

# OPERATIONAL INSTRUCTION

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**Subject:** ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS, REWARDS, PRIZES, OR INDUCEMENTS

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The State Supply Commission has written to the Commissioner about the need to remind all public sector employees of the guidelines relating to the acceptance of gifts, rewards, prizes or inducements from suppliers or potential suppliers.

**Ethical Standards in Government Buying** expressly prohibits the acceptance of gifts, prizes or other inducements (other than items of negligible value such as pens, calendars and diaries) which could be perceived as influencing buying decisions. Public sector employees should be aware of existing guidelines on this issue. For example, the Public Sector Code of Ethics states:

*“Public sector employees shall not receive any fee, favour, reward, gratuity or remuneration in connection with their official duties which may be perceived as a conflict of interest with, or which may compromise, the performance of their public duties.”*

In cases where gifts have been received by public sector employees by virtue of their employment, they are to be declared to their employing organisation. In most cases, the simple appearance of a conflict of interest - substantiated or not - is sufficient to compromise the purchasing process.

Items which fall within the area of gifts, prizes or inducements (include, but are not limited to):

- paid travel to conferences or conventions;
- contest prizes;
- free hospitality/entrance to sporting or cultural events;
- “specially” discounted products.

A **Buyer Alert** will be issued and distributed to purchasing officers on this matter. Further information on this subject may be obtained from the State Supply Commission or the Office of the Public Sector Standards Commission.

Andrew Holton  
**MANAGER**  
**AUDIT AND ACCOUNTABILITY**