

Statement of Incompatible
Activities (SIA) Training for
General Services Agency (GSA)
Medical Examiner's Office


Welcome to the Statement of Incompatible Activities Training for the Medical Examiner's Office.

If you are a City employee, you should watch the web video, Ethics Training for City Employees, before you watch the Statement of Incompatible Activities Training. You can find both trainings on the Ethics Commission website at www.sfethics.org.

S:\Training & Outreach\Ethics Commission Trainings\SIA Trainings\GSA SIA Training\GSA Medical Examiner's Office SIA Training 2.9.2011 web video SIA portion only

Statement of Incompatible Activities (SIA): What is it?

It's a list of activities that are deemed incompatible, inconsistent or in conflict with your official duties.



SIA template language

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The Statement of Incompatible Activities is a list of activities that are deemed incompatible, inconsistent, or in conflict with your official duties.

There are six parts to the SIA and I'm going to go through each one of them in the consecutive slides. First I will go over some of the history behind the SIA.

In November 2003, the voters of San Francisco adopted an ordinance that revamped the ethics laws governing all City officers and employees. One of the changes made was to require all City departments, boards and commissions to prepare a draft SIA and send it to the Ethics Commission for consideration. The SIAs then went to the Civil Service Commission for about a year of hearings. Based on CSC's recommendations, the Ethics Commission created a template for the SIA so that to the extent possible, the SIAs of all departments, boards and commissions would be identical. Between February 2006 and September 2007, the Ethics Commission held public hearings, met with department representatives, and representatives from the various unions about the provisions of the SIAs.

The SIAs took effect on October 8, 2008. That means that all the provisions of the SIAs have the effect of law, which means that if you violate any of the provisions, you may be subject to discipline as well as administrative, civil and criminal penalties. So we advise you to review the SIA carefully.

You'll notice that in this section of the training, on the bottom left side, a notation will indicate whether the slide information is SIA template language or department specific language of the slide. If it says SIA template language, it means most other departments, boards, or commissions have adopted the same language in their SIAs.

SIA: Whom does it cover?

Unless otherwise stated, the SIA covers:

- The City Administrator
- The Medical Examiner and other Division Heads
- and
- All GSA employees



GSA SIA

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The first part is a general introduction to the SIA. This section also tells you whom the SIA covers. For your office, it's everybody – the City Administrator, the Medical Examiner, and All GSA employees.

Laws You are Subject to

- Political Reform Act, California Government Code § 87100 *et seq.*
- California Government Code § 1090
- San Francisco Charter
- San Francisco Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code
- San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance
- Applicable Civil Service Rules

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Also included in the introduction are a list of laws you are subject to, which includes the Political Reform Act, California Government Code Section 1090, the San Francisco Charter, the San Francisco Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code, San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance, and Applicable Civil Service Rules.

GSA: Mission

- *manage and implement policies, programs, rules and regulations promulgated by the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors and the voters*
- *oversee the management and operations of certain City departments, offices, and programs*

GSA SIA

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GSA's mission is to manage and implement policies, programs, rules and regulations promulgated by the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors and the voters. GSA also oversees the management and operations of certain City departments, offices, and programs.

Medical Examiner's Office: Mission

- *Provide forensic science services to the people and agencies of the City and County of San Francisco*

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The Medical Examiner's Office provides forensic science services to the people and agencies of the City and County of San Francisco.

III. Restrictions on Incompatible Activities

This section prohibits outside activities that are incompatible with the mission of the department, board or commission.



SIA template language

The third section is restrictions on incompatible activities.

For most departments, section III is the core of the SIA.

This section identifies activities that are banned under the SIA for your department. It has three subsections, which are identified in upcoming slides.

III. Restrictions on Incompatible Activities

- A. Restrictions that apply to all officers and employees
- B. Restrictions that apply to employees in specified positions
- C. Advance Written Determination (AWD)



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There are three parts in Section III, titled Restrictions on Incompatible Activities, which are:

- A. Restrictions that apply to all officers and employees,
- B. Restrictions that apply to employees in specified positions, and
- C. the Advance Written Determination or AWD.

I will describe the AWD and give examples in subsequent slides.

