National Transport Authority

Code of Conduct for Staff Members

This code of conduct provides a framework to guide the work of the Authority in order that ethical practices are followed and that confidence and trust in the Authority are established and maintained.

The central requirement of the Code is that Staff Members must operate, and be seen to operate, to the highest standards of business ethics.

Five principles of conduct are set out below covering:

1. Conflict of Interest
2. Support and Loyalty
3. Fairness and Work Environment
4. Confidential Information
5. Integrity.

1. Conflict of Interest

Staff Members are statutorily obliged to comply with the provisions of Sections 37 of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 concerning disclosure of pecuniary or other beneficial interests in, or material to, any matter which falls to be considered by the Authority.

Staff Members at a grade or a level specified are also required to comply with Ethics in Public Office Acts, 1995 and 2001 (the Ethics Acts). The obligations in that regard are summarised in the Guidelines for Public Servants (7th Edition) published by the Standards in Public Office Commission.

A Staff Member shall, where there is a change regarding any such interest or where they acquire any other interest, give to the Authority a new declaration in the prescribed form.

Staff Members shall ensure that there is no conflict of interest between the discharge of their duties as employees of the Authority and any outside business interests/beneficial or other interests they may have. In particular, individual Members shall avoid actual or apparent conflict of interests in relation to situations involving the potential award of a contract or the disbursement of monies.

To ensure appropriate practice, Staff Members shall comply with the following requirements:

- disclose all details relating to their connection to any persons or groups doing business with the Authority.
- remove themselves from situations or decisions that may present a potential conflict of interest.
- not participate, where an actual or apparent conflict of interest occurs, in discussions or votes on business transactions between the Authority and other parties.
- not take advantage of their position for personal gain.

Where a question arises as to whether or not a case relates to the interests of a Staff Member or a person or body connected with him or her, the Authority, whose decision shall be final, shall determine the question and shall record this decision in the minutes of the meeting.
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2. **Support and Loyalty**

Staff Members shall not undermine through action or omission the goals and objectives of the Authority.

Staff Members shall support all actions taken by the Authority, even when they may be in a minority position with respect to such action. Staff Members may identify that a decision or action was not their preference but shall do so in a manner that supports the collegiate decision and does not undermine that decision.

3. **Fairness and Work Environment**

Staff Members place the highest priority on the creation of an appropriate work environment and affirm that it is their requirement that:

- the Authority complies with employment equality and equal status legislation.
- the Authority commits to fairness in all its commercial dealings.
- all parties in communication with the Authority are treated equitably and with courtesy.
- the Authority places the highest priority on promoting and preserving the health and safety of its Members, staff members and the general public.
- harassment of any form of staff or Members is not tolerated.

4. **Confidential Information**

Staff Members are statutorily obliged to comply with the provisions of Section 38 of the National Transport Authority Act 2008 concerning confidential information.

Staff Members shall make themselves familiar with these statutory provisions which generally provide that:

- a Staff Member shall not disclose confidential information obtained in the course of performing their duties unless authorised in writing by the Authority.
- any Staff Member who contravenes this requirement shall be guilty of an offence.

Confidential information includes:

- information furnished to the Authority by a Government Department upon terms which forbid the disclosure of the information to the public;
- information the disclosure of which to the public is prohibited by or under any enactment or by the order of the court.
- information relating to a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of, or a particular office-holder, former office-holder or applicant to become an office-holder.
- information relating to the financial or business affairs of any individual.
- information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter.
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- any instructions to legal counsel and any opinion of legal counsel (whether or not in connection with any proceedings) and any advice received, information obtained or action to be taken in connection with any legal proceedings by or against the Authority, or the determination of any matter, affecting the Authority, (whether in either case, proceedings have been commenced or are in contemplation).
- information that is expressed by the Authority or a Committee to be confidential either as regards particular information or as regards information of a particular class or description.
- commercial information in relation to contractors, consultants, providers of finance or any other person.
- proposals of a commercial nature or tenders submitted to the Authority by contractors, consultants or any other person.
- information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any purchases or disposals of property.

It is the responsibility of the Executive in circulating documents to the Staff Members to determine whether such documentation contains any confidential information and, if so, to mark them 'confidential'.

Handling and Disposal of Confidential Information

Staff Members in receipt of 'confidential' information shall:

- only use it in accordance with the proper performance of their duties.
- not divulge or use the information improperly.
- keep the information secure and not make copies of it.
- dispose of the information in a proper and appropriate way so that the confidentiality of the material is maintained.

