

MS 647 Staff Responsibilities and Conduct

Effective Date: July 21, 2023

Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources

Supersedes: 02/15/2023; 05/12/22; 03/01/13; Attachment A to MS 652, IPS 2-10 *Texting While Driving*

Issuance Memo (03/01/2013)

Issuance Memo (05/12/2022)

Issuance Memo (02/15/2023)

Issuance Memo (07/21/2023)

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1.0 Purpose

Peace Corps staff members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that furthers the three goals of the Peace Corps and reflects the high public trust placed in the Peace Corps. The purpose of this Manual Section is to provide staff with a guide regarding the legal and other issues and general rules which affect employee responsibilities and conduct. Employees should be aware of their legal responsibilities so as to comply with conduct requirements for federal employees. This Manual Section applies to all Peace Corps employees and personal services contractors.

2.0 References

- (a) Sections 7(a) and 7(c) of the Peace Corps Act, as amended.
- (b) 3 U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 4130 et seq.
- (c) 5 CFR Part 734 Political Activities of Federal Employees.

- (d) 5 CFR Part 735 Employee Responsibilities and Conduct.
- (e) 5 U.S.C. 2302 Prohibited personnel practices.

3.0 Core Expectations for all Peace Corps Staff Worldwide

As members of the Peace Corps community, all staff are responsible for sustaining the highest ethical standards of the Peace Corps and will abide by the following commitments.

With integrity, and a shared commitment to equity and intercultural understanding, I will:

1. Represent and promote the Peace Corps' mission and goals with humility and cultural sensitivity.
2. Foster an environment that enables a safe, meaningful, and productive experience for Peace Corps Volunteers, including Peace Corps Response Volunteers, Trainees, staff, community members, and partners.
3. Engage with Peace Corps community members in a spirit of mutual respect, cooperation, and learning.
4. Strengthen a culture of sustained performance improvement by collecting, analyzing, and sharing information for effective decision-making.
5. Exercise the highest degree of professional and ethical standards and maintain a healthy balance between professional and personal life.
6. Honor diversity, advance equity, champion inclusion, and treat every human being with dignity and respect.
7. Adapt in a timely manner as knowledge evolves and needs and conditions shift.
8. Collaborate with staff, Volunteers, Trainees, and community partners to create an atmosphere of open communication, accountability, belonging, and trust.
9. Uphold the Peace Corps' management and ethical stewardship of human, material, and financial resources in ways that are efficient, cost-effective, socially and environmentally sustainable, and provide for a healthy, safe, and secure work environment.
10. Pursue excellence and perform duties with diligence and integrity within the framework of the Peace Corps' policies, procedures, guidance, and rules.

4.0 Policy

Peace Corps staff members are expected to maintain high standards of personal integrity, conduct, and effectiveness and to comply with the specific rules and regulations of the Peace

Corps Manual and other authorities. In adhering to those professional standards, staff shall not discriminate against any individual in connection with their work with the Peace Corps on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), national origin, age, disability, or other bases as provided for under U.S. federal law and the non-discrimination laws of their host country.

5.0 Employee Conduct that may Constitute Grounds for Disciplinary or Separation Action by the Agency

To maintain the efficiency of the Service, the following provisions on employee misconduct, including notoriously disgraceful conduct, shall apply to all domestic employees. (For overseas employees, conduct that may constitute grounds for disciplinary or separation action by the agency is set forth in subsection 6.1 of MS 641 *Standards of Conduct for Peace Corps Employees*.) Below, is a non-all-inclusive list of conduct that may constitute grounds for the agency taking disciplinary or separation action against domestic employees:

- (1) Misconduct of applicants in prior employment;
- (2) Misconduct, either in itself or as a result of attendant circumstances, impeding or preventing the performance of duties, or conduct contrary to the customs, mores, or laws of the local community, as communicated to employees by the agency or Post in writing to the extent practicable;
- (3) Criminal, dishonest, or notoriously disgraceful conduct. Notoriously disgraceful conduct is that conduct which, were it to become widely known, would embarrass, discredit, or subject to opprobrium the perpetrator, the Foreign Service, and the United States. Examples of such conduct include but are not limited to the frequenting of prostitutes, spousal abuse, neglect or abuse of children, or making use of one's position or immunity to profit or to provide favor to another or to create the impression of gaining or giving improper favor. Discipline of an employee, including separation for cause, is warranted when the potential for opprobrium or contempt should the conduct become public knowledge could be reasonably expected to affect adversely the person's ability to perform their job or the agency's ability to carry out its responsibilities;
- (4) An intentional and material false statement, deception, or fraud in the examination or appointment process in response to a proper inquiry;
- (5) Refusal to furnish testimony or information to proper authority in response to specific and relevant inquiry concerning an individual's job performance, conduct, or such other matters as:
 - (a) Qualifications for the position, function, or service under consideration or held;
 - (b) Qualification for a security clearance;
- (6) Repeated or habitual use to excess of intoxicating beverages affecting the ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of the employee's position;
- (7) Trafficking in or abuse of narcotics, drugs, or any substance listed under the Controlled Substance Act (21 U.S.C. 812) and/or trafficking in or abuse of narcotics, drugs, or other

controlled substance in violation of the law of the country or jurisdiction in which the individual was or is located at the time of the offense;

- (8) Reasonable doubt as to the loyalty to the U.S. Government of the individual involved;
- (9) Conduct which furnishes substantial reason to believe that the individual may be or is being subject to coercion, improper influence, or pressure which is reasonably likely to cause the individual to act contrary to the national security or foreign relations of the United States;
- (10) Conduct which clearly shows poor judgment or lack of discretion which may reasonably affect an individual or the agency's ability to carry out its responsibilities or mission;
- (11) Conduct by a senior official that demonstrates unsatisfactory leadership in relation to a security incident; or
- (12) Misconduct or unsatisfactory performance that significantly contributes to the serious injury, loss of life, or significant destruction of property, or the serious breach of security in relation to a security incident.

6.0 Staff Responsibilities and Conduct Issues Generally

Staff members of the Peace Corps are responsible for behaving in a way that brings credit upon the Federal Government and the Peace Corps, that contributes to the efficiency of the government, and that best realizes the three goals of the Peace Corps. Such behavior or conduct includes, among other requirements, observing rules and obligations set forth in the Peace Corps Manual and other authorities—as applicable to a particular employee—and otherwise complying with basic on-the-job rules. The outline in subsections 6.1 and 6.2 below is not meant to be exhaustive but is intended to serve as a guide regarding the responsibilities and conduct of staff in effectuating the Peace Corps' mission.

6.1 Peace Corps and Other Regulations

Peace Corps staff members are responsible, among other obligations, for conducting themselves in accordance with the following:

6.1.1 Alcohol Use. See MS 646 *Staff Alcohol Use* and MS 658 *Peace Corps Employee Assistance Program*.

6.1.2 Communications. See MS 320 *Peace Corps Publicity in the United States and Overseas*.

6.1.3 Confidentiality. See MS 269 *HIPAA Administration*, MS 271 *Confidentiality Protection*, and MS 897 *Privacy Act Administration*.

