



NEW ZEALAND CUSTOMS SERVICE

CODE OF CONDUCT



NEW ZEALAND
CUSTOMS SERVICE
TE MANA ĀRAI O AOTEAROA

PROTECTING NEW ZEALAND'S BORDER

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COMPTROLLER'S INTRODUCTION

The New Zealand Customs Service must maintain and enhance the trust and respect of stakeholders, our communities, our customers, and ourselves. Our solid reputation lies in the integrity of our actions and the way we use our skills, knowledge, experience, and powers as we carry out our border protection work. This Code of Conduct underpins our work and ensures that there is no doubt about the behaviours that our stakeholders can expect from Customs employees.

This Code of Conduct is aligned with the State Service Commissioner's Standards of Integrity and Conduct and details the minimum standards of behaviour required of all Customs employees. The Customs Service has a strong and proud record of service and integrity. Maintaining this relies on each employee actively demonstrating our spirit and character values and the standards detailed in this Code of Conduct.



Carolyn Tremain
Comptroller of Customs

CODE OF CONDUCT OVERVIEW

Purpose

This Code of Conduct details the minimum standards of behaviour required of all Customs Service employees. It provides a framework through which Customs employees will act with integrity and a spirit of service, a requirement of all public service employees.

These standards of behaviour will be demonstrated by all Customs employees, and will guide us when making decisions and taking actions.

Coverage

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees of the New Zealand Customs Service, within New Zealand and offshore. It also applies to persons engaged by Customs in contractor and consultant arrangements, and forms part of the terms and conditions of employment and engagement with Customs. For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, all such persons shall be referred to as "Customs employees".

Legislative Framework

All Customs employees have a responsibility under the State Sector Act 1988 to 'maintain proper standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest' (section 56 (3)). This Code of Conduct is consistent with the 'Standards of Integrity and Conduct', a Code of Conduct issued by the State Services Commissioner under section 57 of the State Sector Act 1988.

THE STANDARDS

The behaviour required of Customs employees falls under four standards which support the The Customs Story's purpose and philosophy:

1. Fair
2. Impartial
3. Responsible
4. Trustworthy

The **Customs Story** is critical to our success, and this Code of Conduct sets the minimum standards for how we actively demonstrate our purpose, our beliefs, our focus, our spirit, and our character.

The Customs Story	
Our Purpose	Protecting and promoting New Zealand through world class border management
Our Challenge	Make compliance easy to do and hard to avoid
Our Focus	High assurance, light touch
Our Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» People are at the heart of what we do» Compliance should be easy to do and hard to avoid» Using information, innovation, and technology to shape our future» Intelligence-led, risk-based border management» NZ Customs is a welcome home and a welcome here» Partnership and collaboration add value and reduce risk» Valuing diversity makes the organisation stronger
Our Spirit	Service excellence
Our Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Mana» Professional» Integrity» Enterprising» Agile» Belonging» Connected

Within this Code of Conduct, each standard is detailed in its own section. Within each section are statements detailing the requirements of that standard, and within each statement are sub-statements describing the behaviours required of Customs employees.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All Customs employees are responsible for:

- » behaving in a manner consistent with this Code of Conduct.
- » encouraging others to behave in a manner consistent with this Code of Conduct.
- » reporting any behaviour that is inconsistent with this Code of Conduct.

Customs managers are also responsible for:

- » being a good employer and dealing with employees in good faith.
- » modelling the standards of behaviour detailed in this Code of Conduct.
- » applying this Code of Conduct in an objective manner and appropriately addressing any behaviour that appears inconsistent with this Code of Conduct.

BEHAVIOUR THAT IS INCONSISTENT WITH THIS CODE OF CONDUCT

Behaviour that is inconsistent with this Code of Conduct is not acceptable.