III.A. Restrictions that apply to all officers and employees

1. Activities that conflict with official duties
2. Activities with excessive time demands
3. Activities that are subject to review by the department



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III.A. itself has three subparts:

1. Activities that conflict with official duties,
2. Activities with excessive time demands, and
3. Activities that are subject to review by the department.

III.A.1. Activities that conflict with official duties

An outside activity conflicts with City duties when your ability to perform your City duties is **materially impaired**.



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This section provides that no officer or employee may engage in an outside activity (regardless of whether the activity is compensated) that conflicts with his or her City duties.

An outside activity conflicts with City duties when your ability to perform your City duties is materially impaired.

Outside activities that materially impair your ability to perform your City duties include, but are not limited to, activities that disqualify you from City assignments or responsibilities on a regular basis.

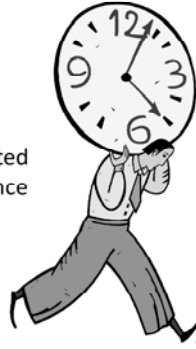
If an activity is listed here in section III.A.1, unless it is otherwise noted or an advance written determination determines that the outside activity is not incompatible, the activity is expressly prohibited.

There are a couple things I want to emphasize.

1. You can seek an AWD to find out if an outside activity is incompatible.
2. Outside activities other than those that are expressly identified may be prohibited; so if you think you might be engaged in an activity that might conflict with the mission of your department or division, you may want to seek an AWD.

III.A.2. Activities with excessive time demands

- Cause you to be absent on a regular basis
or
- Interfere with or require a time commitment that is demonstrated to interfere with the performance of your City duties



SIA template language

No employee may engage in outside activity (regardless of whether the activity is compensated) that would cause the employee to be absent from his or her assignments on a regular basis, or otherwise require a time commitment that is demonstrated to interfere with the employee's performance of his or her City duties.

Here's an example. An employee who works at the Department's front desk answering public questions, wants to take time off every Tuesday and Thursday from 2:00 to 5:00 to coach soccer. Because the employee's duties require the employee to be at the Department's front desk during regular business hours, and because this outside activity would require the employee to be absent from the office during regular business hours on a regular basis, the director or the director's designee may determine that the employee may not engage in this activity.

Medical Examiner's Office Only:

Where a specific activity has not been identified as being incompatible for a particular division of the GSA, and the employee is not sure as to whether the activity creates excessive time demands or otherwise conflicts with their job duties, the employee benefits from obtaining an advance written determination. An AWD protects the employee from possible enforcement action based on his or her pursuit of the activity, provided that the activity is as described in the AWD and the decision in the AWD is that the activity is NOT incompatible.

III.A.3. Activities that are subject to review by
the department

You may NOT engage in an outside
activity that is subject to the

- control
- inspection
- review
- audit
- or
- enforcement of your department



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Section III.A.3. of the SIA discusses activities that may be incompatible because they are subject to review by your department. It states that unless otherwise noted or an advance written determination under subsection C concludes that such activities are not incompatible, you may not engage in an outside activity (regardless of whether the activity is compensated) that is subject to the control, inspection, review, audit or enforcement of the Department.

III.A.3. Activities that are subject to review by
the department: example

- a. You may NOT knowingly provide selective assistance to a bidder who is responding to a City bid, RFP or RFQ so as to confer a competitive advantage to that bidder.



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You may not knowingly provide selective assistance to individuals or entities in a manner that confers a competitive advantage to bidders or proposers who are competing for a City contract.

Nothing in the SIA prohibits you from providing general information about a bid for a City contract, a Department Request for Qualifications or Request for Proposals or corresponding application process if that information is available to any member of the public.

Nothing in the SIA prohibits you from speaking to or meeting with individual applicants regarding the individual's application, provided that such assistance is provided on an impartial basis to all applicants who request it.

III.A.3. Activities that are subject to review by the department: example

You may not be employed by or receive compensation from an individual or entity if, currently or during past 12 months, that individual or entity has or had a contract or is or was a vendor with you department, division, or office.

- ***Exception: employment of or compensation received by an your spouse or registered domestic partner***

GSA SIA



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You may not be employed by or receive compensation from an individual or entity if, currently or during past 12 months, that individual or entity has or had a contract or is or was a vendor with you department, division, or office.

