

# ***Ethics for Washington Board and Commission Members!***

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

***- Japanese proverb***

# ***Ethics***

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**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

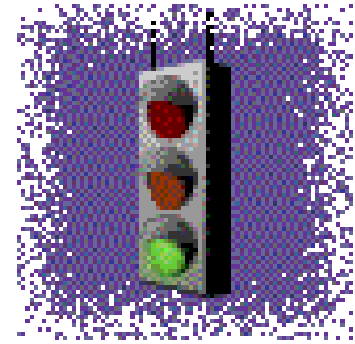
**Public employees should not make decisions in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.**

- *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

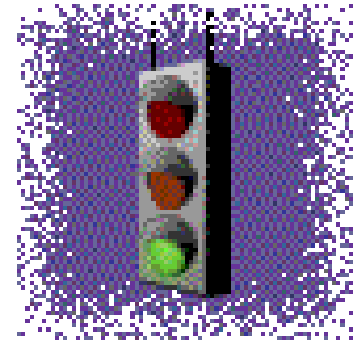


Public employees have a duty to conserve public resources and funds against misuse and abuse.

- *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*