






GIFTS BETWEEN CITY CO-WORKERS: A PLAIN ENGLISH GUIDE TO EXECUTIVE ORDER 2011-3

On May 16, 2011, Mayor Emanuel enacted six Executive Orders. One of these, Executive Order 2011-3, changes how City employees may give, solicit, or contribute to gifts to or for each other. This brief guide is intended to help you understand the new rules. It's not a substitute for guidance from the Board of Ethics though—in the event that this anything in this brochure conflicts with the language of the Executive Order, the Order controls.



THE RULES

-  With a few exceptions, City employees **may not give** gifts directly to their official superiors, or **contribute** to group gifts for them. And they may not solicit contributions from other City employees for gifts for their official superiors. Who is your “official superior?” Any other City employee(s), including your immediate supervisor(s), whose official responsibilities include directing or evaluating your performance—and Mayor Emanuel himself.
-  With a few exceptions, City employees may not accept gifts from other City employees who receive less City pay than they do.
-  An official superior may **never** coerce his or her subordinates into giving or contributing to a gift.





THE EXCEPTIONS. THEY'RE COMMON-SENSICAL.

1. Office gatherings. For occasions on which gifts are traditionally given or exchanged (like birthdays or office holiday parties), City employees can give to their official superiors or other City employees who earn more City pay:

-  Any token item worth less than \$10, but not cash; or
-  Food or drinks to be shared in the office among co-workers.

2. Personal hospitality at home. City employees may invite co-workers or bosses to their home. Any employee may give, and any other employee may accept:

-  Personal hospitality provided at home, if of a type and value customarily provided to personal friends (so, you can have your co-workers and boss, and their families, over for a bbq or to watch the Bears game); or
-  Items, like flowers or dessert, given in connection with the receipt of personal hospitality, if of a type and value customarily given on such occasions (so, you can bring your host a bottle of scotch, wine, beer, dessert or flowers, when going to his or her home for a bbq, even if your host is your boss).



3. Gifts given for life-occasions. You can give any gift **directly** to your official superior or any other employee if:

- 🎁 It's for an infrequently occurring occasion of personal significance, like marriage, illness, birth or adoption of a child, death in the family, house fire or flood; or
- 🎁 It's for an occasion that marks termination of an official superior relationship—like, retirement, resignation, or transfer.

4. Gifts from the group. You can solicit or make a voluntary contribution (in cash or otherwise) up to \$20 for a gift for your own or another's official superior (or another employee who makes more money), or you can make a voluntary contribution toward a gift for your own or another's official superior, if it's for:

- 🎁 A special, infrequent occasion of personal significance, like those described above, or
- 🎁 An occasion on which gifts are traditionally given or exchanged (like birthdays or office holiday parties).



City employees and appointed officials may not make **any** political contributions to the Mayor or his political fundraising committee.



AFTER-WORK SOCIAL EVENTS

Common question: A group of City co-workers is going out for drinks on a Friday evening (not for anyone's birthday, farewell or special occasion, but just like that). Can they pay for each other?

Answer: they can pay for colleagues who aren't their official superiors. *Bosses can buy their subordinates or reports drinks, but not vice-versa.*

Bottom line: it's safest to act like a group of ethics regulators at an ethics conference: go and socialize, but buy your own beverages (byob). Note also that you can't "cancel" or "even out" potential violations by buying things for each other: that would only compound the problems, not erase them.

VIOLATIONS ARE GROUNDS FOR DISCIPLINE, UP TO AND INCLUDING TERMINATION.

QUESTIONS? PLEASE CONTACT THE BOARD OF ETHICS AT 312-744-9660.



BOARD OF ETHICS
740 NORTH SEDGWICK, SUITE 500
CHICAGO, IL 60654
SBERLIN@CITYOFCHICAGO.ORG