Sometimes there may be situations where your duties as a public officer conflict – or may be seen to conflict – with your personal interests.

# Know the basics

A conflict of interest exists when a reasonable person might perceive that your personal interests could be favoured over your public duties. Personal interests are things like your family, friends, business interests and secondary employment. Accepting gifts or hospitality may also present a conflict of interest.

There are 3 types of conflicts of interest:

* **Actual**: A conflict happening now
* **Potential:** A personal interest that may present a conflict later
* **Perceived:** A reasonable third party might think your personal interests could improperly influence your decisions now or in the future – whether this is the case or not

# Why conflicts of interest matter

You are expected to carry out your role as a public officer with integrity and without bias. Identifying, declaring and managing conflicts of interest are essential to maintain public trust, ensure fair decision making and safeguard public resources.

Not acting on conflicts of interest could be a breach of your authority’s code of conduct. Deliberately concealing or understating conflicts could be serious misconduct or corruption.

# Identify and declare

**You** are primarily responsible for identifying and declaring conflicts of interest.

Your authority’s code of conduct or conflicts of interest policy and procedures may include tools to help you identify conflicts. The legislation you work under may set out how conflicts of interest are to be identified and dealt with.

If you are unsure, err on the side of openness by disclosing and discussing situations with your manager or others in your authority. They can help you decide if these situations are or could be conflicts of interest.

# Manage

Once you declare a conflict of interest your manager can support and guide you through the process of managing it. This involves identifying the risks and putting strategies in place.

**You** are actively involved in managing your conflict of interest. This includes informing your manager of changes in your situation (such as a potential conflict becoming an actual conflict) that may need the conflict to be managed differently.

# 5 quick tips

* Know and follow the rules of your authority such as its code of conduct and conflicts of interest policy and procedures.
* Declare a conflict of interest in writing as soon as you become aware of it.
* Disclose the full details of the conflict so it can be assessed and managed.
* Seek advice from your manager or human resources if you are unsure.
* Watch the video [Anything to Declare?](https://www.wa.gov.au/government/multi-step-guides/conflicts-of-interest/education-resources)

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