III.A.3. Activities that are subject to review by the department: example

c. Except for members of the Immigrant Rights Commission, no officer of GSA may serve as a member of the Board of Directors of an organization that the officer knows or has reason to know has applied for contracts, loans or grants administered by the Agency in the previous twelve months.

"Administered by" does not include approval or rejection of a contract by the Office of Contract Administration/Purchasing, where such action is required by law.



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Except for members of the Immigrant Rights Commission, no officer of GSA may serve as a member of the Board of Directors of an organization that the officer knows or has reason to know has applied for contracts, loans or grants administered by the Agency in the previous twelve months. For the purposes of this subsection, “administered by” does not include approval or rejection of a contract by the Office of Contract Administration/Purchasing, where such action is required by law.

III.A.3. Activities that are subject to review by the department: exceptions

1. Appearing before your department or commission on your own behalf
2. Filing or otherwise pursuing claims against the City on your own behalf
3. Running for City elective office
4. Making a public records disclosure request under the Sunshine Ordinance or Public Records Act



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For most departments, the restrictions in this section of the SIA do not prohibit you from appearing before your own department or commission on behalf of yourself; filing or otherwise pursuing claims against the City on your own behalf; running for City elective office; or making a public records disclosure request pursuant to the Sunshine Ordinance or Public Records Act.

III. B. Restrictions that apply to employees in specified positions

Some departments have identified activities that are not compatible with employees who are employed in specific positions. These employees are subject not only to the restrictions set forth in section III.A but also to any restrictions that are set forth in section III.B of the SIA.



SIA template language

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Some departments have identified activities that are not compatible with employees who are employed in specific positions. These employees are subject not only to the restrictions set forth in section III.A but also to any restrictions that are set forth in section III.B of the SIA.

III.B.3. Restrictions that apply to **OFFICERS OR EMPLOYEES OF THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER**

- *You may NOT provide expert testimony in a civil or criminal proceeding unrelated to job duties, except as authorized by an advance written determination by the Chief Medical Examiner or his or her designee.*



GSA SIA

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3. OFFICERS OR EMPLOYEES OF THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER


No officer or employee of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Division may provide expert testimony in a civil or criminal judicial proceeding unrelated to job duties, except as authorized by an advance written determination pursuant to subsection C of this section by the Chief Medical Examiner or his or her designee.

Medical Examiner's Office Only:

The SIA contains a section specific to the Medical Examiner's Office. This section identifies outside expert testimony as an incompatible activity for employees of the Medical Examiner's Office. This means that outside expert testimony is incompatible with an officer or employee's job duties and the overall operation of the Medical Examiner's Office. But in a particular case, the Medical Examiner may determine from the facts presented that the employee's outside activity does not conflict with the mission of the Medical Examiner's Office or is otherwise incompatible.

III. C. Advance Written Determination: Immunity from Prosecution

- You may submit a request for an Advance Written Determination (AWD).
- The decision-maker may deem the activity incompatible or not incompatible.
- An AWD cannot exempt you from any other applicable law.



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Section III C of your SIA sets forth a very important process, the advance written determination or AWD.

You may request an AWD from the applicable decision maker on whether a proposed activity that you want to engage in is incompatible or NOT incompatible with your city duties.

A written determination by the decision-maker that an activity is not incompatible provides the requestor immunity from any subsequent enforcement action for a violation of the SIA if the material facts are as presented in the requestor's written submission. However, a written determination cannot exempt the requestor from any applicable law.

An example of this is, if an employee requests an AWD to be a part-time taxi driver, and the decision-maker has deemed the activity not incompatible, then the AWD would protect the employee from future prosecution for a violation of the SIA but the employee would still need to adhere to traffic and speed limit laws, as well as taxi permitting laws.

If an individual has not requested an AWD and engages in an activity that is deemed incompatible, the individual will not be immune from any subsequent enforcement action brought pursuant to the SIA.

Similarly, if an individual has requested an AWD and engages in the outside activity, the individual will not be immune from any subsequent enforcement action brought pursuant to the SIA if:

- the individual is an employee who has not received a determination from the decision-maker, and 20 working days have not yet elapsed since the request was made; or
- the individual is an officer who has not yet received a determination from the decision-maker; or
- the individual has received a determination that the activity is incompatible.

