board and Commission Members!

***“The reputation of a thousand years is determined by
the conduct of one hour.”***

- Japanese proverb

Ethics

The embodiment of those values that the person or organization feels are important..., and spell out proper conduct and appropriate action.

- Merriam Webster

Ethical Choices

What you find is that the tough ethical choices are not between good and evil, but rather between two goods:

- *Truth versus Loyalty*
- *Individual versus Community*
- *Short-term versus Long-term*
- *Justice versus Mercy*

Ethical Principles

- **Objectivity**
- **Selflessness**
- **Stewardship**
- **Transparency**
- **Integrity**

Objectivity

- A conflict of interest occurs when you have a private interest that may benefit from your actions, or when a private interest could interfere with official duties
- An interest **need not be financial** to create a conflict of interest
- Most conflicts result from the exercise of discretionary authority

Selflessness

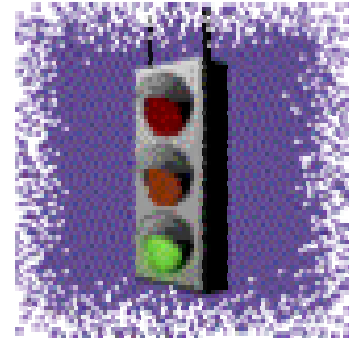
Public employees should not make decisions in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

- *RCW 42.52.070, Special privileges*
- *RCW 42.52.140, Gifts*
- *RCW 42.52.150, Limitations on gifts*
- *RCW 42.52.080, Employment after public service*

Gifts

- **General rules**
- **Those items that are not gifts**
- **Those items that are gifts, but not subject to the \$50 limitation**
 - ❖ *Rebuttable presumption these do not influence*
- **The only items that may be accepted by employees who contract or regulate**

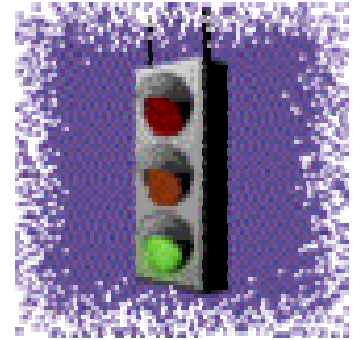
Stewardship



Public employees have a duty to conserve public resources and funds against misuse and abuse.

- *Green Zone – Official Duties*
- *Yellow Zone – Personal Use Under Limited Circumstances*
- *Red Zone – Prohibited Uses*

The Red Zone



Prohibited Uses

- **Private business**
 - Goods, Services, Marketing, etc.
- **Outside groups, unless authorized**
- **Illegal or unprofessional activities**
- **Political activities, including lobbying**
- **Equipment removed from the workplace**

Transparency

Public employees must practice open and accountable government. They should be as open as possible about their decisions and actions, and protect truly confidential information.

- *RCW 42.52.050, Confidential information*

Quote

“If ... you can't be a good example, then you'll just have to be a horrible warning.”

- Catherine Aird

Executive Ethics Board

- Interprets and enforces the ethics law
- Issues advisory opinions
- Reviews agency ethics policies
- Investigates and hears complaints
- Imposes sanctions for violations
 - ❖ *Disciplinary action also may be taken by the agency*