



**Food Safety and Inspection Service**  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# **Professionalism and Ethics**

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## Objectives

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### **To demonstrate mastery of Professionalism and Government Ethics, at the end of this module you should be able to:**

- Define “professionalism”- what does it look like?
- Define how professionalism relates to and impacts food safety and biosecurity.
- Identify appropriate and inappropriate behavior and explain how they affect employees, industry officials, consumers, and others.
- Define the Agency’s expectations and the role each employee has in supporting the Agency in achieving its public health mission.
- Identify the 14 Principles of Ethical Conduct in public service and your annual responsibility to complete the ethics training.

## What is Professionalism?

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**Skill**



**Competence**



**Ethics**



**Courtesy**

# How have You Demonstrated Professionalism?



## Examples of Professional Behavior



**Wearing the appropriate attire**



**Practicing good communication skills**



**Demonstrating emotional intelligence**



**Applying a working knowledge of the regulations**



**Consistently implementing Agency policy**



**Treating others with respect**

## Why is it Important to be Professional?

- To maintain Agency standards
- To retain the confidence of the public
- You represent the Agency in the eyes of the public

$$\text{TRUST} = \frac{\text{CONSISTENCY}}{\text{TIME}}$$


## What are Examples of Unethical Conduct?

**Working in an establishment where immediate family members are employed**

**Accepting gifts or engaging in business or financial dealings with regulated establishments or their employees**

**Engaging in outside employment or activities, including speaking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with official government duties and responsibilities**

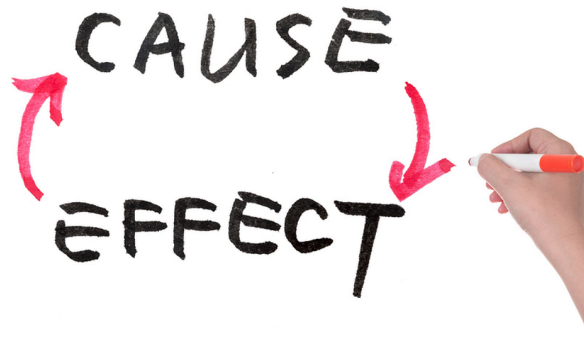
**Making unauthorized commitments or promises that involve binding the government**

**Using public office for private gain**

**Receiving anything of value given with the intent to influence the performance of official duties**

## What are Consequences of Unethical Conduct?

- Caution or Warning
- Official Letter of Reprimand
- Suspension without Pay
- Demotion
- Removal
- Non-pay Absence Status



## Ethics and the HATCH Act

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### What is the purpose of the HATCH Act?

*"...to ensure that federal programs are administered in a nonpartisan fashion, to protect federal employees from political coercion in the workplace, and to ensure that federal employees are advanced based on merit and not based on political affiliation."*

**Review the following document for more information on when the use of social media and email could violate the Hatch Act.**

[Social Media and Email FAQs.pdf \(osc.gov\)](#)

## The HATCH Act Illustrated and Explained

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**Click on the play button below to watch a video about how the HATCH Act impacts you at FSIS.**

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## 14 Principles of Ethical Conduct

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Review the **14 Principles of Ethical Conduct** listed in the info button and then answer the question below:



**How can you demonstrate these competencies as you perform your duties?**



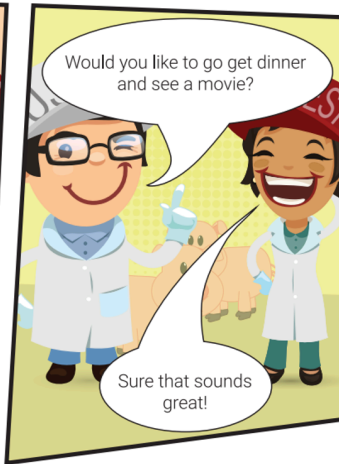
# Scenarios

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Consider this...



## SCENARIO A ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS



An FSIS employee has been seeing an establishment employee outside of work and this has evolved into a romantic relationship.



## Is this Behavior Professional? Why or Why Not?

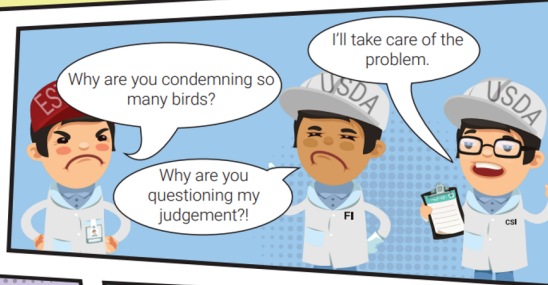
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- How does this behavior compare to the definition of professionalism?
- What is the potential impact for food safety/bio-security?
- What impact does it have on the Agency's credibility?
- What might be the outcome of this situation?
- How could you have prevented or avoided this behavior?
- How would you demonstrate your professionalism in this situation?

## SCENARIO B

# ATTITUDE, INITIATIVE, AND COMMUNICATIONS

The FSIS Food Inspector is on the poultry line when the Establishment Evisceration Supervisor walks up. The Establishment Evisceration Supervisor starts asking questions of the Food Inspector in a harsh manner. The Food Inspector slams the red button and stops the line as an argument ensues. At this point, the CSI comes upon the situation and approaches the two individuals...



The CSI promptly reports the incident to the IIC.

## Which Inspector was Professional? Why or Why Not?

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- Which one of the FSIS inspectors exhibited professionalism? Why?
- How does this behavior compare to the definition of Professionalism?
- What is potential impact for food safety/bio-security?
- What impact does it have on the Agency's credibility?
- What might be the outcome if the food inspector had not taken action?
- How could this behavior be prevented or avoided?
- How would you demonstrate your professionalism in this situation if you were the food inspector in this scenario?

## **What is Your “Personal Action Plan?”**

**Consider what things YOU plan to do to provide a positive and professional image of the USDA.**

## Ensuring Professionalism in the Workplace

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### What can you do to ensure professionalism in the workplace?

- Consistently follow Agency policy to carry out your responsibilities
- Use the 14 Principles of Ethical Conduct
- Maintain high levels of skill, competency, ethics, and courtesy
- If you ever have any questions on or about the permissibility of a specific action, you should first email your ethics advisor at: [Ethics-FoodSafety@usda.gov](mailto:Ethics-FoodSafety@usda.gov)

## Summary

**Now that you've reached the end of this module, please review the objectives covered in the beginning of this section:**

- Define “professionalism”- what does it look like?
- Define how professionalism relates to and impacts, food safety and biosecurity.
- Identify appropriate and inappropriate behavior and explain how they affect employees, industry officials, consumers and others.
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## Professionalism Resources

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- [FSIS Directive 4735.3 Employee Responsibilities and Conduct | Food Safety and Inspection Service \(usda.gov\)](#)
- [FSIS Directive 4735.9 Office of Field Operations Assignment Restrictions and Rules on Gifts from Regulated Industry | Food Safety and Inspection Service \(usda.gov\)](#)
- [Social Media and Email FAQs.pdf \(osc.gov\)](#)
- [14 Principles of Ethical Conduct \(usda.gov\)](#)
- [Form USDA OE-101 REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF OUTSIDE ACTIVITY](#)
- [Office of Ethics | USDA](#)





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# ANY ETHICS QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about  
ethical issues, please feel free to  
contact the USDA FSIS ethics advisor  
at:

**[Ethics-FoodSafety@usda.gov](mailto:Ethics-FoodSafety@usda.gov)**





**This concludes the  
Professionalism and Ethics  
training module.**