

CODE OF ETHICS

PLAIN LANGUAGE GUIDE



Our [Code of Ethics \(Chapter 12A of the Dallas City Code\)](#) is full of exceptions; this handout will guide you through it.

BIG PICTURE: Our Code of Ethics applies to city employees, city officials, and people doing business with the city (§ 12A-1(c)). Because we have access to things that the public does not, we must act responsibly and ethically with commitment beyond self (§§ 12A-1, 3 and 4).

AT ALL TIMES the following six principles must be upheld:

1. put the city first in the work we do (§ 12A-3);
2. treat one another as we would like to be treated (§ 12A-4(a)(3));
3. think about how the public will perceive our conduct and guard against doing work in a manner that causes suspicion (§ 12A-4(a)(6));
4. city officials shall treat city employees as professionals and only work through approved channels to access city employees, board members, and commissioners (§§ 12A- 4(b)(4 and 5));
5. do not discriminate against persons in protected classes or retaliate against those who help enforce the Code of Ethics (§§ 12A-5, 6 and 7);
6. learn and live by the Code of Ethics (§§ 12A-8, 9, 10, 11).

CONFLICTS: Rules related to conflicts of interest can be summed up as follows: where you have authority, there may be a conflict if you are related to (§ 12A-16), own (§ 12A-13.1), represent (§ 12A-18), work for (§ 12A-19), do business with (§ 12A-13), receive gifts from (§ 12A-12), or have a job lined up (§ 12A-13), with a person or entity doing business with the city.

REPORTING: The Code of Ethics requires reporting for conflict of interest disclosures, annual financial reports, quarterly gift reports, donation reports, and travel reports. [Visit the City Secretary's web page](#) for forms and instructions.

VIOLATIONS: The Inspector General investigates violations of 12A and presents violations to the Ethics Advisory Commission. When you know there is a violation, you must: report it (§ 12A-8), cooperate with investigations (§ 12A-52(e)), tell the truth to investigators (§ 12A-58), and keep investigations confidential (§ 12A-52(d)). Do not falsely accuse others or falsely respond to an investigation (§ 12A-52(f)), retaliate against a whistleblower (§ 12A-6), or interfere with investigations (§ 12A-59).

COMPLAINTS: Anyone can make a complaint online or to the ethics hotline at 877-860-1061. The IGD investigates complaints and may refer the matter to the EAC for a hearing (§§ 12A-47 and 52).

WHAT IF? When in doubt, ask for an advisory opinion (§ 12A- 47(d)). If you have a conflict, follow the rules for recusal and disclosure (§ 12A-24). If you need help, contact your supervisor, or email the Inspector General, at attethicsadvisoryinquiries@dallas.gov.