Recipients of confidential information should only discuss it with others who have received copies. If inquiries are received from others, e.g. the media, no comment should be made.

Staff Members in receipt of confidential information shall ensure that it is kept securely and that reasonable steps are taken to avoid access by a third party and / or loss.

Confidential information should be disposed of either:

- by shredding, or
- making arrangements with the Authority for appropriate disposal.

Discussions at the Authority and at Authority Committees

In addition to the requirements outlined above in respect of confidential information, Staff Members shall not repeat in a public setting or communicate to the media any discussions of the Authority or its Committees concerning the Authority’s business and practices, or any discussions of a personal nature concerning their peers or the Authority’s executive.

Staff Members in the course of their duties acquire information that has yet to be made public and is still confidential. Staff Members shall not disclose or use confidential information for their personal advantage, for the advantage of any other individual or entity known to them, or to the disadvantage or the discredit of the Authority or anyone else.
Prohibition on Certain Communications

Staff Members are statutorily obliged to comply with the provisions of Section 39 of the National Transport Authority Act 2008 concerning receipt of an improper communication.

If a Staff Member to whom a communication is made becomes of opinion that the communication is for the purpose of influencing improperly his or her consideration of any matter which falls to be considered by the Authority, it is his or her duty not to entertain the communication further and he or she shall inform forthwith the chairperson of the Authority in writing of the substance of such communication and the chairperson shall acknowledge in writing the receipt of such information.

5. **Integrity**

Staff Members shall avoid the giving or receiving of corporate gifts, hospitality, preferential treatment or benefits which might affect or appear to affect the making of independent judgment on the business of the Authority.

Staff Members acting in a personal capacity or on behalf of a club, society or professional body shall not solicit or request a gift, donation, support or sponsorship from suppliers / contractors of goods or services to the Authority or from customers of the Authority. Unsolicited gifts, donations or sponsorship should only be accepted on behalf of a club, society or professional body with prior approval from the Chairperson and then only if they could reasonably be viewed as not contributing to the giving of preferential treatment to the donor.

6. **Gifts and Entertainment – Practical Guidelines**

Nominal gifts may be accepted in circumstances where it is clear that in doing so, no obligation is imposed on either the Staff Member or the NTA.

- A meal may be accepted by a staff member during the normal course of business at a local venue (but this must not include residential stay);
- under no circumstances may cash or cash / gift vouchers be accepted.

If foreign travel is necessary to investigate products or services, the NTA will pay for the trip. Supplier's offers of foreign travel and / or hotel should not be accepted.

These examples are intended only as guidelines to help make sensible decisions. Most cases will be obvious. However, if a doubt still exists the matter should be referred to the CEO.

7. **Good Practice**

As it is not possible for this document to provide for every situation which may arise Staff Members must bear in mind that it is primarily their personal responsibility to ensure that all their activities, whether covered specifically or otherwise in this document are governed by the ethical considerations in the Code of Conduct and in the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

It is the responsibility of Staff Members to ensure that when carrying out any business of the Authority. This Code of Conduct, Internal Control Manuals and Procedures of the NTA must be adhered to at all times.
8. **Retirement/Resignation**

Staff Members upon retirement/resignation have a responsibility to ensure the five principles of the Code of business of conduct are not compromised and will be required by the Authority on cessation of their position to sign a declaration agreeing to this. Former Staff Members should treat commercial information received while acting in that capacity as confidential.

Staff Members should not retain confidential documentation obtained during their terms as an employee and should return such documentation to the Chief Executive or otherwise indicate to the Executive that all such documentation in their possession has been disposed of in an appropriate manner.

The NTA recommends that the acceptance of further employment where the potential for conflict of interest arises should be avoided during a reasonable period of time after the exercise of a function in the State body has ceased.

Appendix 1 contains a letter that will be sought from Staff Members in addition to the requirements as set out in employees own contract.

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Signed & Dated
Appendix 1

RETIREMENT/RESIGNATION

In accordance with Code of Business and Conduct of Staff Members I agree that following my resignation as an employee of the Authority to uphold the principles of the code of conduct for Staff Members and to ensure that the ethical practices are followed. As a former employee all commercial information received while acting in that capacity will be treated as confidential.

I can confirm I have returned to the Authority’s Chief Executive or disposed of the Authority’s confidential documentation an appropriate manner.

Yours sincerely

______________________________
Name

______________________________
Address

______________________________
Date

______________________________
Signed & Dated