

Manitoba Civil Service
Values and Ethics
Guide

Our Role

The public service plays an essential role in our democratic way of life, faithfully serving the people of Manitoba through their duly elected government.

The public service affects the day-to-day lives of Manitoba communities and individuals. Civil servants deliver a wide range of services for the benefit of the people of Manitoba and, in doing so, endeavor to make a positive contribution to the quality of life of all Manitobans.

Civil servants provide advice on options available to achieve the government's policies and the consequences of each option. We provide that advice in a complete, honest, and candid manner without fear or favour. Civil servants are then responsible to implement the directions of the government within the law and the Constitution.

All civil servants hold a unique position of trust. Our actions, directly or indirectly touch the lives of all Manitobans. Whether providing advice, developing policy or delivering programs or direct services, civil servants will:

- Act in the public interest
- Act with integrity
- Act with respect for others
- Act with skill and dedication

Application

The values and ethics guide of the Manitoba civil service has been developed to:

- Provide a guide for conduct by Manitoba civil servants and support them in all of their work-related and professional activities.
- Contribute to maintaining and enhancing public confidence in Manitoba's civil service.
- Strengthen respect for, and appreciation of, the role played by Manitoba's civil service within our province.

The Values and Ethics Guide applies to all civil service employees as defined by *The Civil Service Act* and complements existing legislation, policies and guidelines.

If you are unsure how this guide applies to you, please discuss with your manager.

Putting our Values to Work

Act in the Public Interest

Manitoba's civil servants act in the public interest by:

- Resolving any conflict between our personal or private interests and our official duties in favour of the public interest
- Upholding both the letter and the spirit of the law
- Maintaining the confidentiality of information gained as a result of our work
- Being sensitive to the political process and acting in accordance with the traditions regarding political impartiality
- Being a careful steward of public resources and using them in an efficient, responsible and accountable manner

In Practice:

Public trust

In the performance of our responsibilities, the public interest is paramount.

Conflict of interest

It is essential that we do not, by our actions, place ourselves in a conflict of interest. The *Conflict of Interest Policy* in *Principles and Policies for Managing Human Resources* provides direction on conduct expected of civil servants and how to deal with situations to prevent a conflict of interest. The Conflict of Interest Policy seeks to protect the public interest, the organization and civil servants. The intent is to prevent employees from using public office for private gain.

Confidentiality and the use of information

We must exercise discretion in our use of confidential information acquired by virtue of our employment and ensure that the privacy of individuals and their information is maintained. We must be aware of and observe the confidentiality provisions of our Oath of Office as well as those contained in legislation, such as *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) and *The Personal Health Information Act* (PHIA).

Political impartiality

We are required to provide the same support to the elected government regardless of which political party is in office. We should be aware of our own personal views and ensure they do not influence the way in which we carry out our duties. All advice to government must be based on an accurate representation of the facts and the possible consequences of the options available.

Use of public money, property, goods or resources

We are required to use all resources, including human, financial and technological resources, efficiently and effectively for the public benefit. As a manager or as an employee, we strive to ensure that the public receives maximum value for each tax dollar spent.

Political rights

With the exception of deputy ministers, we have the right to be politically active, but we are reminded of our responsibilities to maintain confidentiality. While we are permitted to seek nomination, support a candidate or political party and speak or write on behalf of the candidate or political party, we are not permitted to solicit funds for a provincial or federal political party or candidate. However, we must follow the guidelines of the Civil Service Commission when doing so. See Section 44 of *The Civil Service Act*.

Public comment

Civil servants have the same rights of free speech and independence in the conduct of their private affairs as other members of the public. However, civil servants also have a duty to ensure that any public comment on government policy is appropriate to the position they hold and is compatible with the need to maintain a politically impartial civil service.

Act with Integrity

Manitoba's civil servants act with integrity by:

- Acting honestly
- Conducting ourselves in a manner that will not reflect adversely on the public sector, our department or other public sector employees
- Observing all legislative requirements, and following lawful and reasonable instructions
- Taking responsibility for our advice and actions

In Practice:

Personal conduct

We are expected to exhibit honesty, integrity and the highest standards of personal conduct. We should respect and obey all laws and avoid any activities which negatively impact the government's interests, property, security, reputation, employee health and safety or the confidence of the public. This applies to both on-duty and off-duty conduct. (Refer to the Criminal Charges Policy for additional information.)

Creating a fair, equitable and impartial environment

Our decisions affect other employees, clients and the public and so must be fair, consistent and equitable. Fairness requires that our decisions are based on relevant information and are honest, open and impartial. Equity is being fair and just to all people, and correcting or supplementing practices to redress disadvantages experienced by individuals. Equity may mean treating someone differently to provide an equal chance or opportunity.

