

Elfy's Holiday Gifts Guidelines — FAQs

The holidays are a time of giving and receiving gifts. Elfy wrote these FAQs to help city personnel stay off Santa's "naughty" list by making ethical gift decisions. These FAQs describe the lowest threshold required to comply with the City's Standards of Conduct. **Your agency may set a higher gifts standard, however, so check with your manager or supervisor.**

Q1: What is a gift?

A: Anything that you did not pay full value for.

Q2: When may I accept a gift?

A: It depends. Ask yourself, "Would a reasonable person think that the gift influences my decision or rewards me for doing my city job?" If the answer is "yes," politely refuse the gift. Blame it on the Grinch.

Q3: What about accepting unsolicited gifts of food, like a box of manapua that can be shared with my co-workers during the holidays? Some citizens are really grateful for the services we provide and want to show aloha.

A: Generally yes. You may accept small items (*tokens of aloha*) that are edible, may be shared or worn (lei), or grown (plant), and are valued at less than \$50, up to \$200 per source, per fiscal year. You should refuse gifts of liquor, cash, or anything that may be exchanged for cash such as gift cards and vouchers.

Q4: A private company offered to buy lunch for our city office of over 50 people. May we accept?

A: Generally yes, if the lunch is relatively simple and modestly priced per person (e.g., bento or chili/rice, drink, and dessert) and the private company has no business before your city agency.

Every situation is different, so don't hesitate to call 768-9242 or email your gifts questions to ethics@honolulu.gov. Santa will be so happy to have us on his "nice" list! Enjoy Elfy's quick reference gift guide brochure.

Happy Ethical Holidays~

Ethics Commission (and Elfy, the Ethics Elf!)

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