

§7.10

11 CFR Ch. I (1–1–10 Edition)

when the Commission gives written authorization for the use of nonpublic information on the basis that the use is in the public interest.

(e) This section does not preclude an individual from participation in the affairs of or acceptance of an award for meritorious public contribution or achievement given by a charitable, religious, professional, social, fraternal, nonprofit educational, recreational, public service or civic organization.

(f) An employee of the Office of General Counsel who intends to engage in outside employment shall obtain the approval of the General Counsel/Ethics Officer. All other employees who intend to engage in outside employment shall obtain the approval of the Staff Director prior to review and approval by the Ethics Officer. The request shall include the name of the person, group, or organization for whom the work is to be performed, the nature of the services to be rendered, the proposed hours of work, or approximate dates of employment, and the employee's certification as to whether the outside employment (including teaching, writing or lecturing) will depend in any way on information obtained as a result of the employee's official Government position. The employee will receive notice of approval or disapproval of any written request in accordance with any labor-management agreement between the Commission and a labor organization. A record of the approval shall be placed in each employee's official personnel folder.

§7.10 Financial interests.

(a)(1) A Commissioner or employee shall not engage in, directly or indirectly, a financial transaction as a result of, or primarily relying on, information obtained through his or her Commission employment.

(2) A Commissioner or employee shall not have a direct or indirect financial interest that conflicts substantially, or appears to conflict substantially, with his or her Commission duties and responsibilities, except in cases where the Commissioner or employee makes full disclosure, and the Commissioner or employee disqualifies himself or herself from participating in any decisions, approval, disapproval, rec-

ommendation, the rendering of advice, investigation, or otherwise in any proceeding of the Commission in which the financial interest is or appears to be affected. The filing of public financial disclosure reports will constitute full disclosure for all individuals who are required to file such reports pursuant to the Ethics in Government Act. Until such time as the extent, shape and form of confidential financial disclosure reports required of employees by the Ethics in Government Act has been determined, full disclosure by an employee will require that that employee submit a written statement to the Ethics Officer disclosing the particular financial interest which conflicts substantially, or appears to conflict substantially, with the employee's duties and responsibilities.

(3) A Commissioner or employee should disqualify himself or herself from a proceeding in which his or her impartiality might reasonably be questioned where the Commissioner or employee knows that he or she, or his or her spouse, has an interest in the subject matter in controversy or is a party to the proceeding, or any other interest that could be substantially affected by the outcome of the proceeding.

(b) This section does not preclude a Commissioner or employee from having a financial interest or engaging in financial transactions to the same extent as a private citizen not employed by the Government provided that the activity is not prohibited by law, Executive Order 11222, or Commission regulations.

§7.11 Political and organization activity.

(a) Due to the Federal Election Commission's role in the political process, the following restrictions on political activities are required in addition to those imposed by the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. 7324 *et seq.*):

(1) No Commissioner or employee should publicly support a candidate, political party, or political committee subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission. No Commissioner or employee should work for a candidate, political party or political committee subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission. Commissioners and employees should

Federal Election Commission

§ 7.15

be aware that contributing to candidates, political parties, or political committees subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission is likely to result in a conflict of interest.

(2) No Commissioner or employee shall display partisan buttons, badges or other insignia on Commission premises.

(b) Special Government employees are subject to the restrictions contained in this section for the entire 24 hours of any day on which the employee is on active duty status.

(c) Employees on leave, leave without pay, or on furlough or terminal leave, even though the employees' resignations have been accepted, are subject to the restrictions of this section. A separated employee who has received a lump-sum payment for annual leave, however, is not subject to the restrictions during the period covered by the lump-sum payment or thereafter, provided he or she does not return to Federal employment during that period. An employee is not permitted to take a leave of absence to work with a political candidate, committee, or organization or become a candidate for office despite any understanding that he or she will resign his or her position if nominated or elected.

(d) An employee is accountable for political activity by another person acting as his or her agent or under the employee's direction or control if the employee is thus accomplishing what he or she may not lawfully do directly and openly.

§ 7.12 Membership in associations.

Commissioners or employees who are members of nongovernmental associations or organizations shall avoid activities on behalf of those associations or organizations that are incompatible with their official governmental positions.

§ 7.13 Use of Government property.

A Commissioner or employee shall not directly or indirectly use, or allow the use of, Government property of any kind, including property leased to the Government, for other than officially approved activities. Commissioners and employees have a positive duty to protect and conserve Government prop-

erty including equipment, supplies, and other property entrusted or issued to him or her.

§ 7.14 Prohibition against making complaints and investigations public.

(a) Commission employees are warned that they are subject to criminal penalties if they discuss or otherwise make public any matters pertaining to a complaint or investigation under 2 U.S.C. 437g, without the written permission of the person complained against or being investigated. Such communications are prohibited by 2 U.S.C. 437g(a)(12)(A).

(b) 2 U.S.C. 437g(a)(12)(B) provides as follows: "Any member or employee of the Commission or any other person, who violates the provisions of subparagraph (A) shall be fined not more than \$2,000. Any such member, employee, or other person who knowingly and willfully violates this subsection shall be fined not more than \$5,000."

§ 7.15 Ex parte communications.

In order to avoid the possibility of prejudice, real or apparent, to the public interest in enforcement actions pending before the Commission pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 437g(A) (1) or (2):

(a) Except to the extent required for the disposition of ex parte matters as required by law (as, for example, during the normal course of an investigation or a conciliation effort), no Commissioner or employee involved in the decisional process shall make or entertain any ex parte communications.

(b) The prohibition of this section shall apply from the time a complaint is filed with the Commission pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 437(a)(1) or from the time that the Commission determines on the basis of information ascertained in the normal course of its supervisory responsibilities that it has reason to believe that a violation has occurred or may occur pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 437g(a)(2), and shall remain in force until the Commission has concluded all action with respect to the enforcement matter in question.

(c) Any written communication prohibited by paragraph (a) of this section shall be delivered to the Ethics Officer of the Commission who shall place the communication in the file of the case.