In addition to the AWD process, the Charter also permits any person to seek a written opinion from the Ethics Commission with respect to that person's duties under provisions of the Charter or any City ordinance relating to conflicts of interest and governmental ethics. Any person who acts in good faith on an opinion issued by the Commission and concurred in by the City Attorney and District Attorney is immune from criminal or civil penalties for so acting, provided that the material facts are as stated in the opinion request. Nothing in the SIA precludes a person from requesting a written opinion from the Ethics Commission regarding that person's duties.

Medical Examiner's Office Only:

Where as here the activity is deemed incompatible, the employee must obtain an AWD allowing the outside expert testimony or risk being the subject of an enforcement action.

III. C. Advance Written Determination: The process

- Request must be in writing
- Requestor must describe the proposed activity
- Requestor must explain why the proposed activity is not incompatible.



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Now for the process!

The requestor must provide, in writing, a description of the proposed activity and an explanation of why the activity is not incompatible under the SIA. The written material must describe the proposed activity in sufficient detail for the decision-maker to make a fully informed determination whether it is incompatible under the SIA.

When making a determination, the decision-maker may consider any relevant factors including, but not limited to, the impact on the requestor's ability to perform his or her job, the impact upon the Department as a whole, compliance with applicable laws and rules and the spirit and intent of the SIA.

The decision-maker must consider all relevant written materials submitted by the requestor. The decision-maker must also consider whether the written material provided by the requestor is sufficiently specific and detailed to enable the decision-maker to make a fully informed determination. The decision-maker may request additional information from the requestor if the decision-maker deems such information necessary.

III. C. Advance Written Determination: Who is the Decision-Maker?

Requestor	Decision-Maker
Employees of Medical Examiner's Office	The Medical Examiner
The Medical Examiner	The City Administrator

GSA SIA

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The SIA identifies who the decision-maker is for employees. For your department, the decision-maker for employees is the Medical Examiner and the decision-maker for the Medical Examiner is the City Administrator.

III. C. Advance Written Determination: The process

- The decision-maker must respond in writing to the requestor, by mail, email, personal delivery, or other reliable means.



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The decision-maker must respond to the request by providing a written determination to the requestor by mail, email, personal delivery, or other reliable means.

III.C. Advance Written Determination: The process: special rules for employees



- ⦿ If the requestor is an employee, the decision-maker must respond within 20 working days from the date of the request.
- ⦿ Delegation and appeal.

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For a request by an employee, the decision-maker must provide the determination within a reasonable period of time depending on the circumstances and the complexity of the request, but not later than 20 working days from the date of the request.

If the decision-maker does not provide a written determination to the employee within 20 working days from the date of the employee's request, the decision-maker will be deemed to have determined that the proposed activity does not violate the SIA.

For an advance written determination request from an employee, if the director delegates the decision-making to a designee and if the designee determines that the proposed activity is incompatible under the SIA, the employee may appeal that determination to the director.

III. C. Advance Written Determination:

- AWD requests and written determinations, including approvals and denials, are public records to the extent permitted by law.
- AWD may be revoked.



SIA template language

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To assure that rules are enforced equally, requests for advance written determinations and written determinations, including approvals and denials, are public records to the extent permitted by law.

The decision-maker may revoke the written determination at any time based on changed facts or circumstances or other good cause by providing advance written notice to the requestor. The written notice must specify the changed facts or circumstances or other good cause that warrants revocation of the advance written determination.

IV. Restrictions on Use of City Resources, City Work-Product and Prestige

- A. Use of City Resources
- B. Use of City Work-Product
- C. Use of Prestige of the Office



SIA template language

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The fourth section of the SIA addresses the use of City resources, City work product and City prestige.

