
City of Minneapolis
Policy
on
Gifts Between Employees

Applies to: Employees and volunteers of City Council Departments and elected officials
Synopsis: The City of Minneapolis Gifts Between Employees Policy is adopted to provide guidance regarding the giving and receiving of gifts between employees.

History: Council Approval Date: Last Revision Date:

Links to Related Regulations:

Administering Department: Office of the City Attorney

Contact: Ethics Officer Susan Trammell Phone: 612-673-3230

I. Purpose and Scope of Policy

- A.** Purpose: This policy exists to provide guidance regarding the giving and receiving of gifts between employees. The purpose of these rules is to protect employees from feeling coerced into giving gifts, while permitting some limited, voluntary social exchanges between employees.
- B.** Scope: The following policy sets limits on gifts between employees, particularly gifts to supervisors.

II. Definitions

Gift means money, real or personal property, a service, a loan, a forbearance or forgiveness of indebtedness, or a promise of future employment, that is given and received without the giver receiving consideration of equal or greater value in return. Gift does not include a greeting card, note, or letter.

Supervisor means an employee whose official responsibilities include directing or evaluating the subordinate's official duties, or those of any other supervisor of the subordinate. It includes an employee's direct supervisor and those up the chain of command.

Employee means any person hired and paid under the salary authority of the City Council and includes elected officials. Employee also includes volunteers and interns, paid and unpaid.

Major Life event means special infrequent events, such as a marriage, a birth of a child, graduation, major illness, retirement, or new job.

Subordinate means an employee under the authority, control, administrative direction or within the chain of command of the supervisor.

III. General Conditions

- A. All Gifts:** Gifts should not compromise, or appear to compromise, the ability to make objective and fair decisions. Even though acceptance of a gift may be permitted by this policy, it is sometimes advisable and prudent for an employee to decline a gift or refrain from giving a gift.
- B. Gifts to supervisors:** An employee shall not give a gift to a supervisor and a supervisor shall not accept a gift from a subordinate, unless the gift is:
1. For a major life event, including a gift given by a group of employees financed by voluntary contributions.
 2. Food shared in the office.
 3. Personal hospitality at one's home or a gift to a host or hostess.
 4. A gift given for a traditional occasion such as a holiday or a birthday as long as the gift is not cash and is worth \$25.00 or less.
 5. A gift given because of a family or personal relationship between the employees that would justify the gift.
 6. Sick leave transferred as part of the sick leave transfer program.
- C. Gifts to subordinates:** Supervisors may give gifts to subordinates. Supervisors should use prudence when deciding to give a gift to a subordinate.
- D. Solicitation of employees for gifts:**
1. A recommended contribution amount may be stated, but the recommendation must also indicate that employees are free to contribute less or nothing at all.
 2. Supervisors may organize a collection of donations for a gift but may not conduct face-to-face solicitations of gifts or contributions to a gift from their subordinates – even if the gift is for another subordinate employee.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

- A. Ethics Officer**
1. The Ethics Officer is responsible for answering inquiries related to employee receipt of gifts.
 2. The Ethics Officer is responsible for working with Departments to resolve inquiries and complaints related to employee receipt of gifts.
 3. The Ethics Officer is responsible for providing inquiry and complaint updates to the Ethical Practices Board.
- B. Departments**
1. Departments are responsible for distributing this policy to their employees.
 2. Departments are responsible for investigating and taking appropriate action on complaints related to employee receipt of gifts.
- C. Employees:**
1. Employees are responsible for using good judgment in giving and receiving of gifts.
 2. Employees should decline a gift that would compromise, or appear to compromise, the employee's ability to make objective and fair decisions.