



## NASA OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



# OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

## GRATUITIES

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a thick stack of US dollar bills. The person is wearing a dark suit jacket, a white dress shirt, and a dark striped tie. The focus is on the hand and the money, with the background slightly blurred. The text "REWARDS CAN BE CRIMINAL" is overlaid on the image in a bold, sans-serif font. "REWARDS CAN BE" is in white, and "CRIMINAL" is in a larger, yellow font.

REWARDS CAN BE  
**CRIMINAL**

## ABOUT THE OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

# WHO ARE WE?

Each Federal agency has an independent Office of Inspector General (OIG) charged with conducting objective audits and investigations, as well as preventing and detecting fraud, waste, and abuse. Within the NASA OIG, the Office of Investigations handles allegations of wrongdoing by Government officials, including contracting officials. These allegations of wrongdoing include the improper or illegal acceptance of gratuities.

# WHAT DO WE DO?

We investigate allegations in which NASA is the potential victim of fraud, waste, or abuse by employees, grantees, contractors, or others. We receive allegations from many sources, including NASA contractors and their employees, civil servants, the NASA OIG hotline and the public. We also handle all allegations of contracting officials improperly or illegally accepting gratuities.



## GRATUITIES – GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

# WHAT ARE GRATUITIES?

The basic rules applicable to Government employees regarding gratuities are set forth in the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch (Standards). The Standards generally prohibit Federal Government employees from accepting gifts from “prohibited sources,” a category that includes, among others, contractors (and employees of contractors) doing business with or seeking to do business with the Federal agency.

Under **18 U.S.C. § 201(c)**, the illegal gratuities statute, an employee may not demand, seek, receive, accept, or agree to accept anything of value “for or because of any official act” performed or to be performed by the employee.

An illegal gratuity does not require an intent to influence; rather, the illegal gratuity only need be given “for or because of” an official act. An illegal gratuity “may constitute merely a reward for some future act that the public official will take (and may already have determined to take), or for a past act that he has already taken.”

Exceptions: Under the Standards, Federal employees may accept, even from “prohibited sources,” items worth \$20 or less, as long as the total value of the gifts from the same source is not more than \$50 in a single calendar year. Other exceptions include items given based on a personal/family relationship, or modest items of food or drink other than as part of a meal (coffee, donuts, etc.).



## INDICATORS

Indicators of Potential Violations Include:

- A Government official with a pattern of preferential contractor treatment;
- A Government official with a lifestyle that exceeds his or her salary;
- A Government official who socializes or has personal or outside-business relationships with contractors and their families;
- An unusually close relationship between a Government contracting official and a contractor or grant recipient, oftentimes involving inappropriate exchanges of cash, gifts, or other items of value (e.g., travel, entertainment, etc.); and
- Acts beyond or below the normal scope of duties in awarding or administering a contract.

## PENALTIES

NASA OIG investigates allegations or suspicions of fraud or other wrongdoing related to contracting officials improperly or illegally accepting gratuities. NASA OIG refers violations of criminal law to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Individuals prosecuted by DOJ for fraud or other illegal acts risk going to prison, paying restitution, and facing other penalties. Additionally, NASA OIG refers issues involving NASA contracting officials who have violated the Standards of Conduct or criminal statutes to NASA management for disciplinary action up to and including removal from Federal service.



NASA OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
**OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS**  
300 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20546-0001  
202-358-1500



**OFFICE LOCATIONS AND PHONE NUMBERS**

**NASA OIG HEADQUARTERS**

Washington, DC  
202-358-1500

**AMES RESEARCH CENTER**

Moffett Field, CA  
650-604-2678 (Investigations)

**ARMSTRONG FLIGHT RESEARCH CENTER**

Edwards Air Force Base, CA  
202-358-1001 (Investigations)

**GLENN RESEARCH CENTER**

Cleveland, OH  
216-433-6121 (Investigations)  
216-433-9714 (Audits)

**GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER**

Greenbelt, MD  
301-286-9316 (Investigations)  
301-286-0497 (Audits)  
  
Trenton, NJ Place of Duty  
609-656-2543 or 609-656-2545

**JET PROPULSION LABORATORY**

Pasadena, CA  
202-358-1001 (Investigations)  
818-354-9743 (Audits)

**JOHNSON SPACE CENTER**

Houston, TX  
281-483-8427 (Investigations)  
281-483-9572 (Audits)

**KENNEDY SPACE CENTER**

Kennedy Space Center, FL  
321-867-4714 (Investigations)  
321-867-4719 (Audits)

**LANGLEY RESEARCH CENTER**

Hampton, VA  
757-864-3263 (Investigations)  
757-864-8500 (Audits)

**MARSHALL SPACE FLIGHT CENTER**

Marshall Space Flight Center, AL  
256-544-9188 (Investigations)  
256-791-2002 (Audits)

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN RESIDENT AGENCY**

Greenwood Village, CO  
202-358-4900 (Investigations)

**STENNIS SPACE CENTER**

Stennis Space Center, MS  
228-688-1493 (Investigations)

NASA Policy Directive 9800.1B requires NASA employees who observe crime, fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement to report the observation or suspicion to the OIG. Likewise, NASA employees, contractors, grantees, programs, partners, and those receiving NASA funds are expected to cooperate fully with the OIG and its designees. To report suspected violations, contact us at one of our office locations or through our Hotline.

## OIG HOTLINE

1-800-424-9183 / TDD: 1-800-535-8134

[\*https://oig.nasa.gov/hotline.html\*](https://oig.nasa.gov/hotline.html)

**NASA Office of Inspector General**  
P.O. Box 23089, L'Enfant Plaza Station  
Washington, DC 20026

[\*https://oig.nasa.gov\*](https://oig.nasa.gov)