



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.

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
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OFFICE LOCATIONS AND PHONE NUMBERS

NASA OIG HEADQUARTERS

Washington, DC
202-358-1220

AMES RESEARCH CENTER

Moffett Field, CA
650-604-3682 (Investigations)

GLENN RESEARCH CENTER

Cleveland, OH
216-433-5414 (Investigations)
216-433-9714 (Audits)

GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER

Greenbelt, MD
301-286-9316 (Investigations)
301-286-6443 (Audits)

Trenton, NJ

609-656-2543 (Investigations)
or 609-656-2545

JET PROPULSION LABORATORY

Pasadena, CA
818-354-6630 (Investigations)
818-354-3360 (Audits)

LONG BEACH RESIDENT AGENCY

Long Beach, CA
562-951-5485 (Investigations)
or 661-276-2685

JOHNSON SPACE CENTER

Houston, TX
281-483-8427 (Investigations)
281-483-0483 (Audits)

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER

Kennedy Space Center, FL
321-867-4714 (Investigations)
321-867-3153 (Audits)

LANGLEY RESEARCH CENTER

Hampton, VA
757-864-3263 (Investigations)
757-864-8562 (Audits)

**MARSHALL SPACE
FLIGHT CENTER**

Marshall Space Flight Center, AL
256-544-9188 (Investigations)
256-544-1149 (Audits)

STENNIS SPACE CENTER

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

*This office handles Armstrong Flight
Research Center 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>

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