IV. A. Restrictions on use of City resources

- **You may NOT use City resources, such as letterhead, personnel, telephones, computers, copiers and email, for any non-City purpose.**

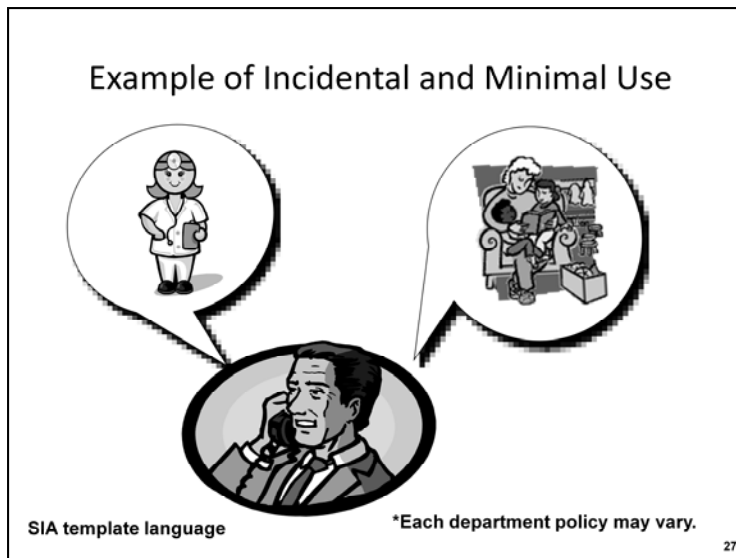


SIA template language

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There is a restriction on the use of City resources.

- You may not use City resources or allow any other persons to use City resources for any non-City purpose, including any political activity or personal purpose. City resources include, without limitation, facilities, telephone, computer, copier, fax machine, e-mail, internet access, stationery and supplies.



Notwithstanding these general prohibitions, any incidental and minimal use of City resources does not constitute a violation of this section of the SIA.

Here's an example.

An employee or officer may use the telephone to make occasional calls to arrange medical appointments or speak with a child care provider, because this is an incidental and minimal use of City resources.

Nothing in the SIA exempts any employee or officer from complying with more restrictive policies of the Department regarding use of City resources, including, without limitation, the Department's e-mail policy.

IV. B. Use of City Work Product



SIA template language

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No officer or employee may, in exchange for anything of value and without appropriate authorization, sell, publish or otherwise use any non-public materials that were prepared on City time or while using City facilities, property (including without limitation, intellectual property), equipment and/or materials.

For the purpose of this prohibition, appropriate authorization includes authorization granted by law, including the Sunshine Ordinance, California Public Records Act, the Ralph M. Brown Act as well as whistleblower and improper government activities provisions, or by a supervisor of the officer or employee, including but not limited to the officer's or employee's appointing authority.

IV.C. Restrictions on Use of Prestige of the Office

You may NOT use your City title or designation in any communication for any private gain or advantage.

1. using City business cards
2. using City letterhead, title or e-mail
3. holding yourself out as a representative of the department without authorization



SIA template language

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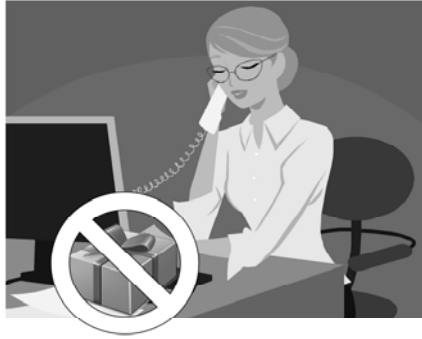
No employee or officer may use his or her City title or designation in any communication for any private gain or advantage. This includes using City business cards, using City letterhead, title or email, or holding oneself out as a representative of the department without authorization.

Here's an example of inappropriate use. An employee's friend is having a dispute with his new neighbor who is constructing a fence that the friend believes encroaches on his property. The friend invites the employee over to view the disputed fence. When the neighbor introduces herself, the employee should not hand the neighbor her business card while suggesting that she could help resolve the dispute. Use of a City business card under these circumstances might lead a member of the public to believe that the employee was acting in an official capacity.

Here's an example of acceptable use. An employee is at a party and runs into an old friend who has just moved to town. The friend suggests meeting for dinner and asks how to get in touch with the employee to set up a meeting time. The employee hands the friend the employee's business card and says that he can be reached at the number on the card. Use of a City business card under these circumstances would not lead a member of the public to believe that the employee was acting in an official capacity. Nor would use of the telephone to set up a meeting time constitute a misuse of City resources.

V. Prohibition on Gifts for Assistance with City Services

No gifts for doing your job!



SIA template language

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Section V is a prohibition on receiving gifts for doing your job. You may not accept a gift for doing you job because you are already receiving a salary for doing it.

