



**DRIVEN TO A  
HIGHER STANDARD**

**SELFLESSNESS • INTEGRITY • OPENNESS**

**HONESTY • ACCOUNTABILITY • OBJECTIVITY**



**OUR VISION**

*We will deliver a 21st century, multimodal transportation system that will improve the quality of life for Texas citizens and increase the competitive position for Texas industries.*

**OUR MISSION**

*We will provide safe, efficient and effective means for the movement of people and goods throughout the state, facilitating trade and economic opportunity.*

## WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE PUBLIC – IT'S GOOD FOR BUSINESS

The Texas Department of Transportation recognizes the importance of maintaining high ethical standards among our employees and business partners. The public expects all of us to conduct the state's business in an ethical, honest and open manner that avoids any conflict of interest.

TxDOT requires all of our 14,000 employees to participate in ethics training, and are expected to support the vision and values under which we operate. TxDOT also communicated our standards for ethical responsibility to companies working with and for TxDOT in the public interest.

Whether you're an employee or business partner, we ask that you please take a moment to familiarize yourself with these basic ethics guidelines. We need your cooperation in avoiding even the slightest perception that we're violating the public trust.

TxDOT does not tolerate violations of ethical standards. If you see something wrong, we expect you to report it. Misconduct affects everyone, because it can lead to an unpleasant working environment for you and everyone around you. Disclosure of actual or suspected violations of agency standards of conduct is critical to the well-being of TxDOT.

This publication has been developed to help emphasize our responsibility to the public and to remind you how important your support is to the Department. We strive to conduct the state's business in an ethical, open and honest manner and we work hard to make decisions that will keep Texas transportation moving in the right direction.

# **TxDOT: Standards of Conduct**

High ethical standards and compliance with the law are critically important to the Texas Department of Transportation. It is our obligation to the citizens of Texas to be good stewards of the resources that have been entrusted to us. Fraudulent activity and noncompliance with laws and policies force all Texans to pay more for goods and services.

While you are not expected to be an expert in ethics law, you are expected to familiarize yourself with TxDOT's Standards of Conduct. It's important to know when you are faced with a potential conflict of interest and how to address the situation before it becomes a problem.

The following are basic ethics guidelines for staff, consultants and other outside entities doing business with TxDOT. The bottom line is to refrain from doing anything that creates even the slightest appearance of a conflict

## **and Business Ethics**

of interest or unethical actions. Some general prohibitions are mentioned in this publication.

The Internal Compliance Program (ICP) ensures that TxDOT business is conducted in an ethical manner in compliance with all laws and regulations. As part of the ICP initiative, the agency has established **TxDOT Watch**. This is an external reporting system that allows individuals to report incidents anonymously online at [www.TxDOTWatch.com](http://www.TxDOTWatch.com) or over the phone by calling **1.877.769.8936**.

**You can also** report fraud, waste or abuse to the State Auditor's Office, call **(800) TX-AUDIT (892-8348)** or visit the **Texas State Auditor's Office Hotline Website**.  
( <http://sao.fraud.state.tx.us/Default.aspx> )



## • **Gifts from Outside Sources**

It's not necessary to treat TxDOT employees to lunch or offer valuable gifts to discuss a business matter; simply call for an appointment. It's our job to work with outside businesses and organizations.

Most employees may accept token items that are a normal means of advertising, if the total estimated value of the gift is less than \$25. TxDOT employees are not allowed to solicit or accept valuable gifts from anyone doing business with the agency.

Valuable gifts include items such as expensive meals, tickets to special events, door prizes, travel expenses, honoraria, services and discounts. Such gifts might appear to show favor. Employees should perform official duties without being influenced or seeming to be influenced by gifts.



## • **Working Meals & Hospitality Rooms**

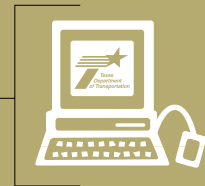
An employee may accept an occasional ordinary working meal during the department's official business with an outside firm or organization. For example, if an employee

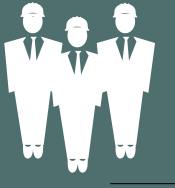
finds themselves working through lunch, a consultant may treat the employee to a practical lunch at a sandwich shop, but not a costly lavish meal at the most expensive steakhouse in town. As a reminder, a working meal does not include alcohol.

