

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
FOOD, AND FORESTRY
MEAT AND POULTRY INSPECTION SERVICE
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

MPI NOTICE	101	2/16/11
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ETHICAL CONDUCT OF MPI PERSONNEL

I. PURPOSE

It is imperative that Meat and Poultry Inspection Personnel maintain impartiality in the conduct of their official duties. This notice serves as guidance to prevent conflicts of interest, potential conflicts of interest and the appearances of conflicts of interest. This policy contains an updated reference to the FSIS Employee Responsibilities and Conduct directive and some minor changes in language from MPI Notice 02-07.

II. CANCELLATION

MPI Notice 02-07

III. REFERENCES

Oklahoma Statutes Title 2 § 6-194 – Oklahoma Meat Inspection Act
ODAFF Policy DP 1 – Conduct of State Employees
Merit Rule 530:10-11-91 – Conduct of classified employees
FSIS Directive 4735.3, Revision 1 – Employee Responsibilities and Conduct

IV. BACKGROUND

State employees are held to the highest standard of ethics. This is particularly true of Meat and Poultry Inspection Program employees. Not only should conflicts of interest be avoided but certain behavior may be considered bribery under the Oklahoma Meat Inspection Act, 2 O.S. § 6-194. If an employee is convicted of violating this section of the Oklahoma Meat Inspection Act it could result in termination of employment, fines or even criminal charges.

V. POLICY

Meat and Poultry Inspection program personnel and members of their immediate family should not accept anything of value from any establishment personnel, nor should they place themselves in any position that could compromise or appear to compromise their integrity as an inspection program employee.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER AND PROVIDER

Many circumstances can arise which could create a conflict of interest. The following list is intended to assist employees recognize conflicts that could arise and is not meant to be all inclusive.

- Borrowing or accepting money from any establishment employee by an MPI program employee or a member of their immediate family
- Accepting gifts, food, or favors of any kind from any establishment employee by an MPI program employee or a member of their immediate family
- Participating in benefits/rewards designed for establishment employees only
- Using establishment equipment such as computers, telephones or faxes for personal use
- Allowing establishment officials to conceal actions or whereabouts of an inspector from MPI supervisors or other MPI employees
- Using inspection authority to retaliate against or intimidate establishment officials
- Establishing relationships beyond a professional level with establishment employees
- Disclosing an establishment's proprietary information such as formulations or prices
- Failure to apply state and federal regulations in an honest and impartial manner
- Willful disregard for an establishment's policies
- An employee may not be assigned at any establishment where a member of his immediate family (father, mother, spouse, child, brother, sister) is employed
- An employee is prohibited from performing inspection in any establishment where the employee's own product is inspected
- Receiving anything of value in exchange for favorable inspection results

This policy does not prohibit the exchange of gifts in an obvious family or personal relationship; exchange of customary social courtesies which are wholly free of any embarrassing or improper implications, and which are of trivial value (e.g., soft drink or cup of coffee); acceptance of unsolicited advertising or promotional material of clearly trivial value such as pens, pencils note pads, calendars, and other things of nominal value in the ordinary course of business.

All inspection program personnel who are assigned to Talmadge – Aiken establishments must be familiar with and follow all requirements for employee responsibilities and conduct, approval requirements and appeal provisions described in FSIS Directive 4735.3, Revision 1 – Employee Responsibilities and Conduct.

The Oklahoma Meat and Poultry Inspection Program is committed to providing services in a fair and unbiased manner to all establishments under its jurisdiction. Therefore, employees who are found to have behaved in an unethical manner or who created a conflict of interest may be deemed unfit to continue to represent the ODAFF Meat and Poultry Inspection Program. Such employees will be subject to disciplinary

action that may include oral reprimands, written reprimands, leave without pay or dismissal.

During Basic Slaughter Training, all new MPI Program employees receive training in ethics and conduct. During this training, and at least annually all ODAFF MPI personnel shall have this policy reviewed with them by their supervisors and are required to sign a statement that this policy has been discussed with them, and they understand the requirements of this policy.

If an employee has any doubts or questions about the appropriateness of an activity or circumstance, they should discuss the situation with their immediate supervisor prior to engaging in the activity. The confidence of the citizens in their Government is influenced not only in the manner in which employees serve the public, but in the way they conduct themselves in the eyes of the public. The avoidance of misconduct and conflicts of interest on the part of ODAFF MPI employees through informed judgment is indispensable to the maintenance of these standards.

Please refer all questions about this policy through normal supervisory channels.



Stan Stromberg
Director, Food Safety Division

DISTRIBUTION:
All MPI Personnel

SUBJECT CATEGORY:
Administration