

# 10 Golden Rules To Professional Ethics In The Workplace

Following are ten golden rules to being professional in service to your organization:

- Always strive for excellence; this is the first rule to achieving greatness in whatever endeavor you undertake this is the quality that makes you and your work stand-out. Excellence is a quality of service which is unusually good and so surpasses ordinary standards, it should be made a habit for it to make a good impression on your bosses and colleagues.

- Be trustworthy; in today's society trust is an issue and any employee who exhibits trustworthiness is on a fast track to professionalism. Trustworthiness is about fulfilling an assigned task and as an extension- not letting down expectations, it is been dependable, and reliable when called upon to deliver a service. In order to earn the trust of your bosses and colleagues, worth and integrity must be proven over time.

Be accountable; to be accountable is to stand tall and be counted for what actions you have undertaken, this is the blameworthiness and responsibility for your actions and its consequences- good or bad.

- Be courteous and respectful; courteousness is being friendly, polite and well mannered with a gracious consideration towards others. It makes social interactions in the workplace run smoothly, avoid conflicts and earn respect. Respect is a positive feeling of esteem or deference for a person or organization; it is built over time and can be lost with one stupid or inconsiderate action. Continued courteous interactions are required to maintain or increase the original respect gained.

- Be honest, open and transparent; honesty is a facet of moral character that connotes positive and virtuous attributes such as truthfulness, straightforwardness of conduct, loyalty, fairness, sincerity, openness in communication and generally operating in a way for others to see what actions are being performed. This is a virtue highly prized by employers and colleagues, for it builds trust and increases your personal value to all.

- Be competent and improve continually; competence is the ability of an individual to do a job properly, it is a combination of knowledge, skills and behavior used to improve performance. Competency grows through experience and to the extent one is willing to learn and adapt. Continuous self development is a pre-requisite in offering professional service at all times.

- Always be ethical; ethical behavior is acting within certain moral codes in accordance with the generally accepted code of conduct or rules. It is always safe for an employee to "play by the rules". This is always the best policy and in instances the rule book is inadequate, acting with a clear moral conscience is the right way to go. This may cause friction in some organizations but ethical organizations will always stand by the right moral decisions and actions of their employees.

- Always be honorable and act with integrity; honorable action is behaving in a way that portrays "nobility of soul, magnanimity, and a scorn of meanness" which is derived from virtuous conduct and personal integrity. This is a concept of "wholeness or completeness" of character in line with certain values, believes, and principles with consistency in action and outcome.

- Be respectful of confidentiality; confidentiality is respecting the set of rules or promise that restricts you from further and unauthorized dissemination of information. Over the course of your career, information will be passed on to you in confidence – either from the organization or from colleagues- and it is important to be true to such confidences. You gain trust and respect of those confiding in you and increase your influence within the organization.
- Set good examples; applying the foregoing rules helps you improve your professionalism within your organization but it is not complete until you impact knowledge on those around and below you. You must show and lead by good example. Being a professional is about living an exemplary live within and without the organization.

Professionalism is highly valued by every organization today and professionals are hardly out of work. Apply the ten golden rules of professionalism and enjoy a wonderful, professional and prosperous career.



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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### Professionalism-How to Conduct Yourself at Work

Professionalism is defined as one's conduct at work. In spite of the word's root, this quality is not restricted to those in occupations we describe as "professions," typically those which require a high level of education and have high earnings. Cashiers, janitors and waitresses can demonstrate a high level of professionalism, just as doctors, lawyers or engineers can display a low level of it, and vice versa.

As with good health, the absence of professionalism is usually more obvious than its presence. Who will notice whether you have this quality or not? Your boss definitely will, as will your customers and co-workers, and it can affect your ability to keep your job and advance in your career. So what can you do to make sure you exhibit professionalism and what can you do to ensure that you don't show a lack of it? Follow these dos and don'ts:

**Make Being on Time a Priority:** Showing up late for work or meetings gives the impression that you don't care about your job so make sure you pay attention to the clock. Not only does this go for start times, but this tip also applies to returning from your lunch break.

**Don't Be Grumpy:** Leave your bad mood at the door when you come to work. We all have days when we aren't feeling our best. Remember not to take it out on your boss, your co-workers and especially your customers. If work is what's causing you to be grumpy, it may be time to think about quitting your job. If that isn't a good option for you, make the best of the situation until it is.

