

May 5, 2004

WEST VIRGINIA BULLETIN NO: WV360-4-14

SUBJECT: Ethics Reminder – Employee Conduct

Purpose: Remind All Employees of Ethics Standards and Proper use of Government Equipment and E-Mail.

Expiration Date: This bulletin expires after contents are noted.

This bulletin will serve as a reminder to all West Virginia NRCS Employees of the Ethical Standards of Conduct and the proper use of all government equipment including computers, cell phones, E-Mail and etc.

All employees are responsible for knowing and adhering to the rules of conduct as found in the attached USDA Bulletin No. 735-1, “Employee Responsibilities and Conduct” and in the attached October 2002 issue of the Office of Government Ethics publications of “Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch”, and “Fourteen General Principles that Apply to Every Employee”.

It has come to our attention that there are employees using E-Mail for other than official purposes. Attached is a copy of Page 5 on unacceptable uses of e-mail for easy reference. We ask that all employees review and become familiar with the contents of above referenced documents. Any person who willfully violates these Federal Laws or NRCS and USDA policies will be subject to disciplinary action.

All employees should conduct themselves in a respectful and courteous manner at all times in dealing with both internal and external customers. Our customers include co-workers, supervisors, partners, and other agencies and the general public. Also, employees should be extremely careful to refrain from using slanderous, malicious, derogatory, discourteous, or otherwise inappropriate language, gestures, or other offensive conduct towards internal and external customers.

All employees are asked to acknowledge receipt of this bulletin by completing the attached form and returning it to Charlotte Wertz, State Administrative Officer by June 1, 2004.

/s/

LILLIAN V. WOODS
State Conservationist

Attachments:

- **[USDA Bulletin No. 735-1](#)**
- **[Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch](#)**
- **Fourteen General Principles that Apply to Every Employee**
- **Page 5 on unacceptable uses of e-mail**
- **Acknowledge receipt of Bulletin Form**

DIST: E

Fourteen general principles that apply to every employee:

- (1) Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws and ethical principles above private gain.**
- (2) Employees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty.**
- (3) Employees shall not engage in financial transactions using nonpublic Government information or allow the improper use of such information to further any private interest.**
- (4) An employee shall not, (except as permitted by 5 CFR 2635 Subpart B) solicit or accept any gift or other item of monetary value from any person or entity seeking official action from, doing business with, or conducting activities regulated by the employee's agency, or whose interests may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of the employee's duties.**
- (5) Employees shall put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties.**
- (6) Employees shall not knowingly make unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the Government.**
- (7) Employees shall not use public office for private gain.**
- (8) Employees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.**
- (9) Employees shall protect and conserve Federal property and shall not use it for other than authorized activities.**
- (10) Employees shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with official Government duties and responsibilities.**
- (11) Employees shall disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities.**
- (12) Employees shall satisfy in good faith their obligations as citizens, including all just financial obligations, especially those—such as Federal, State, or local taxes—that are imposed by law.**
- (13) Employees shall adhere to all laws and regulations that provide equal opportunity for all Americans regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicap.**
- (14) Employees shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law or the ethical standards set forth in this part. Whether particular circumstances create an appearance that the law or these standards have been violated shall be determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts.**

UNACCEPTABLE USES OF E-MAIL

E-mail shall not be used for the transmission of:

- Sexually explicit information,
- Racially or ethnically insulting or religiously demeaning information,
- All non-work related personal messages,
- Any type of personal solicitation,
- Chain letters,
- Outside business activities and any other non-work related activity,
- National security information,
- Classified material,
- Sensitive information,
- Information exempted from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (Pub. L. 93-502),
- Information protected by the Privacy Act (Pub. L. 93-579).

ACCEPTABLE E-MAIL MESSAGES FOR ALL EMPLOYEE DISTRIBUTION

Some examples of acceptable all employees e-mail messages are:

- Agency notices,
- Announcements of training opportunities,
- All employee meeting announcements,
- Announcements of scheduled power outages and computer maintenance/down time,
- Special emphasis or cultural activities.

INTERNET E-MAIL WITH ATTACHMENTS

Internet e-mail is not secure, and the potential for receiving an attachment containing a virus is significant. Internet e-mail attachments must be scanned before opening and before saving to the hard drive or another storage device. Employees are responsible for ensuring each attachment is properly scanned.

COMPUTER SOFTWARE PIRACY AND THE COPYRIGHT ACT

Executive Order 13103, Computer Software Piracy, issued on September 30, 1998 states that: "The United States Government is the world's largest purchaser of computer-related services and equipment, purchasing more than \$20 billion annually. At a time when a critical component in discussions with our international trading partners concerns their efforts to combat piracy of computer software and other intellectual property, it is incumbent on the United States to ensure that its own practices as a purchaser and user of computer software are beyond reproach." The Executive Order establishes the following policy: "It shall be the policy of the United States Government that each executive agency shall work diligently to prevent and combat computer software piracy in order to give effect to copyrights associated with computer software by observing the relevant provisions of international agreements in effect in the United States, including applicable provisions of the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, the Berne Convention for the Protection of

Acknowledge Receipt of Bulletin

**This is to certify that I _____
have received and read the provisions in :**

- **USDA Bulletin No. 735-1**
- **Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch**
- **Fourteen General Principles that Apply to Every Employee**
- **Page 5 on unacceptable uses of e-mail**

Employee Signature _____ Date: _____

Employee Location/Office _____

Supervisor Signature _____ Date: _____

Return to Charlotte Wertz by June 1, 2004