

Nepotism

Compliance/Organizational Integrity Office - Ethics

Policy Number: 8234.455
Revision Date: 2/4/2025
Effective Date: 4/11/2025
Issue Date: 3/11/2025

POLICY:

DHS employees may not directly supervise, hire, evaluate, or discipline anyone they are related to by marriage, adoption, or with whom they have a close/intimate/romantic relationship. This applies to previous relationships, such as marriage or romances.

AUTHORITY:

[Minnesota Statute, section 43A.38, "Code of Ethics for Employees in the Executive Branch"](#)

[Minnesota Statute, section 43A.39, "Compliance with Law"](#)

APPLICABILITY:

DHS-wide.

Staff may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, for failure to comply with policies.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to prohibit the practice or the appearance of nepotism to avoid conflicts of interest.

DEFINITIONS:

Conflict of interest: any conduct that would, or might appear to, affect the employee's independence of judgment in the exercise of official duties.

Family: an employee's current and former spouse, children, parents, and siblings, current and former children-in-law, parents-in-law, and siblings-in-law, current and former stepchildren and stepparents, grandchildren and grandparents, and members of the employee's household.

Intimate relationship:

- Individuals who are related;
- individuals with a relationship by marriage, adoption, intimate or romantic relations;

- any relationship through a prior marriage or prior intimate/romantic relationship that may influence the employee’s judgment; or
- friendships and other close relationships as determined to influence the employee’s judgment.

Nepotism: a type of conflict of interest where those with power or influence favor relatives, partners, friends, or outside interests, especially by giving them jobs.

PROCEDURES:

- A. DHS employees are prohibited from engaging in or appearing to engage in nepotism to avoid a conflict of interest in any relationship that affects the employee’s independent judgment in the exercise of official duties.
- B. DHS employees may not directly supervise, hire, evaluate, or discipline any family members or individuals with whom they have, or had, an intimate relationship.
- C. If the employee, appointing authority, or commissioner determines that a conflict of interest exists, the matter will be assigned to another employee who does not have a conflict of interest.
- D. For further information regarding nepotism, employees should:
 1. submit questions using the [“Ethics Inquiries and Questions Web Form,”](#)
 2. contact their supervisor, or
 3. the DHS Ethics Officer via email, dhs_ethics_questions@state.mn.us.
- E. The following employee conduct is prohibited:
 1. use or attempted use of the employee’s official position to secure benefits, privileges, exemptions, or any advantages for the employee’s immediate family or intimate relationships.
 2. acceptance of other employment or contractual relationship that will affect the employee’s independence of judgment in the exercise of official duties.
 3. association with an outside organization that will affect the employee’s independence of judgment in the exercise of official duties.
- F. Employees must follow the [DHS Policy 8234.075, “Conflict of Interest”](#) to avoid situations where they believe a conflict of interest or the perception of a conflict of interest exists and are obligated by law to inform their supervisor or the ethics officer with questions or concerns.

REVIEW:

Biennial

REFERENCES:

[DHS Policy 8234.075, “Conflicts of Interest” \(PDF\)](#)

[DHS Policy 8234.140, “Everyday Ethics for DHS employees” \(PDF\)](#)

[MMB HR/LR Policy 1445, "Code of Ethical Conduct" \(PDF\)](#)

ATTACHMENTS:

[Ethics Box Questions and Responses \(InfoLink\)](#)

[Ethics Inquiries and Questions \(Webform\)](#)

SUPERSESSION:

DHS administrative policy "Nepotism" effective 7/26/2018 and all policies, memos or other communications whether verbal, written, or transmitted by electronic means regarding this topic is superseded with this version, if any.

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Compliance