

Ethical Scenarios

#1. The town recently purchased plants for several parks and after all the plantings are completed, has several left unused. One of your best employees has approached you to ask if he can take the plants home. You:

- A. Let the employee take the plants. Since they are just going to be thrown away, you consider the plants a reward for good work.
- B. Explain to the employee that letting him take the plants could appear to be inappropriate. The press might make a big deal out of this type of thing.

2. A contractor who works closely with your department drops off a little appreciation for all your support: 4 tickets to the Cubs game. Which is the best option for the department director to take?

- A. Keep the tickets and take his entire family to the game. He has been working so hard that he hasn't spent much time with them at all recently.
- B. Raffle the tickets off so that everyone in the department has a chance to win the tickets.
- C. Return them to the contractor.

#3. Dave is a City employee. His brother owns a security firm that bid on the contract to provide security for the city's annual community festival. Can Dave be involved in any part of the contracting process?

- A. Yes, because the contract is going out for competitive bidding and the town manager is responsible for making the final recommendations to the mayor and council.
- B. No. Dave has a real conflict of interest because a family member may benefit financially from the decision. Dave should remain out of the process and not discuss the matter at all with his brother.

#4. Paul is a lead worker in the parks department. His property suffered a lot of damage in a recent storm. More than a dozen trees on his property either blew over or were severely damaged to the point that they needed to be cut down. Paul wants to borrow a chain saw from the department this weekend to tackle the job of cutting up the damaged trees and hauling them away. His supervisor gives permission if Paul returns the chain saw first thing Monday morning. Is this ok?

- A. Yes, if he returns it in good condition and all the other parks employees have a chance to borrow equipment as well.
- B. No. City equipment should only be used for city business.

#5. To encourage residents to recycle and to preserve the life of the landfill, the town council adopted a 2-bag limit on residential garbage collection. As the crew works its route, it comes upon a house where there are three bags of trash and a \$20 bill pinned to one of the bags. If you are on the crew, do you:

- A. Take all three bags and use the \$20 to buy lunch for the crew.
- B. Take all three bags and keep the \$20 for yourself.
- C. Take all three bags and turn the \$20 into the supervisor.
- D. Take two bags and leave the one with the \$20 at the curb.

#6. Greg, the building inspector, is also active in a local foundation that builds houses for lower income families. Because the demand for houses far exceeds the foundation's resources, they are launching a huge fundraising effort. Greg has agreed to help with the effort by asking local businesses to contribute. Is this ok?

- A. Yes, because Greg is doing this on his own time and it is for a good cause.
- B. Yes, if Greg doesn't ask any business that has a permit waiting for approval from Greg's office.
- C. No, because _____ (fill in the blank).

#7. Arlene and her team have had an exhausting month running a series of community meetings throughout the city getting public input on traffic calming proposals under consideration to improve traffic safety in the residential neighborhoods. As is necessary, the meetings were held at night which meant that the staff running the meetings often didn't get home until past 11 p.m. each night. The last meeting on her schedule for the week, held outside the office at a location relatively close to her home, finished at 1:30 on Friday afternoon. Arlene thought that by the time she drove back to the office, she wouldn't get much done and since she was closer to home, she should just 'bag it' and head home.

Arlene asked the staff member who attended the meeting with her to shut down her computer and close the door to her office. See you on Monday, said Arlene!

Did Arlene do the right thing?

- A. Yes, because Arlene earned lots of comp time and she should be free to take it since her meeting ended early.
- B. Yes, if Arlene gives her staff member the afternoon off as well.
- C. No. It's wrong for Arlene to take the afternoon off without advising her supervisor and shows poor judgment sending her staff member back to work to close her office.

#8. You work the concession stand with Sallie at the recreation complex. You have witnessed her taking a \$20 bill out of the cash register when she thinks no

one is looking. It doesn't happen every time you work with her but frequently enough that you are worried that it will be noticed by supervisors. You know that Sallie is on her own raising a young daughter. You:

- A. Say nothing because you don't want her to get into trouble and because probably no one will notice a little missing here and there.
- B. Confront Sallie the next time you see her do it and insist that she repay all the money she has taken.
- C. Report it to your supervisor.

#9. The town has paid the registration fee for city employees to play in a softball league. Surprising to everyone, the team is doing exceptionally well and has made the playoffs. If the team wins the championship, it receives not only a trophy but is awarded the grand prize of \$3,000. What should be done with the money should the town's team be victorious?

- A. The team captain should disburse the money depending on player performance
- B. Donate the prize money to charity but keep the trophy and the bragging rights
- C. Refund the city the registration fee and split the prize among the participants.

#10. Jack, the public works foreman, has the entire fleet ready to go for the snow storm forecast for tomorrow. As he finishes up for the evening, Jack gets a call from a councilmember who orders him to change the routes to ensure that the streets in his neighborhood get done first. After all, there is a retirement village located in his district and those seniors need to be able to get out if there is an emergency. What should Jack do?

- A. Change the routes. Jack is in charge so he can re-direct the drivers.
- B. Leave the routes as they are and call the public works director to inform him of the conversation.