

Office of Government Ethics

§ 2635.303

subpart shall, unless the gift is accepted by an agency acting under specific statutory authority:

(1) Return any tangible item to the donor or pay the donor its market value. An employee who cannot ascertain the actual market value of an item may estimate its market value by reference to the retail cost of similar items of like quality. See § 2635.203(c).

Example 1: To avoid public embarrassment to the seminar sponsor, an employee of the National Park Service did not decline a barometer worth \$200 given at the conclusion of his speech on Federal lands policy. The employee must either return the barometer or promptly reimburse the sponsor \$200.

(2) When it is not practical to return a tangible item because it is perishable, the item may, at the discretion of the employee's supervisor or an agency ethics official, be given to an appropriate charity, shared within the recipient's office, or destroyed.

Example 1: With approval by the recipient's supervisor, a floral arrangement sent by a disability claimant to a helpful employee of the Social Security Administration may be placed in the office's reception area.

(3) For any entertainment, favor, service, benefit or other intangible, reimburse the donor the market value. Subsequent reciprocation by the employee does not constitute reimbursement.

Example 1: A Department of Defense employee wishes to attend a charitable event to which he has been offered a \$300 ticket by a prohibited source. Although his attendance is not in the interest of the agency under § 2635.204(g), he may attend if he reimburses the donor the \$300 face value of the ticket.

(4) Dispose of gifts from foreign governments or international organizations in accordance with 41 CFR part 101-49, and dispose of materials received in conjunction with official travel in accordance with 41 CFR 101-25.103.

(b) An agency may authorize disposition or return of gifts at Government expense. Employees may use penalty mail to forward reimbursements required or permitted by this section.

(c) An employee who, on his own initiative, promptly complies with the requirements of this section will not be deemed to have improperly accepted an

unsolicited gift. An employee who promptly consults his agency ethics official to determine whether acceptance of an unsolicited gift is proper and who, upon the advice of the ethics official, returns the gift or otherwise disposes of the gift in accordance with this section, will be considered to have complied with the requirements of this section on his own initiative.

Subpart C—Gifts Between Employees

§ 2635.301 Overview.

This subpart contains standards that prohibit an employee from giving, donating to, or soliciting contributions for, a gift to an official superior and from accepting a gift from an employee receiving less pay than himself, unless the item is excluded from the definition of a gift or falls within one of the exceptions set forth in this subpart.

§ 2635.302 General standards.

(a) *Gifts to superiors.* Except as provided in this subpart, an employee may not:

(1) Directly or indirectly, give a gift to or make a donation toward a gift for an official superior; or

(2) Solicit a contribution from another employee for a gift to either his own or the other employee's official superior.

(b) *Gifts from employees receiving less pay.* Except as provided in this subpart, an employee may not, directly or indirectly, accept a gift from an employee receiving less pay than himself unless:

(1) The two employees are not in a subordinate-official superior relationship; and

(2) There is a personal relationship between the two employees that would justify the gift.

(c) *Limitation on use of exceptions.* Notwithstanding any exception provided in this subpart, an official superior shall not coerce the offering of a gift from a subordinate.

§ 2635.303 Definitions.

For purposes of this subpart, the following definitions shall apply:

(a) *Gift* has the meaning set forth in § 2635.203(b). For purposes of that definition an employee will be deemed to