Such behaviour will be addressed in a timely manner and could result in disciplinary action under Customs' Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

STANDARD 1: FAIR

1.1 We must treat everyone fairly and with respect

As Customs employees, we:

- » observe the principles of natural justice, disclosing relevant and necessary information about the way we make decisions, and allowing a fair opportunity for people who may be affected by these decisions to make representations
- » avoid any actual or perceived unfairness that could arise from having any personal interest in decisions made, or from working on matters where we have a close relationship with those involved. We will not show any favouritism, bias or self-interest in our work
- » make decisions based on accurate information, taking into account only relevant considerations. All decisions will be balanced, objective, and reached on their merits
- » are fair to the community as a whole, and not concede to unreasonable demands from people seeking our services
- » treat the public and colleagues with respect by:
 - not discriminating against anyone, (except as legally required to give effect to NZCS operational functions) on the basis of their gender, sexual orientation, colour, race, ethnic or national origin, age, religious or ethical beliefs, disability, marital status or family responsibilities
 - protecting the privacy of people accessing Customs services
 - not harassing, bullying or otherwise intimidating others
 - respecting the cultural background of others
 - having proper regard for the safety of others
 - avoiding behaviour that may endanger or cause distress to others
 - valuing equality and diversity by understanding differences
 - communicating in a professional manner

- » individually and collectively ensure that information and services are provided in a way that takes account of the particular interests, sensitivities, and the backgrounds of people seeking those services.

1.2 We must be professional and responsive

As Customs employees, we:

- » have personal integrity and we are committed to Customs' purpose, beliefs, spirit, and character
- » maintain constructive, professional relationships with external partners. We are always aware of our professional responsibilities to Customs, and of maintaining good relationships with the Government
- » are aware of the potential for and implications of conflicts of interest, and therefore act fairly, impartially, and transparently
- » respond in accordance with the intended purpose of Government policy and act with fairness and reasonableness, reflecting a commitment to the spirit of service.

1.3 We must work to make government services accessible and effective

As Customs employees, we:

- » are effective, and contribute effectively to the achievement of objectives that Customs has agreed with the Government
- » operate in a way that is helpful to those using our services, liaising with other parts of the State Service and minimising barriers to any individual, group or community being disadvantaged.

1.4 We must strive to make a difference to the well-being of New Zealand and all its people

As Customs employees, we:

- » individually and collectively endeavour to find more efficient, effective, economical, and sustainable ways of making a professional contribution to the work of Customs.

STANDARD 2: IMPARTIAL

2.1 We must maintain the political neutrality required to enable us to work with current and future governments

As Customs employees, we:

- » remain politically neutral and do nothing that might detract from Customs' ability to work with its Minister and current Government (and also future Ministers), regardless of the political parties they may represent
- » acknowledge our duty to Parliament and in support of the Government, and manage approaches from Members of Parliament in a strictly impartial way. Where there is doubt about the nature of an approach, we refer the matter to the Comptroller
- » are aware that perceptions of personal activities could undermine the confidence the public have in Customs' ability to fulfil its official responsibilities
- » are free to belong to any lawful organisation. The right to participate in social campaigns and the activities of political parties, unions and professional associations is not precluded, however political rights must not be confused or interfere with employment responsibilities or the expectations outlined in this Code of Conduct.

2.2 We must carry out the functions of the New Zealand Customs Service, unaffected by our personal beliefs

As Customs employees, we:

- » are not precluded from having personal beliefs, interests, and commitments, however, our work for Customs will not be compromised by any personal conviction or ethical viewpoint
- » work as directed and obey all lawful and reasonable instructions given by Customs and its managers, and will never disregard Customs' operating procedures or exercise decision-making responsibilities in a way that suits our personal views or beliefs.

2.3 We must support the New Zealand Customs Service to provide robust and unbiased advice

As Customs employees, we:

- » apply high standards of professionalism and impartiality to the advice we prepare, regardless of whether that advice is for Ministers or other decision-makers
- » provide honest, impartial, comprehensive, and objective advice, free of personal interest and/or political bias, reflecting an understanding of the policies and priorities of the Government
- » are aware of, and work in a manner supportive of, the responsibilities placed on Customs, and on our senior managers and advisers who work closely with Ministers.

