



## Filing a Complaint with the San Francisco Ethics Commission

The San Francisco Ethics Commission encourages the reporting of suspected violations of laws, regulations and rules governing the conduct of City officers and employees. The following information is provided to assist persons interested in reporting a violation to the Commission.

**The Ethics Commission is authorized to investigate and enforce violations of the following local governmental ethics laws:**

- Campaign Finance Reform Ordinance  
S.F. Campaign & Governmental Conduct Code  
(S.F. C&GC Code) § 1.100, *et seq.*
- Campaign Consultant Ordinance  
S.F. C&GC Code § 1.500, *et seq.*
- Lobbyist Ordinance  
S.F. C&GC Code § 2.100, *et seq.*
- Sunshine Ordinance\*  
S.F. Admin. Code § 67.1, *et seq.*
- Multiple Campaign Accounts  
S.F. C&GC Code § 1.108, *et seq.*
- False Endorsements on Campaign Literature  
S.F. C&GC Code § 1.163.5
- Financial Conflicts of Interest by  
City Officers/Employees  
S.F. C&GC Code § 3.206
- Payment for Appointments or Nominations to  
City Service or Employment  
S.F. C&GC Code § 3.208
- City Officers/Employees Voting on Own  
Character or Conduct  
S.F. C&GC Code § 3.210
- Decisions Involving Family Members  
S.F. C&GC Code § 3.212
- Disclosure of Personal, Business or  
Professional Relationships  
S.F. C&GC Code § 3.214
- Gifts  
S.F. C&GC Code § 3.216
- Incompatible Activities  
S.F. C&GC Code § 3.218
- Dual Officeholding for Compensation  
S.F. C&GC Code § 3.220
- Contracts Between Members of Boards and  
Commissions and the City  
S.F. C&GC Code § 3.222
- City Officers Representing Private Parties  
Before City Boards and Commissions  
S.F. C&GC Code § 3.224
- Referrals  
S.F. C&GC Code § 3.226
- Disclosure or Use of Confidential Information  
by City Officers/Employees  
S.F. C&GC Code § 3.228
- Political Activity by City Officers/Employees  
S.F. C&GC Code § 3.230
- Post-Employment Restrictions  
S.F. C&GC Code § 3.234
- Intimidation or Retaliation by a City Officer/  
Employee Against Persons Who File  
Complaints with the Ethics Commission  
S.F. C&GC Code § 4.100, *et seq.*

\* The Ethics Commission can only investigate alleged violations of the Sunshine Ordinance if: 1) you notified the Respondent of the alleged violation at least 40 days before filing a complaint with the Ethics Commission; and 2) the Respondent did not cure the alleged violation.  
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The text of these laws can be found on the Ethics Commission’s website at [www.sfgov.org/ethics](http://www.sfgov.org/ethics). Many of these laws are also discussed in the Commission’s publication “The San Francisco Ethics Commission Manual on Governmental Ethics Laws: A Guide to State and Local Laws Governing the Conduct of Public Officials and Employees,” which is available on the website or at the Commission’s office.

### **How to file a complaint**

**It is strongly recommended that prior to filing a complaint, you speak with an investigator to determine whether the matter about which you are complaining is something the Ethics Commission has authority to address.** If it is not, the investigator will refer you to the most appropriate agency to whom to direct your complaint. To schedule an appointment with an investigator, please call the Ethics Commission at (415) 252-3100.

Once you determine that the Ethics Commission is the most appropriate agency to address your complaint, you may file your complaint on the attached complaint form. Please be aware that the more information you provide, e.g., names, addresses and phone numbers of respondent(s) and witnesses, all relevant facts pertaining to the complaint, and any documents that support your allegation, the easier it will be for the Ethics Commission to investigate the complaint.

### **Confidentiality**

All complaints are confidential to the extent permitted by State law. Local law protects persons who file complaints with the Ethics Commission from harassment or retaliation for filing the complaint.

Complainants may submit their complaints anonymously. Please be advised that the Ethics Commission may, but is not required, to process or respond to anonymous complaints and complaints that have not been signed and verified.