6.1.4 Discrimination. See MS 653 *Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Employment*.

6.1.5 Ethical Conduct. See MS 641 *Standards of Conduct for Peace Corps Employees*, 5 CFR Part 2635.

- 6.1.6 *Fraternization.*** See MS 644 *Fraternization*.
- 6.1.7 *Government Vehicle Use.*** See MS 522 *Motor Vehicle Use and Insurance*; MS 523 *Motorcycles and Bicycles*; 41 CFR §301-10.201; 31 U.S.C. 638a(c)(2).
- 6.1.8 *Harassment.*** See MS 645 *Anti-Harassment Program*.
- 6.1.9 *Information Technology Use.*** See MS 542 *Information Security Program*.
- 6.1.10 *Labor-Management Relations.*** See MS 659 *Direct Hire Labor-Management Relations*.
- 6.1.11 *Personal Use of Government Equipment.*** See MS 511 *Personal Property Management*; MS 547 *Use of Government Technology Services and Equipment*.
- 6.1.12 *Political Activity.*** See the Hatch Act, 5 U.S.C. 7321-7326 and 5 CFR Part 734.
- 6.1.13 *Texting While Driving.*** See Executive Order 13513, 74 FR 51225 (10/1/09).
- 6.1.14 *Time and Attendance Requirements.*** See MS 630 *Direct Hire Hours of Duty*, MS 632 *Direct Hire Telework Program*, MS 635 *Absence and Leave*, and MS 636 *Employee Volunteer Program*.
- 6.1.15 *Duties of Peace Corps Staff.*** See MS 861 *Office of Inspector General*.

6.2 Basic On-The-Job Rules

Peace Corps staff members are responsible, among other obligations, for the following:

- 6.2.1** Reporting to work on time and ready, willing, and able to perform the duties of their position. This means reporting for duty free from any effects of alcohol and/or drugs that may impair job performance or conduct; physically and mentally capable of performing job requirements. See MS 646 *Staff Alcohol Use* and MS 658 *Peace Corps Employee Assistance Program*.
- 6.2.2** Responding as soon as practicable to, and fully complying with, directions and instructions received from their supervisor or other management officials.
- 6.2.3** Exercising courtesy and respect in dealing with fellow employees, supervisors, contract personnel and the public.
- 6.2.4** Maintaining a clean and neat personal appearance, in clothing appropriate to their staff role, during working hours.
- 6.2.5** Safeguarding and handling appropriately all sensitive agency information, including but not limited to classified national security information and other protected information (such as PII and medically confidential information), to prevent unauthorized disclosure consistent with applicable law and policy.

6.2.6 Conserving, protecting, and ensuring appropriate use of Peace Corps resources, time, information, and personnel (both employees and contractors).

6.2.7 Seeking advice and guidance as needed through their supervisory chain concerning their responsibilities under this and other policies governing employee conduct. Guidance may also be sought through the Employee and Labor Relations Manager (ELRM) in the Office of Human Resources or the Designated Agency Ethics Official in the Office of the General Counsel.

6.2.8 Abstaining from, either for or without compensation, teaching, lecturing, or writing for the purpose of the preparation of a person or class of persons for an examination of the Office of Personnel Management or Board of Examiners for the Foreign Service that depends on information obtained as a result of the employee's Government employment. 5 CFR §735.202.

6.2.9 Avoiding criminal, infamous, dishonest, immoral, or notoriously disgraceful conduct, or other conduct prejudicial to the Government. 5 CFR §735.203.

6.2.10 Reporting fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, misconduct, and other wrongdoing to the Office of Inspector General. See MS 861 *Office of Inspector General*.

6.2.11 Observing and abiding by all laws, rules, regulations and other authoritative policies and guidance.

7.0 Supervisors and Management Officials

In addition to the responsibilities set forth generally in subsections 6.1 and 6.2 above, staff with personnel authority — managers and supervisors — and all staff making recommendations regarding personnel actions are charged with assuring that the exercise of such authority and the making of such recommendations are free from prohibited personnel practices under 5 U.S.C. 2302.

8.0 Failure to Comply with Staff Responsibilities and Conduct

Failure to comply with the rules and regulations set forth in 6.1 and 6.2 above, or with other rules and regulations applicable to Peace Corps employees and contractors, may result in disciplinary action under MS 652 *Corrective and Adverse Actions* or under other authorities.

9.0 Effective Date

This Manual Section shall become effective upon the date of issuance.