2.4 We must respect the authority of the government of the day

As Customs employees, we:

- » undertake activities in a manner that reflects the knowledge that we can influence the trust and confidence the public have in the Government
- » keep confidential the advice we have given to Ministers, and comment on behalf of Customs only in accordance with Customs' policies for the release of official information
- » act professionally when publicly involved in commenting on matters relating to our organisation, and in a manner that reinforces our spirit of service to the community
- » not comment publicly on or criticise matters of current or proposed government policy, any programme Customs has in operation, or the activities of any other government organisation.



STANDARD 3: RESPONSIBLE

3.1 We must act lawfully and objectively

As Customs employees, we:

- » obey the law and do not engage in corrupt practices
- » act within our powers and within any delegated authority when making a decision, and not make any admission or promise on behalf of Customs or Government without authority
- » act objectively and with a balanced approach to our legislative responsibilities
- » maintain accurate, complete, and accessible records of the decisions and actions we take
- » recognise that a consequence of working in the State Service is that sometimes we have higher integrity obligations than other people do
- » be aware that public trust is influenced by public perception, and we will respond objectively if we become aware of any unlawful activities in our organisation
- » support Customs in taking decisive action when we learn that behavioural or performance standards are being breached. This includes co-operating with any investigation into the possible breach of such standards.

3.2 We must use Customs' resources carefully and only for intended purposes

As Customs employees, we:

- » use resources efficiently, effectively and economically, and account correctly for all transactions involving public money
- » acknowledge that Customs' resources are publicly owned and funded. We follow careful processes to ensure that financial, physical and staffing resources are committed responsibly, and do not incur liability on the part of Customs without appropriate authorisation
- » show reasonable care for and use Customs' property for authorised purposes only. Customs' telephones, technology-based resources and other office equipment are used for occasional

and moderate personal use that is lawful and reasonable and within policies and procedures, and are not used to operate a private business.

3.3 We must treat information with care and use it only for proper purposes

As Customs employees, we:

- » have a duty to handle official information appropriately and ensure that personal privacy rights are preserved
- » are familiar with legal obligations relating to the protection and release of official or personal information, and apply those provisions at all times
- » use information accessed or acquired through work solely for work purposes, disclosing it to others only with the authorisation to do so or if it is already available to the public through official sources
- » are discreet and apply appropriate security levels when discussing or disclosing Customs' information
- » provide true and accurate statements and information, and do not remove, alter or destroy official records without proper authority
- » give the public access to their own personal information, and make any official information available on request unless, there are specific legal or security reasons for withholding it. Such requests will be managed in accordance with legislation and Customs' policies and procedures.

3.4 We must work to improve the performance and efficiency of the New Zealand Customs Service

As Customs employees, we:

- » are aware of the sustainability implications of our actions at work
- » seek to make personal improvements in efficiency, in order to contribute to improvements in the overall efficiency of Customs through its systems and processes.

STANDARD 4: TRUSTWORTHY

4.1 We must be honest

As Customs employees, we:

- » are truthful and open, and act with a focus on accuracy and authenticity
- » set out facts and relevant issues truthfully so as not to encourage misunderstanding, and correct any errors as soon as possible
- » understand that this obligation is not only work-related, and that it arises at any time when the consequences of conduct that may be seen as dishonest and may have an impact on public trust or on the confidence that Ministers, Parliament, or others in the State Services, can have in Customs.

4.2 We must work to the best of our abilities

As Customs employees, we:

- » attend work on days of duty unless otherwise authorised, work diligently, and to the best of our abilities in order to demonstrate a spirit of service and promote trust
- » ensure personal relationships in the workplace do not affect the performance of official duties
- » refrain from conduct, such as the use of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs, which might affect work performance
- » keep accurate and readily accessible records of our decisions and actions in order to promote public understanding and to maintain community confidence
- » endeavour to improve the quality and quantity of our work and in doing so support others within and across organisations to share knowledge and expertise. We use personal development opportunities to increase our skills and the value we can add to our organisation.

