

to approve, disapprove, or otherwise direct Commission action. Official responsibility may be exercised alone or with others and either personally or through subordinates.

(h) *Outside employment or other outside activity* means any work, service or other activity performed by an employee, but not a Commissioner, other than in the performance of the employee's official duties. It includes such activities as writing and editing, publishing, teaching, lecturing, consulting, self-employment, and other services or work performed, with or without compensation.

(i) *Person* means an individual, corporation, company, association, firm, partnership, society, joint stock company, political committee, or other group, organization, or institution.

(j) *Special Commission employee* means an individual who is retained, designated, appointed or employed by the Federal Election Commission to perform, with or without compensation, temporary duties either on a full-time or intermittent basis, for not to exceed 130 days during any period of 365 consecutive days, as defined at 18 U.S.C. 202.

§ 7.3 Notification to employees and special Commission employees.

(a) The provisions of this part shall be brought to the attention of, and made available to, each employee and special Commission employee by furnishing a copy at the time of final publication. The provisions of this part shall further be brought to the attention of such employees at least annually thereafter.

(b) The provisions of this part shall be brought to the attention of each new employee and new special Commission employee by furnishing a copy at the time of entrance of duty, and by such other methods of information and education as the Ethics Officer may prescribe.

§ 7.4 Interpretation and advisory service.

A Commissioner or employee seeking advice and guidance on questions of conflict of interest and on other matters covered by this part should consult with the Commission's General

Counsel, who serves as Ethics Officer. The Ethics Officer should be consulted prior to the undertaking of any action which might violate this part governing the conduct of Commissioners or employees.

§ 7.5 Reporting suspected violations.

(a) Personnel who have information which causes them to believe that there has been a violation of a statute or policy set forth in this part should promptly report such incident to the Ethics Officer. If a report is made orally, the Ethics Officer shall require a written report from the complainant before proceeding further.

(b) When information available to the Commission indicates a conflict between the interests of an employee or special Commission employee and the performance of his or her Commission duties, the employee or special Commission employee shall be provided an opportunity to explain the conflict or appearance of conflict in writing.

§ 7.6 Disciplinary and other remedial action.

(a) A violation of this part by an employee or special Commission employee may be cause for appropriate disciplinary action which may be in addition to any penalty prescribed by law.

(b) When the Ethics Officer determines that an employee may have or appears to have a conflict of interest, the Ethics Officer, the employee's supervisor, the employee's division head, and the Staff Director or General Counsel may question the employee in the matter and gather other information. The Ethics Officer, the employee's supervisor, the employee's division head, and the Staff Director or General Counsel shall discuss with the employee possible ways of eliminating the conflict or appearance of conflict. If the Ethics Officer, after consultation with the employee's supervisor, the employee's division head, and the Staff Director or General Counsel, concludes that remedial action should be taken, he or she shall refer a statement to the Commission containing his or her recommendation for such action. The Commission, after consideration of the employee's explanation and the results

of any investigation, may direct appropriate remedial action as it deems necessary.

(c) Remedial action pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section may include, but is not limited to:

- (1) Changes in assigned duties;
- (2) Divestment by the employee of his or her conflicting interest;
- (3) Disqualification for a particular action; or
- (4) Disciplinary action.

Subpart B—Conduct and Responsibilities of Employees or Commissioners

§ 7.7 Prohibited conduct—General.

A Commissioner or employee shall avoid any action whether or not specifically prohibited by this subpart which might result in, or create the appearance of:

- (a) Using public office for unlawful private gain;
- (b) Giving favorable or unfavorable treatment to any person or organization due to any partisan, political, or other consideration;
- (c) Impeding Government efficiency or economy;
- (d) Losing independence or impartiality;
- (e) Making a Government decision outside official channels; or
- (f) Affecting adversely the confidence of the public in the integrity of the Government.

§ 7.8 Gifts, entertainment, and favors.

(a) A Commissioner or employee of the Federal Election Commission shall not solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, any gift, gratuity, favor, entertainment, loan, or any other thing of monetary value, from a person who:

- (1) Has, or is seeking to obtain, contractual or other business or financial relations with the Commission;
 - (2) Conducts operations or activities that are regulated or examined by the Commission; or
 - (3) Has interests that may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of the Commissioner or employee's official duty.
- (b) Paragraph (a) of this section shall not apply:

(1) Where obvious family or personal relationships govern when the circumstances make it clear that it is those relationships rather than the business of the persons concerned which are the motivating factors;

(2) To the acceptance of food, refreshments, and accompanying entertainment of nominal value in the ordinary course of a social occasion or a luncheon or dinner meeting or other function where a Commissioner or an employee is properly in attendance;

(3) To the acceptance of unsolicited advertising or promotional material or other items of nominal intrinsic value such as pens, pencils, note pads, calendars; and

(4) To the acceptance of loans from banks or other financial institutions on customary terms to finance proper and usual activities, such as home mortgage loans.

(c) A Commissioner or an employee shall not solicit a contribution from another employee for a gift to an official superior, make a donation as a gift to an official superior, or accept a gift from an employee receiving less pay than himself or herself. However, this paragraph does not prohibit a voluntary gift of nominal value or donation in a nominal amount made on a special occasion such as birthday, holiday, marriage, illness, or retirement.

(d) A Commissioner or employee shall not accept a gift, present, decoration, or other thing from a foreign government unless authorized by Congress as provided by the Constitution and in section 7342 of title 5, United States Code.

(e) Neither this section nor 11 CFR 7.7 precludes a Commissioner or employee from receipt of a bona fide reimbursement, unless prohibited by law, for expenses of travel and such other necessary subsistence as is compatible with this part for which no Government payment or reimbursement is made. However, this section does not allow an employee or Commissioner to be reimbursed, or payment to be made on his or her behalf, for excessive personal living expenses, gifts, entertainment, or other personal benefits, nor does it allow an employee to be reimbursed by a person for travel on official