

# **IRVINE RANCH WATER DISTRICT**

## **PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

### **POLICY NO. 48 – BUSINESS CONDUCT STANDARDS**

#### **1. General Policy**

The Irvine Ranch Water District is committed to upholding the highest ethical standards in all business and professional operations and relationships. All employees and public officials must carry out the mission of the District with the highest level of business ethics and integrity in order to create and maintain credibility and ensure the public trust.

#### **2. Purpose of Policy**

This policy sets forth the minimum ethical standards to be followed by the District's employees and public officials. The objective of this policy is to heighten awareness of ethics and values, provide guidance for dealing with ethical issues, and improve ethical decision-making.

For the purposes of this policy, "Employee" means any full-time, part-time, regular, temporary or contracted staff employed by the District. "Public official" means any publicly elected Board of Director or Board-appointed Committee Member or any other non-employee who acts as a representative of the District.

#### **3. Standards of Behavior**

##### **A. General Employee and Public Official Responsibilities**

The proper operation of the District requires that decisions and policies be made in the proper channels of governmental structure, that the employment relationship or holding of a public office not be used for personal gain, and that all individuals associated with the District remain impartial and act responsibly toward the public. It is the policy of the District that employees and public officials maintain the highest standard of personal honesty and fairness in carrying out their duties and abide by all applicable laws and District policies regulating their conduct. District employees and public officials have a special relationship of trust with the public. In the arena of public trust, perception is reality. Employees and public officials must work to avoid any appearance of impropriety that will erode the public trust.

##### **B. Employee Responsibilities**

It is the District's goal that employees, customers, and the public in general, be treated fairly and with respect. Individually, every District employee is responsible for using good judgement and discretion in his or her business and personal conduct while at work or representing the District outside of the work environment. Employees are expected to treat each other, District customers, and

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the public with courtesy and professionalism at all times. Employees are required to abide by all District policies.

### **C. Public Officials Responsibilities**

#### **1. Proper Use and Safeguarding of District Property and Resources**

Except as specifically authorized, a public official will not use or permit the use of District-owned vehicles, equipment, telephones, materials or property for personal convenience or profit or require a District employee to perform services for personal convenience or profit.

#### **2. Use of Confidential Information**

A public official may not disclose confidential information that has been received for or during a closed session meeting or that is protected by attorney/client privilege unless authorized by the Board of Directors or required under the California Public Records Act.

#### **3. Soliciting Political Contributions**

Public officials are prohibited from soliciting political funds or contributions at District facilities or from District employees. A public official will not accept, solicit or direct a political contribution from District vendors or consultants who have a material financial interest in a contract or other matter while that contract or other matter is pending before the District. A public official will not use the District's identity in any solicitation for political contributions contrary to state or federal law.

#### **4. Board-General Manager Relationship**

The Board of Directors sets the policy for the District. The General Manager has full charge and control of the construction, maintenance and operation of the operating and other systems of the District, including the power and authority to employ and discharge employees, to prescribe the duties of employees, and to fix and alter the compensation of employees, consistent with Board-approved District policies and the provisions of law.

The General Manager serves at the pleasure of the Board. The Board provides policy direction and instructions to the General Manager on matters within the authority of the Board during duly-convened Board and Committee meetings. Board members will deal with matters within the authority of the General Manager through the General Manager and not through other employees. Board members may request non-confidential, factual information regarding District operations from District employees. Board members shall not make requests directly to District employees to undertake analyses, perform other work assignments or change the priority of work assignments.

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**5. Incompatible Offices**

Public officials appointed, elected, or employed in a public office or by another public entity or organization, the duties of which may require action contradictory or inconsistent with the Board action, will recuse themselves from participating in any discussion and/or actions related to a specific item or will resign from the conflicting position or the IRWD Board of Directors.

**6. Public Officials Compensation and Expense Reimbursement**

- a. Public officials will be compensated at the rate determined by the Board consistent with applicable statutes and approval by the Board for attendance at Board meetings, Committee meetings and for travel days to and from any conference, meeting or other event where service is rendered as a public official. Such compensation will not be paid for more than a total of ten days in any calendar month. Such compensation will be provided in addition to any reimbursement for meals, lodging and travel expenses incurred in attending any conference, meeting or approved event.
- b. All travel and conference expenses must comply with the Business Expense Reimbursement, Travel, Meeting Compensation and Representation policy, which can be found at s:\District Policies\Finance\Expense Policy.doc.

**4. Reporting Suspected Improper Activities**

**A. Violation of the Business Conduct Standards Policy**

A perceived violation of this policy by an employee should be reported to the General Manager for investigation. A perceived violation of this policy by a public official should be referred to the President of the Board or to the full Board for investigation.

No employee or public official will use or attempt to use any position or official authority or influence for the purpose of preventing any person from acting in good faith to report any suspected violation of any District policy.

**B. Protection of “Whistle-Blowers”**

No employee or public official will use or threaten to use any position or official authority or influence to effect any action as a reprisal against an employee or public official who reports any information regarding suspected violations of the District’s Business Conduct Standards or other related policies.

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**5. Related Policies**

The District has several policies that address various subjects involving business ethics and conduct. Employees and elected officials should make sure they are familiar with and comply with the ethical components of all District policies including but not limited to:

- A. General Policies/EEO Commitment (Policy 2)
- B. Violence in the Workplace Policy (Policy 4)
- C. Hiring Policy (Policy 6)
- D. Honesty and Integrity Policy (Policy 28)
- E. Harassment Policy (Policy 29)
- F. Americans with Disabilities Act Policy (Policy 40)
- G. Conflict of Interest Policy (Policy 45)
- H. Sensitive and Non-Public Information Policy (Policy 47)
- I. Business Expense Reimbursement, Travel, Meeting Compensation and Representation Policy (Finance Policy)

**APPROVED:**

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**Director of Human Resources**

December 15, 2003  
**Date**

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**General Manager**

December 15, 2003  
**Date**