

Prohibited Personnel Practices

Prohibited Personnel Practices (PPPs) are employment-related activities that are banned in the federal workforce because they violate the government's merit system through some form of employment discrimination, retaliation, improper hiring practices, or failure to adhere to laws, rules, or regulations that directly concern the merit system principles.

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel has the authority to investigate and prosecute violations of the 14 PPPs.

What are the 14 PPPs?

1. An agency official shall not discriminate against an employee or applicant based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability (or handicapping condition), marital status, or political affiliation. 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(1).
2. An agency official shall not request or consider a recommendation based on political connections or influence. 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(2).
3. An agency official shall not coerce the political activity of any person or retaliate against an employee for refusing to engage in political activity. 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(3).
4. An agency official shall not intentionally deceive or obstruct anyone from competing for employment. 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(4).
5. An agency official shall not influence anyone to withdraw from competition in order to improve or injure the employment prospects of any person. 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(5).
6. An agency official shall not give an unauthorized advantage in order to improve or injure the employment prospects of any person. 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(6).
7. A federal government employee shall not engage in nepotism (i.e., hire, promote, or advocate the hiring or promotion of relatives). 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(7).
8. An agency official shall not retaliate against an employee for whistleblowing. 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(8).
9. An agency official shall not retaliate because an employee: a) filed a complaint, grievance or appeal; b) testified for or helped someone else with one of these activities; c) cooperated with or disclosed information to the Special Counsel or an Inspector General; or, d) refused to obey an order that would require the employee to violate a law. 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(9).
10. An agency official shall not discriminate due to conduct that does not adversely affect job performance. 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(10).

11. An agency official shall not take or fail to take, recommend, or approve a personnel action if the official knows that doing so would violate a veterans' preference requirement. 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(11).
12. An agency official shall not take or fail to take a personnel action if doing so would violate a law, rule or regulation implementing or directly concerning the merit system principles. 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(12).
13. An agency official shall not implement or enforce a non-disclosure policy, form or agreement if it does not contain a specific statement notifying employees of their rights, obligations, or liabilities relating to classified information, communications to Congress, whistleblowing to an Inspector General, or any other whistleblower protection. 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(13).
14. An agency official shall not access the medical record of another employee or applicant for employment as a part of, or otherwise in furtherance of, any conduct described in paragraphs (1) through (13). 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(14).