### **Laws the Ethics Commission cannot enforce**

The Ethics Commission does not have the authority to investigate and enforce *all* laws relating to ethics and the conduct of City officials. The Commission can investigate violations of, but **cannot enforce**, most provisions of state law, such as the California Elections Code and the Penal Code. The Ethics Commission **does not investigate** complaints pertaining to: personnel matters (such as sexual or racial discrimination or failure to comply with Civil Service requirements); violations of the State or Federal Constitution; and ethics violations by members of the judiciary.

If the Ethics Commission receives a complaint alleging violations that are not within the Commission’s jurisdiction, the Commission will forward the complaint to the appropriate agency for investigation and enforcement.



**San Francisco Ethics Commission  
Complaint Form**

Please type or print legibly, and attach additional pages if necessary.

**Complainant Information\***

<b>Name of Complainant</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Zip</b>	
<b>Home Phone</b>	
<b>Work Phone</b>	

*\* If you wish to remain anonymous, do not complete this section or the verification below.*

**Respondent Information**

<b>Name of Respondent</b>	
<b>Business Title</b>	
<b>City Department</b>	
<b>Business Address</b>	
<b>Work Phone</b>	

*If more space is needed to list additional complainants or respondents, please check this box and attach additional sheets as necessary.*

**Type of Allegation(s)**

Check the appropriate box(es) below indicating the type of allegation(s) stated in this complaint.

- Campaign Finance Reform Ordinance
- Campaign Consultant Ordinance
- Lobbyist Ordinance
- Sunshine Ordinance (The Ethics Commission can only investigate alleged violations of the Sunshine Ordinance if: 1) you notified the Respondent of the alleged violation at least 40 days before filing a complaint with the Ethics Commission; and 2) the Respondent did not cure the alleged violation).
- Multiple Campaign Accounts
- False Endorsements on Campaign Literature
- Political Activity by City Officers and Employees
- Acceptance of Gifts, Contributions and Future Employment by Public Officials Who Approve Contracts and Other Public Benefits
- Contracts Between Members of Boards and Commissions and the City
- Dual Officeholding for Compensation
- City Officers Representing Private Parties Before City Boards and Commissions
- Intimidation or Retaliation by a City Officer or Employee Against Persons Who File Complaints with the Ethics Commission
- Financial Conflicts of Interest by City Officers and Employees
- Payment for Appointment to City Service or Employment
- Disclosure of Confidential Information by City Officers and Employees
- City Officer or Employee Appearing Before Former Board or Agency
- Private Compensation of City Officers and Employees for City Service
- City Officers or Employees Voting on Own Character or Conduct
- Decisions Involving Family Members
- Disclosure of Personal, Business or Professional Relationships
- Referrals
- Other\*\* \_\_\_\_\_

*\*\* Complaints that allege that a City officer or employee engaged in some form of misconduct that is not within the Commission’s authority to resolve will be forwarded to the appropriate agency for review and possible enforcement.*

**Description of Facts**

Provide a specific description of the facts constituting the violation(s), including any relevant dates. Attach additional sheets as necessary.

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**Witnesses**

Provide the following information about person(s) you believe may have information that would assist the Commission in its evaluation of this complaint.

<b>Name of Witness</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Phone</b>	
<b>Information you believe this person can provide to support the allegations stated in this complaint</b>	

<b>Name of Witness</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Phone</b>	
<b>Information you believe this person can provide to support the allegations stated in this complaint</b>	

*If more space is needed to list additional witnesses, please check this box and attach additional sheets as necessary.*

**Documentation**

Attach copies of any documents in your possession that relate to the allegations stated in this complaint. In addition, indicate below whether there are other records, not in your possession, that you believe may assist the Commission in its evaluation of this complaint.

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**Additional Information**

Provide any additional information that you believe may assist the Ethics Commission in its evaluation of this complaint.

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**Related Complaints**

Have you made the same or similar allegations to another agency or court? Yes  No

If yes, identify the agency or court and attach a copy of any complaint or other written description of the allegations submitted to that agency or court.

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**Verification\*\*\***

I certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the above statements are true and correct.

Executed:  (Date)	At:  (City and State)
By:  (Typed or printed name)	(Signature)

\*\*\* Complaints need not be verified. Complainants who wish to remain anonymous should not complete the verification section above. However, please be advised that the Commission is not required to process or respond to unverified complaints.