**Dress Appropriately:** For many jobs, workplace attire doesn't include wearing a suit and tie. Whether or not you have to dress up for work or you can wear more casual clothes, your appearance should always be neat and clean. A wrinkled suit looks no better than a ripped pair of jeans. Wear the type of clothing your employer requires or that is the norm for your place of employment. Generally speaking, revealing clothing is a no-no. Flip flops, shorts and tank tops should be saved for the weekends.

**Watch Your Mouth:** Swearing, cursing or cussing—whatever you call it—has no place at work, particularly if those who might be offended by it are present. If you wouldn't say it to your grandmother, refrain from saying it at work. Using bad language makes it seem as if your vocabulary is limited.

**Offer To Help Colleagues:** A true professional is willing to help his or her co-workers when they are overburdened. He or she isn't afraid to share knowledge, opinion or simply an extra pair of hands. One person's success reflects well on everyone in his or her workplace.

**Don't Gossip:** While you may be tempted to tell your cubicle neighbors what you heard about Suzy or Sam down in accounting, gossiping makes you look like a middle school student. If you know something that simply must be shared, tell someone who has nothing to do with your workplace, like your sister, brother or best friend.

**Try to Stay Positive:** Negativity at work brings everyone down and your boss will certainly not appreciate a drop in morale among his or her employees. Instead, if you think something can be improved, try to do something to make that happen.

**Don't Hide From Your Mistakes:** As hard as it may be, take ownership of your errors and do your best to correct them and make sure you don't make the same one twice. Never blame others, but set an example for those who were also responsible to do as you've done.

**Always Fight Fair:** It is inevitable that you will occasionally have disagreements with your co-workers, or even your boss. You may think that something should be done one way, while someone else will believe it should be done another. Don't let yourself lose control. No matter how upset you are or how strongly you believe you are right, screaming isn't allowed, nor is name calling or door slamming. And, it should go without saying that physical attacks should always be avoided, no matter what. Calmly explain your opinion and be ready to walk away if the other person can't be swayed or if he or she begins to lose control.

**Don't Lie:** Dishonestly never makes anyone look good, whether it's lying on one's resume or calling in sick. A true professional is upfront, so if you aren't qualified for the job, either don't apply for it or send in your application anyway and explain why you'd be perfect for the job in spite of it. Do not lie about being sick, if you need a day off take a personal or vacation day.

**Don't Air Your Dirty Laundry:** While confiding in a close friend at work is usually okay, sharing too much information with the entire office isn't. Be judicious about whom you talk to, particularly when it comes to discussing problems with your spouse or other family members. If you do decide to share personal information with your co-workers, make sure to do it away from where customers and clients can overhear you. Also, be mindful of what you share on social media! Potential employers use social media to screen employees, don't let an unflattering photo or militant post keep you from getting the job you deserve.

Modified from About.com article by Dawn Rosenberg McKay

# Federal Ethics

A dark blue, solid-colored shape that starts from the bottom-left corner and extends diagonally upwards to the right, covering the bottom half of the slide.

# Guiding Principles



[Assateague Lighthouse](#) image by Eric B Walker via flickr



# Responsible Stewardship

**“A PROBLEM IS A  
CHANCE FOR YOU TO  
DO YOUR BEST.”**

**DUKE ELLINGTON**

Give your best effort



Use equipment and  
supplies responsibly



Speak up

# Selfless Service



Non-public information



Gifts and Payments



Conflicts of Interest

# Scenario 1 - The Friendly Tour Guide

**You've been selected for an internship at a large refuge near a popular vacation destination -**

**CONGRATULATIONS!**



What do you say?



NOW what do you say?



# Scenario 2 -- Caught up in the moment

You've been selected for an internship with an  
FWS office  
near your college campus in a mid-sized city --

**CONGRATULATIONS!**



## Scenario 2 -- Caught up in the moment



## But, what if ... ?

- Your friend said “hold my beverage and/or vape pen” first ?
- You’re holding a sign that says Vote for “X” ?
- You’re wearing an article of clothing with the FWS logo?
- Your personal profile pic on social media has you performing work duties and/or wearing an article of clothing with the FWS logo?

