

CODE OF ETHICS
WASHINGTON COUNTY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS
DISTRICT, TENNESSEE

Section 1. Definitions

(1) "District" means Washington County Emergency Communications District, which includes the board, committees, authorities, employees or other instrumentalities appointed or created by the District.

(2) "Board members and employees" means and includes any official, anyone appointed, an officer, employee or servant, or any member of the Board, (whether compensated or not), or any officer, employee or servant thereof, of the District.

(3) "Personal interest" means, for the purpose of disclosure of personal interests in accordance with this Code of Ethics, a financial interest of the Board member or employee, or a financial interest of the Board member's or employee's spouse or child living in the same household, in the matter to be voted upon, regulated, supervised, or otherwise acted upon in an official capacity.

Section 2. Disclosure of personal interest in voting matters.

A Board member or employee with the responsibility to vote on a measure shall disclose during the meeting at which the vote takes place, before the vote and to be included in the minutes, any personal interest that affects or that would lead a reasonable person to infer that it affects the Board member's or employee's vote on the measure. In addition, the Board member or employee may, to the extent allowed by law, recuse himself or herself from voting on the measure.

Section 3. Disclosure of personal interest in non-voting matters.

A Board member or employee who must exercise discretion relative to any matter other than casting a vote and who has a personal interest in the matter that affects or that would lead a reasonable person to infer that it affects the exercise of the discretion shall disclose, before the exercise of the discretion when possible, their interest. In addition, the Board member or employee may, to the extent allowed by law, recuse himself or herself from the exercise of discretion in the matter.

Section 4. Employee Responsibilities.

Each Board member and employee shall avoid any action, whether or not specifically prohibited by statute, regulation, or this policy, which might result in or create the appearance of

- i. using their office for private gain;

- ii. giving preferential treatment to any person;
- iii. impeding government efficiency or economy;
- iv. losing independence or impartiality; or
- v. making a government decision outside of official channels.

Section 5. Gifts.

Employees and Board members must remain independent from those who contract with Washington County Emergency Communications District. Therefore, no Board member or employee shall accept or receive, directly or indirectly, from any person, firm or corporation to which any contract or purchase order may be awarded, by rebate, gift or otherwise, any money or anything of value whatsoever, or any promise, obligation or contract for future reward or compensation. No Board member or employee shall solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, on behalf of himself or herself or any member of the Board or employee's household, any gift, including but not limited to any gratuity, service, favor, food, entertainment, lodging, transportation, loan, loan guarantee or any other thing of monetary value, from any person or entity that:

- i. Has, or is seeking to obtain, contractual or other business or financial relations with Washington County Emergency Communications District;
or
- ii. Conducts operations or activities that are regulated by Washington County Emergency Communications District;
- iii. Has interests that may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of the Board member or employee's official duties.

Exceptions. The prohibition on accepting gifts (paragraph 5 Gifts) does not apply to:

- i. A gift given by a member of the Board or employee's immediate family, or by an individual if the gift is given for a non-business purpose and is motivated by a close personal friendship and not by the position of the employee;
- ii. Informational materials in the form of books, articles, periodicals, other written materials, audio tapes, videotapes, or other forms of communication;
- iii. Sample merchandise, promotional items, and appreciation tokens, if they are routinely given to customers, suppliers or potential customers or suppliers in the ordinary course of business;
- iv. Unsolicited tokens or awards of appreciation, honorary degrees, or bona fide awards in recognition of public service in the form of a plaque, trophy, desk item, wall memento and similar items; provided, that any such item shall not be in a form which can be readily converted to cash;

- v. Food, refreshments, foodstuffs, entertainment, or beverages provided as part of a meal or other event, if the value of such items does not exceed thirty dollars (\$30.00) per occasion; provided further, that the value of a gift made pursuant to this subsection may not be reduced below the monetary limit by dividing the cost of the gift among two or more persons;

When it is in the best interest of the District, a Board Member or department head may at any time restrict an employee(s) from accepting additional gifts under this provision;

- vi. Food, refreshments, meals, foodstuffs, entertainment, beverages or intrastate travel expenses that are provided in connection with a District services event or an event where the Board member or employee is a speaker or part of a panel discussion at a scheduled meeting of an established or recognized membership organization which has regular meetings; and
- vii. Loans from established financial institutions made in the ordinary course of business on usual and customary terms, so long as there are no guarantees or collateral provided by any person described in paragraph 5 Gifts.

