

A WORD ABOUT ETHICS

PARTICIPATING IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

ON-DUTY ACTIVITIES

In what political activities may an employee participate when on duty?

○ None. Federal employees (except Senate-confirmed Presidential appointees) may not engage in partisan political activities while on Government premises or when on duty.

What other limits apply regarding political activities while at work?

○ Federal employees *may not*:

- use Government property for political purposes, including use of Government equipment to send political e-mails;
- use a Government position or influence to interfere with an election or to coerce any person to participate in a political activity;
- wear a political button on duty;
- display a partisan banner, sign, sticker, or poster in a Federal office; or
- consider political affiliation or political activity with regard to a personnel action (except with regard to Schedule C employees and non-career SES appointments).

OFF-DUTY ACTIVITIES

Are there any restrictions on an employee's political activities when off duty and off Federal premises?

○ Yes. Federal employees are barred, even when not on duty, from:

- soliciting, receiving, or accepting campaign funds (such as by hosting a fund-raiser or asking for contributions by telephone or in a speech) and
- running for office in a partisan election (except as an independent in local races in some areas, such as the Washington, D.C. suburbs).

(However, these off-duty restrictions do not apply to employees serving 130 days or less or intermittent employees.)

Are these the only restrictions on Federal employees?

○ No. Career members of the SES, NOAA Corps officers, and administrative law judges are also barred from any active participation in a partisan political campaign (including stuffing envelopes or soliciting votes by telephone) and from serving as an officer in a political organization.

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