

CODE of ETHICS

Application: All Virginia Department of Health (VDH) workers including, but not limited to, classified employees, wage employees, volunteers, assignees, and contractors.

Policy

It is the policy of the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) that each worker demonstrates the agency's Code of Ethics' Core Values and Commitments with uncompromising integrity in all aspects of their work. The Code of Ethics is the foundation for accomplishing the VDH mission, delivering public health services, and inspiring the public's trust in VDH workers.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish standards and mandate ethical behavior by VDH workers in the performance of their duties and responsibilities to the public, colleagues, management and other customers.

Authority

State Health Commissioner

Related Policies

Management Control Policy – (OCOM #1.04)
Confidentiality Policy – (OCOM #1.01)

Commonwealth Accounting Policies and Procedures Topic 10305

Agency Values

- **Accountability:** To act responsibly and adhere to the agency Code of Ethics at all times.
- **Communication:** To communicate effectively, timely, and accurately.
- **Confidentiality:** To respect the value and ownership of information received and do not disclose information without appropriate authority unless there is a legal or professional obligation to do so.
- **Diversity:** To appreciate and support diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and ideas.
- **Equity:** To promote justice, fairness, and a commitment to others.
- **Excellence:** To work at the highest level of performance by delivering services and products of high quality in a competent and timely manner, with a commitment to continuous improvement.

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- **Integrity**: To be honest and trustworthy.
- **Objectivity**: To be objective in gathering, evaluating, and communicating information without being unduly influenced by others or personal interests.
- **Respect**: To recognize and respect the dignity of the people served as well as our fellow employees.
- **Stewardship**: To manage public resources responsibly, efficiently, and effectively.

Agency Commitments

- **Obey the law and comply with policies and procedures**
Demonstrate commitment to full compliance with VDH, state, and federal laws, regulations, requirements, policies, and procedures.
- **Promote a positive work environment**
Demonstrate courtesy and respect to all. Harassment or discrimination of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This includes discrimination based on race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, citizenship or veteran status.
- **Work safely**
Follow standard and workplace safety precautions, warnings, and regulations in carrying out all their duties and in caring for patients. Report all client, environmental or safety hazards or concerns promptly to the appropriate authority.
- **Promote health equity**
Commit to eliminating inequity in health status by promoting access to those resources and opportunities that support quality health care, healthy behaviors, and healthy families, communities and environments.
- **Maintain confidentiality of sensitive patient and client information, employee records and other private information**
Comply with agency policy and law regarding privacy, confidentiality, and inappropriate release of sensitive patient, client, employee or emergency preparedness information. Limit access to sensitive information and obtain appropriate release of information as required by law and policy.
- **Carefully negotiate contracts and make responsible purchases**
Fairly and accurately bid and negotiate outside contracts at fair market value, and make purchases so there is no question of conflict. Comply with procurement policy, regulations and law.

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- **Avoid conflicts of interest**
Avoid conflicts of interest and/or the appearance of conflicts of interest by understanding the State and Local Government Conflict of Interest Act (COIA), related policies, disclosing all pertinent facts about potential conflicts, ensuring that their official position is never used for personal gain, and ensuring that no one benefits at the expense of the agency.
- **Neither give nor receive any illegal gifts, favors or kickbacks**
Follow the Commonwealth and agency guidelines regarding giving or receiving gifts or discounts from clients or people who supply us with goods and services.

Governor McAuliffe issued [Executive Directive 2](#) (2014), which prohibits the solicitation or acceptance of certain direct or indirect gifts; and established the Executive Branch Ethics Commission.

- **Report suspected wrongful conduct promptly**
Promptly report suspected fraud and alleged violations of the Code of Virginia or the agency Code of Ethics to their supervisor, to the Office of Internal Audit, or to the anonymous State Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Hotline (1-800-723-1615), for investigation.
- **Address confirmed misconduct in a consistent and appropriate manner**
Follow the Commonwealth and agency guidelines regarding Standards of Conduct and the disciplinary process to address unacceptable behavior, conduct, and employment problems that impact the employee's ability to do their job and/or influence the agency's overall effectiveness.
- **Protect financial assets and resources**
Ensure the proper use, protection and conservation of VDH's assets and resources. This includes assets, financial data and other resources. Ensure financial data is accurate, timely and documented to ensure stakeholders can rely on the information represented in the agency and state financial systems.

Communicating the VDH Code of Ethics

- The State Employee Orientation Program (SEOP) for new employees, provided by the Office of Human Resources, includes a review of the Code of Ethics. A copy is provided to each employee/worker at the beginning of their employment. Employees are required to sign an acknowledgement that they have received, reviewed and will comply with the Code of Ethics policy.
- The Code of Ethics is posted on the agency's internal home page on the VDH website and on the VDH internet home page.



Office of the Commissioner
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Reviewer: Deputy Commissioner for Administration

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- A copy of the Code of Ethics is posted in each VDH facility, both where employee notices are normally posted and in close proximity to the main public entrance. Office of Human Resources provides posters to Offices/Districts. In the Madison Building, posters are placed on every floor and near every building entrance. The Code of Ethics will be periodically displayed on the building's TV monitors.
- The Commissioner emphasizes annually to all workers the importance of the agency's Code of Ethics.
- Managers discuss with their staff annually, the importance of compliance with the agency's Code of Ethics. (This should include contractors and volunteers).

Policy Administration

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Reviewer: Signature on File
Richard Corrigan
Deputy Commissioner for Administration

Date: February 4, 2016

Approver: Signature on File
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Date: February 5, 2016

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