

CITY OF SANTA CLARITA		POLICY/PROCEDURE
NUMBER		SUBJECT CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT
ORIGINAL ISSUE	EFFECTIVE	
CURRENT ISSUE	EFFECTIVE	CATEGORY  CITY COUNCIL
SUPERSEDES		
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE		

### STANDARD MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

#### PURPOSE

The City of Santa Clarita has developed the following policy for administration of a Code of Ethics and Conduct.

#### POLICY

##### **I. Purpose**

The City recognizes that the proper operation of democratic government requires that decision-makers be independent, impartial, and accountable to the people they serve. At the City of Santa Clarita, we believe ethical conduct requires more than simply complying with the laws and regulations that govern our organization. As members of the City Council, boards, committees, commissions, and employees, we agree to uphold this Code of Ethics and Conduct.

The residents of the City of Santa Clarita are entitled to a fair, ethical and accountable local government which has earned the public's full confidence for integrity. The City of Santa Clarita's strong desire to fulfill this mission therefore requires that:

- Public officials, both elected and appointed, and employees comply with both the letter and spirit of the laws and policies affecting the operations of government
- Public officials be independent, impartial and fair in their judgment and actions
- Public office be used for the public good, not for personal gain and
- Public deliberations and processes be conducted openly, unless legally confidential, in an atmosphere of respect and civility

For these reasons, the City of Santa Clarita has adopted this Code of Ethics and Conduct for elected officials, and members of appointed boards, commissions, committees, staff, and volunteers to assure public confidence in the integrity of local government and its effective and fair operation.

##### **II. Persons Governed by Policy**

This policy shall govern all elected officials of the City, appointed officials of the City, Commissions of the City, members of City committees, employees of the City, and volunteers for the City, whether serving for compensation or no compensation ("Covered Persons"). These persons are also guided by policies, principles and guidelines established by the City and various organizations.

**1. Integrity/Honesty**

Covered persons will be honest with fellow officials, the public and others. Covered persons shall be prepared to make unpopular decisions when the public's interest requires it. Additionally, covered persons shall take responsibility for their actions and disclose suspected instances of corruption to the appropriate authorities.

**2. Accountability/Responsibility**

Covered persons shall hold a high standard and be accountable to the public, stakeholders, and other institutions. Such persons are required to be an agent of the democratic process, thus receive input, explain actions, accept results of the body's decisions, and engage in continuous improvement. Covered persons are prudent stewards of public resources and actively consider the impact of their decisions on the financial and social stability of the City and its residents.

**3. Respect**

Covered persons shall treat fellow officials, staff and the public with courtesy and civility, even when there is disagreement on what is best for the community. Covered persons shall actively listen, ask questions, seek diverse opinions and participate in added value discussion for the purpose of consensus building, and make decisions and recommendations based upon research and facts involving staff and stakeholders, taking into consideration short and long-term goals. Furthermore, covered persons shall support a positive work environment for City staff and others who serve the City.

**4. Fairness**

Covered persons shall be impartial when making decisions, avoiding the temptation to favor those who have supported the covered person and disfavor those who have not. They shall support the public's right to know and will promote their meaningful participation in the conduct of the public's business. Furthermore, covered persons shall treat all persons, claims, and transactions in a fair and equitable manner, and make decisions based on the merits of the issue, with attention to due process.

**5. Comply with the Law**

Covered persons shall comply with the laws of the Nation, the State of California, and City in the performance of their public duties. These laws include, but are not limited to: the United States and California Constitutions; United States and California codes, regulations, interpretive administrative findings and relevant case law, City ordinances, City norms and procedures, and City personnel guidelines and philosophies. These laws include, but are not limited to, topics relating to ethics and conduct, including conflicts of interest, financial disclosure regulations, and campaign finance contribution limitations and reporting requirements. Additionally, certain City professionals are guided by particular rules regarding ethics provided by their professional organizations.

**6. Act in the Public Interest**

Recognizing that stewardship of the public interest must be their primary concern, covered persons will work for the common good of the people of the City and not any private or personal interest, and they will assure fair and equal treatment of all persons, claims, and transactions coming before the City, including the City Council, boards, commissions, and committees.