Section 6. Use of information.

No Board member or employee shall, directly or indirectly:

- i. Use, disclose, or allow the use of District information which was obtained through or in connection with his or her employment and which has not been made available to the general public for the purpose of furthering the private interest or personal profit of any person, including the employee; or
- ii. Engage in a financial transaction as a result of, or primarily relying upon, information obtained through his or her employment.

Section 7. Use of Government Property.

No employee shall make use of the facilities, equipment, personnel, or supplies of the District or its agencies for private use or gain, except to the extent that the use is incidental or minimal or is lawfully available to the general public.

Section 8. Holiday and Event Gifts.

Board members and employees are public servants to the citizens of Washington County. As a result, it is not uncommon for citizens to offer small gifts, foodstuffs, and other gratuities. Board members and employees may not accept gratuities and gifts that

exceed a value of \$10.00. Acceptance of monetary gifts by Board members and employees is strictly prohibited. This rule does not prevent employees and Board members from accepting gifts from their employer, supervisor, or co-workers, or employees. Employees may also receive prizes given at holiday event celebrations sponsored by Washington County Emergency Communications District so long as the gift was received as part of a random drawing where other employees present also had an equal opportunity to win the prize.

Section 9. Holiday-Event Celebrations.

Gifts to support Christmas and New Year holiday parties for District employees may be accepted in accordance with the provisions of this rule. The acceptance of money or other items of value in excess of \$100.00 is prohibited. Gifts may be accepted if the value is \$100.00 or less, and the gifts are intended to support a function that benefits the District. All gifts received pursuant to this rule must be documented and filed within 10 days of receipt of the gift with the District's Ethics Committee, which filing will be accomplished by filing the disclosure statement with the committee.

Section 10. Conflicts of Interest Prohibited.

Neither District employees, Board members of the District, shall be financially interested, or have any personal beneficial interest, either directly or indirectly, in any contract or purchase order for any supplies, materials, equipment or contractual services used by or furnished to Washington County Emergency Communications District government.

Section 11. Ethics Complaints.

The District's Ethics Committee (the "Ethics Committee") consisting of three members shall be the District's Chairman of the Board of Directors, Director of operations, and Board of Director's legal council. The Ethics Committee shall convene as soon as practicable after their appointment and elect a chair and a secretary. The records of the Ethics Committee shall be maintained by the secretary and shall be filed in the office of the District Director, where they shall be open to public inspection.

Questions and complaints regarding violations of this Code of Ethics or of any violation of state law governing ethical conduct shall be directed to the chair of the Ethics Committee. Complaints shall be in writing and signed by the person making the complaint, and shall set forth in reasonable detail the facts upon which the complaint is based.

The District Ethics Committee shall investigate any credible complaint against an Board member or employee charging any violation of this Code of Ethics, or may undertake an investigation on its own initiative when it acquires information indicating a possible violation, and make recommendations for action to end or seek retribution for any activity that, in the Committee's judgment, constitutes a violation of this Code of Ethics.

If a member of the Committee is the subject of a complaint, such member shall recuse himself or herself from all proceedings involving such complaint.

The Committee may:

(1) refer the matter to the Board of Director's Legal Council for a legal opinion and/or recommendations for action;

(2) in the case of a Board member, refer the matter to the District legislative body for possible public censure if the District legislative body finds such action warranted;

(3) in the case of an employee, refer the matter to the Director for public disciplinary action if the Director finds discipline warranted;

(4) in a case involving possible violation of state statutes, refer the matter to the Board of Director's legal council for possible ouster or criminal prosecution;

The interpretation that a reasonable person in the circumstances would apply shall be used in interpreting and enforcing this Code of Ethics. When a violation of this Code of Ethics also constitutes a violation of a personnel policy or a civil service policy, the violation shall be dealt with as a violation of the personnel or civil service provisions rather than as a violation of this Code of Ethics.