Conferences sponsored by private entities or associations offer great educational tools for TxDOT employees, and we encourage attendance at such events. The agency, however, does not allow employees to participate in conference hospitality rooms, if there are restrictions on visitors.

## **Use of State Equipment & Supplies**

TxDOT equipment and supplies are for official business purposes only. Employees and contractors are not allowed to use resources for non-agency related business or for personal or private use. For example, an employee is not allowed to use office equipment, copier or work time to make copies of a flyer for a school or church fundraiser.





- **Employment**

An employee is not allowed to engage in outside business, professional activities or accept employment in private enterprises, if the activities interfere with the employee's working hours, efficiency and appear to create a conflict between the employee's private interests and public duties.

For example, if you are an accountant and work for an outside firm that does business with TxDOT, this might create a conflict of interest. It certainly could create the appearance of impropriety especially, if information obtained in connection with the employee's official duties could impair the employee's judgment on behalf of TxDOT. Employees are required to notify their supervisor, consult with TxDOT's Office of General Counsel and receive permission to accept outside employment.



- **Post-Employment**

Former employees may not enter into consultant contracts, professional services contracts, or employment contracts (including contracts for personal services directly with

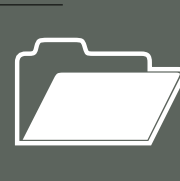
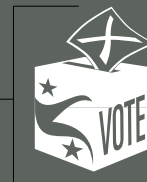
the Department) until they have been separated from the department for 12 months. Higher-level employees, however, are prohibited indefinitely from working on contracts and projects the individual worked on at the agency.

## **Political Activities •**

Employees may volunteer for political campaigns. However, employees can't participate in any political activity on TxDOT time. This includes making phone calls, sending emails or faxes in support of or against a candidate or political cause. Using TxDOT personnel or equipment to benefit or deter a political campaign is prohibited.

## **Disclosure of Information and Open Records •**

TxDOT employees should not disclose or share confidential and sensitive information to outside interests or to co-workers unless authorized to do so. Most of our records are open to the public. You only have to ask to see them; however, most of us aren't authorized to disclose



confidential or sensitive information (i.e. bid information, proprietary information or pending litigation). Depending on the nature of inquiry, the requestor may have to file an open records request.



- **Speaking Engagements**

TxDOT staff is encouraged to help the public better understand our agency and operations. As transportation industry experts, we are often called on to speak at conferences and to civic organizations.

Employees participating in such events are not allowed to accept honoraria, gifts or anything else of value

# TxDOT Watch

## Anonymous Reporting System



TxDOT does not tolerate violations of ethical standards. If you see something wrong we want you to report it. Employees are encouraged to report – not condone – misconduct. As an agency, we encourage employees, consultants and the public to bring to management’s attention any potential compliance issues. The agency prefers to identify and address incidents of misconduct in an expeditious manner. Therefore TxDOT has established the **TxDOT WATCH**, an anonymous reporting system. This reporting system is part of TxDOT’s Internal Compliance Program (ICP) and provided as a means to report unethical and illegal activities.

**Access to reporting incidents can be made anytime 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by phone or over the internet. Anonymous reporting links can be found at [www.TxDOT.gov](http://www.TxDOT.gov) or [www.TxDOTWatch.com](http://www.TxDOTWatch.com).**

**To file an incident report, contact ChemTel directly at 1.877.769.8936.**

Misconduct affects everyone. It can lead to an unpleasant working environment for you and your co-workers, and in some situations to serious legal and financial costs or penalties for TxDOT. Disclosure of actual or suspected violations of agency standards of conduct is critical to the well-being of TxDOT.

The mission of the department ICP is to exercise due diligence to prevent and detect criminal conduct and otherwise promote an organizational culture that encourages ethical conduct and commitment to compliance with the law. It’s our obligation to the citizens of the state.



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**[www.TxDOT.gov](http://www.TxDOT.gov)**

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