**7. Conflict of Interest**

In order to assure their independence and impartiality on behalf of the common good, covered persons shall not use their official positions to influence government decisions in which they have a material

financial interest or personal relationship which may give the appearance of a conflict of interest. In accordance with the law, covered persons shall disclose investments, interests in real property, sources of income, and gifts, and they shall abstain from participating in deliberations and decisions-making where conflicts may exist. (See California Government Code §§ 1090 *et seq.*, 81000 *et seq.*, 82000 *et seq.*, 87100 *et seq.*; 87407; California Health & Safety Code §§ 33130 *et seq.*; California Penal Code §68; 2 Code of California Regulations §§ 18700 *et seq.*)

#### **8. Regulations Regarding Personal Advantages and Perquisites**

Covered persons shall comply with the requirements of the United States and California Constitutions; United States and California codes, regulations, interpretive administrative findings and relevant case law, relating to the acceptance and reporting of gifts, loans, and other possible perquisites of office. (See California Constitution, Art. XII, § 7; Gov. Code §§ 3204, 8314, 36501 *et seq.*, 82000 *et seq.*, 87200 *et seq.*, 87400 *et seq.*; 89001, 89500 *et seq.*; Pen. Code § 424 *et seq.*; 2 Code of Cal. Regs. §§ 18700 *et seq.*, 18930 *et seq.*)

#### **9. Confidential Information**

Covered persons shall respect the confidentiality of information concerning City property, personnel or proceedings of the City. They shall neither disclose confidential information without proper legal authorization, nor use such information to advance their personal interests. (See Gov. Code §§54963, 82000 *et seq.*)

#### **10. Use of Public Resources**

Covered persons shall not use public resources not available to the public in general, such as City staff, time, equipment, supplies or facilities, for private gain. Covered persons shall not utilize the City's name or logo for the purpose of endorsing any political candidate. (See Gov. Code §§ 3204, 8314, 89001, 89500 *et seq.*; Pen. Code § 424 *et seq.*; 2 Code of Cal. Regs. §§ 18901.)

#### **11. Representation of Private interests**

In keeping with their role as stewards of the public interest, members of Council shall not appear on behalf of the private interests of third parties before the Council or any board, commission, committee, or proceeding of the City, nor shall members of boards, commissions and committees appear before their own bodies or before the Council on behalf of the private interests of third parties related to the areas of service of their bodies.

#### **12. Advocacy**

Covered persons shall represent the official policies or positions of the City Council, board, commission, or committee to the best of their ability. When presenting their individual opinions and positions, covered persons shall explicitly state they do not represent their body or the City of Santa Clarita, nor will they allow the inference that they do.

#### **13. Governmental Transparency Laws**

Covered persons are governed by relevant government transparency laws, including, but not limited to, the California Brown Act (Gov. Code §§ 54950 *et seq.* and California Public Records Act (Gov. Code §§ 6250 *et seq.*).

#### **14. Independence of Boards, Commissions, and Committees**

Because of the value of the independent advice of boards, commissions, and committees to the public decision-making process, members of Council shall refrain from using their positions to influence

unduly the deliberations or outcomes of board, commission, and committee proceedings.

**15. Positive Work Place Environment**

City Council Members, Commissioners and Committee Members shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive work place environment for City employees, for persons dealing with the City, and for each other as well. These persons shall recognize their special role in dealings with City employees and refrain from creating the perception of inappropriate direction to staff.

**16. Implementation**

All covered persons should be familiar with this Code of Ethics and Conduct and embrace its provisions. For this reason, ethical standards shall be included in orientations for City Council Members, Commissioners, Committee Members, and newly appointed officials, staff, and volunteers. Furthermore, copies of this Code of Ethics and Conduct shall be distributed at orientation sessions for all new City elected and appointed officials, and employees.

**17. Compliance**

The Santa Clarita Code of Ethics and Conduct expresses standards of ethical conduct expected for covered persons, and the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of government. The City of Santa Clarita will continue to comply with state and federal laws, and will continue conducting necessary trainings as mandated by the state and nation.

Any violations of applicable laws as referred to in this Code of Ethics and Conduct, which include, but are not limited to, violations of the United States and California Constitutions; United States and California codes, regulations, interpretive administrative findings and relevant case law, may be reported to the appropriate governing agencies. Any persons who believe that a City official, employee, or volunteer has violated this Code of Ethics and Conduct shall report the allegation to the proper agency.

**EXCEPTION**

There are no exceptions to the above stated guidelines without City Council approval.

**AUTHORITY**

By order of the City Council.