# Scenario 3 - Uncle Donnie

You've been selected for an internship  
with a fish hatchery  
in your small home-town,

**CONGRATULATIONS!**



Image Credit: Linea Mallette

# What do you say?



[Photo Credit: Sam Stukel / SDGFP via Flickr](#)

# What if....

Later, you find out Uncle Donnie's company is planning to submit a bid for a construction contract with the hatchery....



[Image Credit](#) and [License](#) : by Marco Verch

# Things to Remember

- Your first duty is to the American public
- The law is the law
- Speak up
- Keep an open dialogue with your supervisor
- Be mindful of your actions -- they have consequences



# Questions?



# Setting the Stage for a Successful Internship

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ODU Conservation Leadership Minor with  
USFWS/DCR/ERP

# Agenda

- Professional Behavior
  - Representing yourself, faculty, ODU, and FWS/DCR/ERP
- Weekly Reports
- Benefits
  - Networking
  - Field Experience
- Expectations
  - Organizational policies on communication, use of equipment and safety
- Procedures
  - Conflicts
  - Disciplinary actions



# Remember

- You represent the faculty, ODU, the CL Minor, and the organization
- You are fully prepared for your internship
- You bring a great deal to the table
- **Do not have your parents call about anything!**



# Daily Behavior

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- Dress appropriately
- Arrive on time every day
- Stay off your cell phone
- Be engaged, ask questions, have a positive attitude
- **Leave your personal drama at the door**



# Daily Behavior

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- Use good judgment and ask when unsure
- Manage risks
- Use critical thinking and problem solving
- Do not expect hand-holding
- Work with you supervisor and faculty to work on your project
- Do not expect a “grading rubric” for assignments, take initiative and be a **leader!**



# Commitment

- Be fully committed to your internship
- You are expected to stay at your internship for the full 200-500 hours. Contact your faculty supervisor if you have concerns
- Paid employment (another job) comes in second behind your internship!



# Do Not Forget Your Paperwork

- Part of professional behavior is completing your internship assignments:
  - On time...
  - Being thorough with weekly reports, one or two lines does not cover a week...
  - Giving your internship supervisor a week or more to complete any documents needing signatures (e.g., hours log, reviewing video, etc.)



# Weekly Reports

Old Dominion University  
Department of Human Movement Sciences  
Conservation Leadership

## FIELDWORK WEEKLY REPORT

**Instructions:** This report should be completed at the end of each week (Friday 6pm local time) by the student intern. Student will send it to ODU faculty. Written concerns will be provided to the student intern from the Faculty Supervisor via e-mail, if necessary.

STUDENT INTERN: \_\_\_\_\_

SEMESTER:  Summer     Fall     Spring

REPORT NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ WEEK OF THIS REPORT (dates): \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL HOURS FOR THIS WEEK: \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL HOURS TO DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make sure to **TYPE** your comments below AND use **COMPLETE SENTENCES**.  
**Please send weekly via e-mail to your Faculty Supervisor.** *The boxes will expand as you type.*

# Benefits

- Networking

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- Possible future employment
- Never underestimate who you meet, who they know, etc.
- Think about it, “would by supervisor write me positive letter of reference...on any given day of my internship?”

- Field Experience

- May provide you with the extra to secure a job with USFWS, NPS, NFS, BLM, state parks, NGOs, etc.
- Cannot be taught from a book....teachable moments!



# Expectations

- USFWS/DCR/ERP Policies
  - Communication
    - Verbal, written and electronic communication
      - Do not communicate with supervisors as if you were texting a friend
      - Proper salutation, content, punctuation and grammar, signature
  - Use of equipment
    - Computers, vehicles
  - Safety
    - Risk Management



