

Code of Conduct

Policy · US · Updated 2026-07-23 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A code of conduct is the single document that sets out how everyone in a business is expected to behave — with each other, with customers, and with the company's money, property, and information. It is the umbrella over your other policies: shorter than any of them, pointing to all of them.

Its value shows at the edges: the gray-area gift from a supplier, the manager hiring a relative, the argument that spills onto a customer's premises. People rarely need a code for the obvious cases — they need it for the ones where reasonable people might guess differently, and where "nobody told me" would otherwise be true.

This template covers the core standards: respect and fair treatment, conflicts of interest, gifts and business ethics, company property and information, and how to raise a concern without fear of retaliation.

Purpose and scope

This code applies to everyone who works for or represents [Your company] — employees, officers, and, where their contracts say so, contractors and agency staff. It applies at our premises, at client sites, when traveling on business, at work events, and online when you are identifiable with the company.

This code is a statement of standards, not a contract. It does not create a contract of employment, express or implied, and it does not change the at-will nature of employment at [Your company]: either you or the company may end the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or notice, except where the law provides otherwise. Nothing in this code limits rights protected by law, including the right to discuss wages and working conditions with coworkers.

Our standards

Three tests cover most situations this code cannot predict. Is it legal? Is it honest? Would you be comfortable if it were described, accurately, to a customer or a colleague? If any answer is no — or if you are not sure — stop and ask [manager/named role] before acting.

Managers carry the standards twice over: they follow the code and they enforce it, evenly. A rule applied only to some people is worse than no rule, because it converts a conduct problem into a fairness problem.

Respect and fair treatment

- Treat colleagues, customers, and suppliers with courtesy and professionalism, whatever the pressure of the day.
- Discrimination and harassment based on a protected characteristic are prohibited — the EEO policy and anti-harassment policy set out the full rules and every reporting route.
- Employment decisions — hiring, assignments, promotion, discipline — are made on merit and business need, never on personal characteristics or personal relationships.
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Violence, threats, and intimidation have no place at work; report any threat to [name/role] immediately, and call emergency services first if anyone is in danger.

- Alcohol and drugs at work are governed by the drug and alcohol policy — impairment at work is a conduct issue wherever it appears.

Conflicts of interest

- Disclose to [name/role] any outside interest that could compete with [Your company] or bias your judgment: a second job with a competitor or supplier, a financial stake in one, or a family member in either.
- Do not take part in hiring, supervising, or setting pay for a relative or romantic partner — hand the decision to [name/role].
- Do not use company time, equipment, information, or your position for personal gain or a side business.
- Disclosure usually resolves a conflict; concealment always compounds it. When in doubt, disclose — most disclosed conflicts are managed in minutes.

Gifts, hospitality and business ethics

Modest, occasional gifts and hospitality are a normal part of business. Anything above [amount], anything in cash or its equivalent, and anything offered around a live purchasing decision should be declined or cleared with [name/role] first and recorded in the [gifts register]. Never offer or accept anything intended to improperly influence a decision — and anything involving a government official, US or foreign, at any value, needs advance approval under the anti-bribery policy.

Deal honestly with customers and suppliers: no false claims, no misleading records, no commitments we cannot keep. Financial records, timesheets, and expense claims are accurate or they are misconduct.

Company property, information and communications

- Use company money, equipment, and time for company purposes; reasonable personal use of [phones/internet] is set out in the IT acceptable use policy.
- Protect confidential business information — pricing, customer lists, plans — and the personal data of customers and colleagues, during and after your employment, in line with our policies and the law.
- Confidentiality never restricts what the law protects: discussing your own pay and working conditions, reporting suspected lawbreaking to a government agency, or cooperating with an investigation.
- On social media, follow the social media policy: be clear opinions are your own, and never share confidential information — the code applies online whenever you are identifiable with [Your company].

Speaking up and non-retaliation

If you see conduct that may break this code or the law, report it — to your manager, to [named role], or through [reporting channel] if you prefer to go around your manager. You do not need to be certain, and you do not need to investigate first; a good-faith report of an honest concern is always the right call.

Retaliation against anyone who raises a concern in good faith or takes part in an investigation is itself a violation of this code and, in many cases, of federal and state law. Report suspected retaliation through any channel above; the whistleblower policy sets out the full protections.

Violations, records and review

Suspected violations are looked into promptly and as confidentially as a fair process allows, and are handled under the [progressive discipline policy] — outcomes range from coaching to termination depending on the seriousness. We follow the same process whoever is involved.

Signed acknowledgments and training records are kept in [system/location]. This code is reviewed [frequency, e.g. annually] and after any significant incident. Owner: [name/role]. Next review: [date].

How to use this template

1. Read this code against your other policies first — it should point to them, not contradict them, and every cross-reference should name a document you actually have.
2. Localize the gray areas: set the gift threshold, name the reporting channels, and put real names against [bracketed roles].
3. Check the wording against the NLRA caution — strike any rule that could be read to ban employees discussing pay or working conditions.
4. Keep it short enough to read at onboarding in one sitting; the detail belongs in the underlying policies.
5. Collect a signed acknowledgment at hire and after each revision, and keep them.
6. Walk managers through the speak-up and non-retaliation sections — the code lives or dies on what happens the first time someone uses them.

Official guidance

- › [EEOC — Harassment](#)
- › [NLRB — Employee rights](#)

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/code-of-conduct-us> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.