

## **PROHIBITED PERSONNEL PRACTICES**

Prohibited personnel practices are those things a Federal employee with personnel authority may not do. A Federal employee has personnel authority if they can take, direct others to take, recommend, or approve any personnel action. This includes appointments, promotions, discipline, details, transfers, reassignments, reinstatements, or any decisions concerning pay, benefits, and training. Changes to the law were made to protect whistleblowers and people with veterans preference. A personnel action includes any significant change in duties, responsibilities, or working conditions which is inconsistent with the employees salary or grade. People with personnel authority—managers and supervisors—are charged with avoiding the following prohibited personnel practices:

1. Don't **DISCRIMINATE** on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicapping condition, marital status, or political affiliation.
2. Don't **SOLICIT** or **CONSIDER** any personnel recommendation or statement not based on personal knowledge or records of performance, ability, aptitude, general qualifications, character, loyalty, or suitability.
3. Don't **COERCE** an employee's political activity.
4. Don't **DECEIVE** or **OBSTRUCT** any person with respect to such person's right to compete for employment.
5. Don't **INFLUENCE** a person to withdraw from competition.
6. Don't **GRANT** any preference or advantage not authorized by law, regulation, or rule.
7. Don't **EMPLOY** or **PROMOTE** a relative.
8. Don't **RETALIATE** against a whistleblower, whether an employee or an applicant.
9. Don't **RETALIATE** against employees or applicants who exercise their appeal rights, testify, or cooperate with an inspector general or the Special Counsel, or refuse to break the law.
10. Don't **DISCRIMINATE** based on actions not adversely affecting performance.
11. Don't **VIOLATE** any law, rule, or regulation implementing or directly concerning the merit principles.
12. Don't **VIOLATE** veterans' preference requirements.

Avoiding prohibited personnel practices will not guarantee you will never have to defend a decision or action, but it will give you a firm basis from which to start.

For more information see US Code, Title 5§2302 “Prohibited personnel practices” at:  
<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/5/2302.html>