

INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: Ethical Principles for Changes of Command

1. Purpose. To advise on common ethical concerns relating to Changes of Command.

2. Gifts between Employees. The general prohibition against superiors accepting gifts from subordinates does not apply when the superior-subordinate relationship ends because of PCS or retirement.

- a. No more than \$10 may be solicited per person.
- b. Gifts may not exceed \$300 in value per donating group.
- c. Contributions by employees donating to more than one group are combined for purposes of the \$300 limit.
- d. Gifts must be voluntary.
- e. Gifts of cash are prohibited.

3. Gifts from Contractors and Other Non-Federal Sources.

- a. Do not accept gifts from a prohibited source (anyone doing or seeking to do business with the Army, such as a contractor or subcontractor).
- b. Do not accept gifts offered because of official position unless an exclusion or exception applies.
- c. If a gift is not offered by a prohibited source, an employee, or offered because of position, no limitation on acceptance unless acceptance would undermine government integrity.

4. Exceptions permitting acceptance of an otherwise prohibited gift:

- a. Unsolicited gifts with a market value of \$20 or less, with a \$50 limit from same donor per calendar year.
- b. Gifts based on a personal or outside business relationship of the commander or spouse.

5. "Non-gifts" may be accepted. These include coffee, donuts, and similar modest refreshments, as well as greeting cards, certificates, plaques, and other items of little intrinsic value. Items with little intrinsic value are those which have no ornamental or functional value, and the usefulness of which is solely to commemorate the occasion.

6. Gifts to Family Members. Gifts to a departing or retiring employee's spouse or other family member are considered gifts to the employee and are subject to the same rules listed above.

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7. **Travel and Transportation.** The Secretary of the Army Travel Policy, Army Directive 2007-1, provides that changes of command are considered official business. Although air travel to changes of command is restricted by the policy, GOV travel to such ceremonies is encouraged, but should be managed reasonably. GOV travel is not authorized for purely social (unofficial) events.

8. **Funding.** The use of official representation (.0012) funds, or ORF, is prohibited for hosting or entertaining purposes in conjunction with a change of command or retirement ceremony.

9. **New Commander Receptions.** AR 37-47 authorizes the use of ORF to extend courtesies to "authorized guests," such as local government officials, community leaders, and university officials. ORF may cover the total cost of an event if the ratio of authorized guests to attending DOD personnel is met; for example, if a guest list contains 30 or more invitees, then at least 50 percent of the invitations must be to authorized guests. If this ratio is not met, then DOD personnel in excess of the ratio may attend by paying their pro-rata share of the total expenses.

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