



TOP 10 ETHICS RULES FOR U.S. COMMERCIAL SERVICE OFFICERS SERVING OVERSEAS

1. You cannot run a business or invest in your country of assignment (except, with prior approval, in a residence or retirement property).
2. You cannot have outside employment in your country of assignment (except, with prior approval, some work within the Embassy community or teaching unrelated to your Government duties at a school that is not state-supported).
3. You cannot engage in political activities regarding a non-U.S. election, in fund-raising for a United States election, or in any political activity while on Government premises or using Government resources.
4. You can accept gifts from a foreign government, but any gift over \$350 becomes the property of the United States Government.
5. You cannot accept gifts greater than \$20 in value from anyone (other than a foreign government) with interests before Commerce, except invitations to (1) “widely-attended” events (with approval) or (2) business meals overseas (if there is a foreign citizen present and the value is less than the city’s *per diem*).
6. You cannot give a gift to a supervisor (or accept a gift from a subordinate) unless it is for a significant, infrequently occurring occasion (such as a wedding or recovery from a serious illness) or is of minimal value (\$10 or less).
7. You can solicit and accept gifts for U.S. Government programs provided that: (1) you do not solicit travel gifts, (2) you do not accept gifts from ITA contractors, grantees, or entities with interests in controversial matters before ITA, and (3) solicitations are conducted fairly and donors do not receive special benefits.
8. You cannot work on any matter affecting your personal financial interests (or those of your spouse or minor children), unless you obtain a conflict of interest waiver (or unless the interest is in U.S. stocks or bonds of minimal value (\$15,000 or less.))
9. You cannot work on a matter in which one of the parties is (or is represented by) a recent (within 1 year) former employer or client, your parent’s or spouse’s employer, or an entity in which you are active, unless you receive prior approval.
10. You can serve as an officer or director of, or liaison to, a non-Federal entity as part of your ITA duties with management approval if such service serves an ITA mission.

Prepared by the Ethics Law and Programs Division, Office of the Assistant General Counsel for Administration, United States Department of Commerce – 202-482-5384 – ethicsdivision@doc.gov – January 2, 2015