

This holiday season, please keep in mind the Louisiana Code of Governmental Ethics and the laws concerning food and drink—and gifts.

According to La. R.S. 42:

Generally, a public employee may not

- Receive anything other than his normal salary and benefits because of his position as a public employee (La. R.S. 42:1111A(1))
- Accept or solicit anything, directly or indirectly, from a company or individual that has a business or contractual relationship with his agency, including vendors and contractors (La. R.S. 42:1115A(1))
- Accept or solicit anything, directly or indirectly, from a company or an individual that is regulated by his agency (La. R.S. 42:1115B(1))
- Accept or solicit anything, directly or indirectly, from a company or individual that has an economic interest in the performance of the employee's public job duties (La. R.S. 42:1115B(2))

Food and Drink Regulations

The Code of Ethics does not prohibit a public employee from accepting complimentary food and drink when the public employee is the personal guest of the giver. Therefore, if a company or an individual is providing food and drink, a representative of that company or the individual providing the food or drink must be physically present when the food or drink is consumed. Additionally, the public employee may not be given more than \$56 in food and/or drink at a single meal or event.

Gifts

Other than food and drink, any other type of gift or donation is generally prohibited. A limited exception to this general rule is for promotional items that have no substantial resale value. In order to qualify, these items must be permanently imprinted with a company or organization's name or logo and must be of very minor value (such as t-shirts, pens, hats, or cups imprinted with the logo). Items such as money, gift cards, tickets, and other gifts are strictly prohibited.