4.3 We must ensure our actions are not affected by our personal relationships

As Customs employees, we:

- » ensure that our actions do not improperly benefit, or give preferential treatment to, family, friends, groups in which we have a personal interest, people we are connected with in any way
- » avoid circumstances where our personal relationships cause an actual or perceived conflict with the interests of Customs, and if such circumstances arise, we will declare them as soon as possible to enable management of any actual or perceived conflict of interest
- » are fair, unbiased and transparent in our actions which are able to bear close public scrutiny
- » seek to avoid actual or perceived bias as it places the impartiality of Customs at risk
- » are open with Customs and disclose personal relationships that might cause an actual or perceived conflict of interest. This is to ensure that there is no conflict with our official duties and no adverse effect on our employment, efficiency or performance. Such disclosure will enable an objective discussion about how possible or perceived affects can be avoided or mitigated.

4.4 We must never misuse our position for personal gain

As Customs employees, we:

- » have a range of roles, responsibilities, and powers under various legislation, which will be applied only for the intended purpose and in the intended way
- » remain impartial in our work and are not influenced in any decision-making process by personal interests or advantage to ourselves, or to any person or organisation with which we are connected
- » will not expect nor request special treatment when travelling, for example, special treatment regarding facilitation through airports or clearance of Customs formalities

4.5 We must decline gifts or benefits that place us under any obligation or perceived influence

As Customs employees, we:

- » are aware of the public perception that can result from accepting favours, benefits, and/or gifts
- » are careful about accepting any form of gift, benefit or gratuity that is not provided by Customs, and only accept anything offered to us in connection with our work if specifically permitted by Customs policy
- » declare all gifts received, and accept ceremonial gifts offered which thereafter become the property of Customs.

4.6 We must avoid any work or non-work interests or activities or that may harm the reputation of the New Zealand Customs Service or of the State Services Commission

As Customs employees, we:

- » understand that what we do in our personal lives is of no concern to Customs except where it may interfere with work performance, or reflects, or has the potential to reflect badly on the integrity or standing of Customs or the State Services
- » acknowledge that Customs has a legitimate interest in the activities of its employees if those activities are likely to affect relationships with the Government, other Members of Parliament, or the public
- » understand that involvement in some personal activities, including unlawful behaviour, or other incidents involving a breach of trust, may bring Customs into disrepute
- » will not at any time engage in associations that might raise reasonable doubts as to our suitability for continued employment in the New Zealand Customs Service

- » will consider, when making judgements about non-work activities:
 - the nature and circumstances of the activity
 - our position, duties, and responsibilities
 - the consequences of the activity on our ability to fulfil our duties and responsibilities
 - the effects of the activity or its consequences on Customs' relationships with Ministers and the public
 - any potential implications of the behaviour on levels of public trust in the State Services
- » are open with Customs and disclose any commitments, commercial activities, investments or other personal interests that might cause an actual or perceived conflict of interest. Customs employees will not undertake additional employment or be in commercial business without the consent of Customs. This is to ensure that there is no conflict with our official duties and no adverse effect on our employment, efficiency or performance, or the operations of Customs. Such disclosure will enable an objective discussion about how possible or perceived affects can be avoided or mitigated.

OTHER INFORMATION

Reporting of wrongdoing

As Customs employees, we have a responsibility to notify a manager or People and Capability advisor where we are concerned about our own or others' ability to act consistently with this Code of Conduct, or, where we have concerns about the behaviour or integrity demonstrated by colleagues, which could bring Customs or the State Services into disrepute.

We also have a specific responsibility to notify senior management where we have evidence of serious wrongdoing. Customs' Protected Disclosures Policy and Procedure can be applied in such circumstances.



CODE OF CONDUCT EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the New Zealand Customs Service Code of Conduct.

I have read the Code of Conduct, I understand it, and I agree to comply with the standards of integrity and conduct detailed herein.

I understand that behaviour inconsistent with this Code of Conduct is not acceptable, and that any such behaviour will be addressed in a timely manner and could result in disciplinary action under Customs' disciplinary policy and procedures.

Employee name:

Employee signature:

Witness name:

Witness signature:

Witness position title:

Date:

Please complete and return this acknowledgement form to your manager.

