



MEMORANDUM

TO: TRIANGLE TRANSIT EMPLOYEES

FROM: David King, General Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David King", is written over the printed name in the "FROM" field.

DATE: NOVEMBER 25, 2013

SUBJECT: GIFT AND FAVORS POLICY (#503)

Our Human Resources Department (HR) is in the process of revising the Triangle Transit Policy Manual. During this transition the policy manual is not available on the Intranet. You may refer to a policy binder in the interim. If your department does not have a policy binder, please consult with HR when seeking guidance on a specific policy.

One policy which needs emphasis during this time of year is #503, which details Triangle Transit's position on Gifts and Favors. A copy of this policy is attached, along with a few common situations to give you a better flavor of how to respond to offers of gifts.

Triangle Transit employees are in a vulnerable position during the holiday season because we are a customer service organization. It is natural for customers and vendors to wish to recognize kindnesses extended to them throughout the year and to show their appreciation through gift giving. If you are approached by anyone who wishes to give you a gift, favor or any item of value, your best response should be a polite "no thank-you." Your motives in accepting a gift or favor may be pure but the gift giver may not know about our policies or might have another agenda.

Early next year, HR and the Legal Department will host an interactive Ethics Training presentation where we talk candidly about ethics and the importance of our Code of Conduct for our work environment.

We encourage you to read the "Gifts and Favors" policy, review the scenarios and let HR know if you need further guidance. I am confident that we all want to do the right thing and adhere to a high standard of integrity and ethics. I hope that you will find this information useful.

Have a wonderful and safe holiday season.

Policy Number 503
GIFTS AND FAVORS

POLICY STATEMENT

Triangle Transit prohibits all employees from accepting inappropriate gifts and favors. Employees are to refrain from using their positions to influence a decision that would prompt an external party to offer items of reward to demonstrate their appreciation.

POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all Triangle Transit regular, full-time, part-time, temporary, and contract employees.

POLICY GUIDELINES

Under this policy, employees are expected to demonstrate the highest degree of professionalism and ethics by refusing to:

- Accept any gift, favor, item of value, service, loan, or promise from any person, firm, or organization that either directly or indirectly transacts business with Triangle Transit;
- Accept any gift, favor, or item of value from any person, firm, or organization that could misinterpret the action and expect to influence the employee in the discharge of his/her duties;
- Grant any improper favor, service, or item of value to any person, firm, or organization in the performing his/her duties;
- Accept gratuities, except for nominal food or gift items, in accordance with Triangle Transit's Code of Ethics.

Employees who find themselves in a compromising position should bring it to the attention of his/her department supervisor, department manager, or Human Resources so that any perception of impropriety can be avoided. The Legal Department is also happy to assist with employee questions.

Below are some examples of applications of this policy to common situations that arise during the holiday season and in other circumstances.

What Do You Do?

- 1) You are a bus operator who has driven the same route for five years. One of your regular passengers is an elderly woman who you greet with a smile every morning when she boards the bus. She tells you about her grandchildren and you ask about her health. The day before Christmas, when she gets on the bus she hands you a card. You assume it is a Christmas card, but when you open it after your shift, you see that she has included a \$20 bill in the card. What do you do?

Answer: You cannot accept a gift or money in the performance of your service. It is important that you let your supervisor know about the situation and then return the money. One way to do it would be to give the passenger a card from you the next time she boards thanking her for the thought and enclose the \$20 bill and a letter from Triangle Transit explaining our policy. Of course, you could have politely refused the card in the first place.

- 2) You are the receptionist at the front desk for Triangle Transit. One of Triangle Transit's vendors arrives with a large plant for our procurement officer. What do you do? What does the procurement office do?

Answer: Employees cannot accept any item of value from any person, firm or organization that directly or indirectly transacts business with Triangle Transit or who expects to influence you in the discharge of your duties. There are also state and federal laws prohibiting such gifts particularly in the procurement area. The Triangle Transit receptionist should not accept gifts for Triangle Transit employees from vendors. If there is any question, the receptionist should contact the legal department. In the event the receptionist did accept the gift, the procurement officer should return it promptly with a letter from Triangle Transit explaining our policy. The legal department has a form letter for this situation.

- 3) You are an employee in a small department at Triangle Transit. During the holidays your manager wants to take your team out for lunch to celebrate the season and give each employee a small gift. What do you do?

Answer: There is no prohibition on employees paying for other employees' meals or giving gifts. However, employees should not feel an obligation to reciprocate.

- 4) You are a Triangle Transit employee who has been invited to a party by a consultant who also has become a friend. The party is for friends and neighbors and is not business related. What do you do?

Answer: Triangle Transit employees may accept nominal food or gift items from a contractor, subcontractor or supplier when a business relationship is not the motivating factor. However, you should inform your supervisor in advance to ensure that there is no other reason to decline the invitation.

- 5) You are a planner who is attending a continuing education conference out of town. Triangle Transit is paying for your conference registration and hotel. One of the nights you are there, a consultant who is interested in working in the Triangle area asks you to join her and some colleagues for dinner. At the end of the dinner, the consultant offers to pick up the tab. What should you do?

Answer: You cannot accept any item of value from any person, firm or organizations that directly or indirectly transacts business with Triangle Transit or who expects to influence you in the discharge of your duties. Because the consultant may seek to work for Triangle Transit in the future, the best course of action is to pay for your own meal and get a receipt.

Finally, if an employee finds himself/herself in a situation when consultation with a supervisor or the legal department is not possible before accepting the gift or favor, it is always better to thank the person for the kind thought and politely refuse the gift or favor. Simply explain that you are following Triangle Transit's ethics policies. People will understand and appreciate your integrity.



take it. easy.

Date

Name
Address

Dear _____:

We at Triangle Transit appreciate your consideration of Triangle Transit and our employees during the Holiday Season. It was very thoughtful of you to extend a gratuity to one of our employees for assistance during the past year. However as a public agency, our policy does not allow employees to accept individual gifts from our tenants or vendors.

In line with our policy, I am returning the enclosed gratuity to you. Please know that we do value you as a (customer, vendor, etc.) to Triangle Transit, and, we wish you and your family a safe and joyful Holiday Season.

Sincerely,