Prohibition on Gifts for Assistance with City Services: Exceptions

- You may accept a bona fide award, or free admission to a testimonial dinner or similar event, to recognize exceptional service by you. Such awards are subject to the limitation on gifts imposed by the Political Reform Act and local law.



SIA template language

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There are exceptions to the prohibition on gifts for doing your job.

You may accept a bona fide award, or free admission to a testimonial dinner or similar event, to recognize exceptional service by you. Such awards are subject to the limitation on gifts imposed by the Political Reform Act and local law discussed in the Ethics Training for City Employees.


Prohibition on Gifts for Assistance with City Services: Exceptions

- Gifts, other than cash*, with an aggregate value of \$25 or less per occasion

$\leq \$25$ per occasion

and

- Gifts such as food and drink, without regard to value, to be shared in the office among officers or employees



***Gift cards are considered cash.**

SiA template language

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In addition, the following gifts are de minimis and therefore exempt from the restrictions on gifts for doing your job.

- Gifts, other than cash, with an aggregate value of \$25 or less per occasion; and
- Gifts such as food and drink, without regard to value, to be shared in the office among employees or officers.

Example number 1. A member of the public who regularly works with and receives assistance from the Department sends a \$15 basket of fruit to an employee as a holiday gift. Although the fruit may in fact be offered in exchange for performing services that the employee is expected to perform in the regular course of City duties, the employee may accept the fruit because the value is de minimis. (Remember! Statement of Economic Interests or SEI filers have filing requirements. Because the reporting requirement is cumulative, an employee may be required to report even de minimis gifts on his or her Statement of Economic Interests if, over the course of a year, the gifts equal or exceed \$50.)

Example number 2. A member of the public who regularly works with and receives assistance from the Department sends a \$150 basket of fruit to the Department as a holiday gift. Although the fruit may in fact be offered in exchange for performing services that the Department is expected to perform in the regular course of City duties, the Department may accept the fruit basket because it is a gift to the office to be shared among employees and officers.

VI. Amendment of SIA

An SIA may be amended if it is approved by the Ethics Commission and the City has satisfied the meet and confer obligations of State law and the collective bargaining agreement.



SIA template language

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Section VI of the SIA makes clear that once a Statement of Incompatible Activities is approved by the Ethics Commission, the department, board or commission may, subject to the approval of the Ethics Commission, amend the Statement. C&GC Code § 3.218(b).

In addition, the Ethics Commission may at any time amend the Statement on its own initiative.

An SIA may be amended only if it is approved by the Ethics Commission and the City has satisfied the meet and confer obligations of State law and the collective bargaining agreement.



In the next couple slides I will cover obligations, enforcement, and penalties.

OBLIGATIONS OF OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES



- Cooperate and Assist in Enforcement and Investigations.
- Do Not File False Charges.
- Do Not Assist Others in Violating Ethics Laws.

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Officers and employees are obligated to:

- Cooperate and Assist in Enforcement and Investigations.
- Not File False Charges.
- Not Assist Others in Violating Ethics Laws

What is enforcement?

- The Ethics Commission can investigate and prosecute violations of ethics laws.
- The City Attorney can bring a civil case on the matter.
- The District Attorney can initiate criminal proceedings.

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The various enforcement mechanisms include:

- The Ethics Commission can investigate and prosecute violations of ethics laws.
- The City Attorney can bring a civil case on the matter.
- The District Attorney can initiate criminal proceedings.

Penalties for Violations of Local Law

- Criminal penalties of up to \$10,000 and/or one year in jail per violation.
- Civil or administrative penalties of \$5,000 per violation.
- Injunctive relief.
- Discipline and removal for official misconduct.

C&GCC 3.242

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The penalties for violations of local law are:

- Criminal penalties of up to \$10,000 and/or one year in jail per violation,
- Civil or administrative penalties of \$5,000 per violation,
- Injunctive relief which means the courts can order you to cease certain activities, and/or
- Discipline and removal for official misconduct.

Questions?

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As stated before, these trainings are based on local law and state ethics laws. To the extent that these training videos conflict with state or local law, the law controls.

Please contact us if you have specific questions or need advice relating to a real life governmental ethics concern. We offer advice based on the facts and specifics of your situation.

Thank you for taking this training.