# Procedures

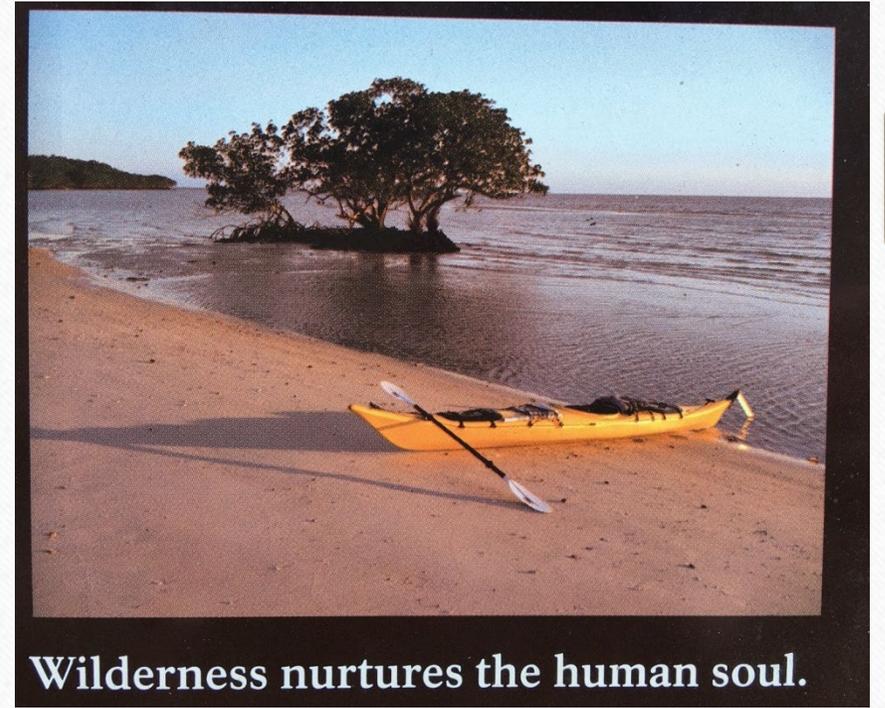
- Conflicts
  - How do you handle them?
  - Who?
  - What can you expect?
- Disciplinary actions



## At the end of your internship.....

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- Have a professional reference from the internship site
- Have job leads
- Have contact information from other professionals (beginning your professional network)
- Update your resume/CV and e-Portfolio to include your internship experience



**Wilderness nurtures the human soul.**

## **ODU Intern Orientation 2019**

### **Ethics Scenarios Handout**

#### **Scenario 1 – The Friendly Tour-Guide**

**Background: You've been selected for an internship at a large refuge near a popular vacation destination – congrats!**

- Your Job: analyze visitor traffic on the refuge and occasionally help to staff the visitor center
- Refuge may be considering expanding visitor areas, depending in part on the results of your analysis
- You will NOT be the final decision maker on this matter
- Over the months, you develop a friendly, professional relationship with a local tour-guide, Gina, who runs her own eco-tourism business and frequently brings groups to the refuge
- Gina offers to take you out for coffee near the end of your internship

Is it okay to accept Gina's offer?

What are the potential conflicts?

What would YOU do?

#### **Scenario 2 – Caught Up in the Moment**

**Background: You've been selected for an internship at an FWS office near your college campus -- congrats!**

- Your Job: develop promotional materials and novel communication strategies for sharing information on social media about the work of this FWS program with the public
- Your office hours are 12-4 Tuesday-Friday, and you telework a bit on nights and weekends around your class schedule
- In your personal time, you are politically active and volunteer often for causes you care about
- It's campaign season and your friends, who share your beliefs, invite you to a rally in support of someone running for local office with a controversial platform
- Things at the rally get heated, the media shows up, and one of your friends snaps a selfie of the group and posts it to one or more social media apps

What do you do?

**Now, what if.....**

Your friend said "hold my beverage/vape pen" first?

You are holding a sign that clearly states "Vote for "Candidate"?"

You happen to be wearing an article of clothing with the FWS logo on it?

Your personal profile pic on social media shows you engaged in work for FWS and/or you are wearing an article of clothing with the FWS logo on it?

**Scenario Three – Uncle Donnie**

**Background: You've been selected for an internship at a fish hatchery in your small home-town – congrats!**

- Your Job: biological technician duties
- Your awesome, engaging supervisor gives you the chance to sit in on some of the hatchery's operations meetings, which you gladly accept
- The hatchery has received a large maintenance and construction allotment to renovate its infrastructure, build new facilities, and make improvements at the hatchery
- Your uncle by marriage, Donnie, owns a small construction company that deals primarily with federal business contracts
- You have no input into the decision making and selection process for any hatchery contracts
- During a family function, outside of work hours, Donnie starts asking you questions about your internship and plans to expand the hatchery

Is there a potential conflict of interest here?

What do you say to Donnie?

What do you do next?