Act with Respect for Others

Manitoba's civil servants act with respect for others by:

- Treating the public and colleagues with respect, courtesy and dignity
- Treating the public and colleagues fairly and consistently
- Valuing and using diversity in our workplace
- Contributing to a positive work environment by being self aware, professional and tactful

In Practice:

Valuing diversity

A strong and effective civil service is enriched by, and open to, the exchange of different perspectives and ideas. This creates a foundation for understanding and building relationships, and results in the development of better policies and service delivery. We value the diversity of our fellow employees and strive to reflect the diversity of Manitobans. See the Civil Service Commission's Valuing Diversity: An Equity Approach handbook for further information.

Respectful workplace

It is our collective responsibility to ensure that we contribute to, and maintain a respectful workplace environment that is free from harassment and discrimination. A respectful workplace promotes courteous and professional conduct, and expects staff to communicate effectively and work together to meet organizational goals. If you are unsure on how to deal with disrespectful behaviour occurring in your workplace, follow the responsibilities outlined in the government's Respectful Workplace Policy.

Services to the public

We are committed to ensuring all contact with the public is prompt, courteous, respectful and contributes to making the experience of dealing with government as satisfying and constructive as possible.

Act with Skill and Dedication

Manitoba's civil servants act with skill and dedication by:

- Providing responsive, effective and efficient services to the community that are flexible and can adapt quickly to changing demands
- Giving our best to meet performance standards and other organizational requirements
- Promoting excellence in the civil service by maintaining and improving our knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies as well as assisting in enhancing those of our colleagues
- Committing to a process of continual learning and innovation

In Practice:

Citizen-centered service

In delivering government programs and services, we are committed to providing quality service to the public. In doing so, we are continually reviewing ways to improve our programs and services in response to the public's changing needs. Whether it is through the use of new technology, forging new partnerships, or streamlining our processes, we will ensure we are flexible and adapt quickly to change. Serving the public to the best of our ability is an essential role of the civil service.

Merit

Selection for appointment, promotion or transfer shall be based on the merit principle as outlined in *The Civil Service Act*. The goal of this principle is to ensure that the civil service is comprised of well qualified employees with abilities, skills, training and competence to perform at their initial level of appointment and as far as is reasonably possible to progress in a career within the civil service. This requires that we maintain and develop our skills on an ongoing basis to ensure that we meet the demands of our continuously changing work environment.

Thinking it Through

It is not possible to have a rule for every situation. The guide below will help you to ensure that your behaviour meets the required standards. Assistance is also available from your manager, Human Resource Services, your deputy minister (or designate) or the Labour Relations Division of the Treasury Board Secretariat. If you are unsure, seek advice before you act.

1. *Identify and assess the situation*

- What is difficult about the situation?
- What are the legal issues to be considered?
- Does this guide require you to behave in a certain way?
- Who else is involved and what effect does your behavior have on them?

2. *Look at the situation from a public sector standpoint*

- What are your duties?
- Is there a standard practice, relevant guideline or policy?
- Who do you need to involve?

3. *Would your behavior stand up to scrutiny by the public*

- This is sometimes called the family or newspaper test.
- What would your family, colleagues or supervisor say if your actions were reported on the front page of the newspaper?
- Would others see you as using your employment and resources for public benefit?
- Do your personal interests conflict with the public interest?

4. *Identify and consider the options*

- Is there an alternative solution and what would the results of that solution be?
- How would the public view the alternative solutions?
- Do you need to seek advice from your manager, your Human Resource Services branch, or the Labour Relations Division of the Treasury Board Secretariat.

5. *Choose your course of action*

- Your choice of action must be within existing legislation, policies and guidelines.
- Your behavior must support the public sector's aims and standards.
- You must be able to justify your course of action.

For More Information Contact:

- Your manager
- Legislation:
 - *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
 - *Criminal Code, R.S. 1985, c. C-46; section 121*
 - *The Civil Service Act, C.C.S.M. c. C110*
 - *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, C.C.S.M. c. F175*
 - *The Human Rights Code, C.C.S.M. c. H175*
 - *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Conflict of Interest Act, C.C.S.M. c. L112*
 - *The Personal Health Information Act, C.C.S.M. c. P33.5*
 - *The Workplace Safety and Health Act, C.C.S.M. c. W210*
- Public sector policies, and other relevant documents:
 - Criminal Charges Policy
 - Oath of Office
 - Electronic Network Usage Policy
 - Principles and Policies for Managing Human Resources
- Department specific policies and codes of conduct
- Websites:
 - Government of Manitoba - Internal
 - At Your Service Manitoba:
<http://gww.internal/atyourservicemanitoba/>
 - Laws of Manitoba: <http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/index.php>
 - Manitoba Civil Service Commission: <http://www.internal/csc/>
 - Policies/Directives: <http://www.internal/policy.html>
 - Finance: <http://gww.internal/finance>

References

Code of Conduct for South Australian Public Sector Employees, October 2001

New Zealand Public Service Code of Conduct, Sept. 2001

A Framework for Effective Comptrollership in the Government of Manitoba, Sept. 2003