



**Food Safety and Inspection Service**  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# LERD Conduct 101 Training Video

## Detailed Briefing Guide

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## **Purpose:**

This briefing document summarizes key themes, important ideas, and critical facts regarding employee conduct expectations for FSIS personnel, as presented in the LERD (Labor and Employee Relations Division) Conduct 101 video.

## **I. Overarching Themes**

The LERD training emphasizes that all FSIS employees must uphold the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Employee conduct is portrayed as "the gauge in which the public and industry perceive you, your peers, and FSIS." The training uses illustrative scenarios (often involving "Inspector Ian") to highlight common conduct issues and demonstrate both incorrect and correct responses. A recurring message is to seek guidance from supervisors or LERD when in doubt, as FSIS aims for employees to "thrive and succeed." Ultimately, individual actions are a "direct reflection on your coworkers, FSIS, and the Federal Government."

## **II. Key Conduct Issues and Expectations**

The training covers several specific areas of conduct, detailing how to avoid common pitfalls:

### **1. Absent Without Leave (AWOL)**

Problem: Failure to report for duty, follow call-in procedures, or obtain approved leave. "Inspector Ian isn't going to call in and expects his supervisor to have psychic abilities and know Inspector Ian is sick!" This is presented as a "bold move, but not one I'd recommend for career longevity."

Solution: Employees experiencing illness or needing leave must "call your supervisor before the start of your shift, request leave, and make sure you receive approval."

### **2. Government Issued Credit Card Misuse (Government Issued Travel Charge Card)**

Problem: Using the Government Issued Travel Charge Card for unauthorized purchases, personal expenses, or while not on official travel. "Inspector Ian is not on travel orders, and he doesn't have authorization to use the Government Issued Travel Charge Card. Furthermore, if he was on travel orders he could only use the Government Issued Travel Charge Card to pay for his own meal." The card is referred to as "what some think of as the 'Golden Ticket!'"

Solution: The card "must only be used while on official travel, for authorized purchases, and must be paid in full by the deadline on your credit card statement even if you have not been reimbursed for the expenses incurred." Employees are advised, "As tempting as it is to use your Government Issued Travel Charge Card to buy a brand-new big screen TV, please use your personal credit card or personal funds."

### 3. Conflicts of Interest & Accepting Gifts

Problem: Accepting gifts from plant personnel or engaging in actions that create the "appearance of a Conflict of Interest" or an actual "Conflict of Interest." The scenario shows Plant Supervisor Paul giving Inspector Ian a "50-lb box of high-quality steaks" with the expectation of favorable treatment ("You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours.").

Solution: Employees must decline gifts from regulated entities and "immediately report it to your supervisor." The narrator stresses, "Remember your integrity is important and don't do anything that can cause someone to question it."

### 4. Off-Duty Misconduct & Misuse of Official Position

Problem: Engaging in inappropriate actions while off-duty that can be connected to FSIS employment, especially if one identifies as an FSIS employee or seeks preferential treatment. District Manager Denise's "road rage" and subsequent display of her badge to police exemplify this: "She just connected her off duty conduct to her work with FSIS. She also is abusing her position to lessen or get out of a potential ticket."

Solution: Employees should separate their personal conduct from their official capacity. If stressed or in a potentially compromising situation, it is better to "pull over and get some rest."

### 5. Social Media Use

Problem: Discussing internal policies, using an official title/position, or making social media posts without Agency approval. Public Affairs Specialist Peggy's post, "I am a PAS at FSIS and even though we have a zero-tolerance policy for Marijuana/CBD, I encourage all of you to use it and ignore this FSIS policy," is a prime example of misuse.

Solution: "Unless you have Agency approval to make social media posts, don't do it. Don't use your official title or position and don't talk about internal guidance, policies, or protocols without permission."

### 6. Marijuana/Cannabidiol (CBD)

Problem: Possession or being under the influence of Marijuana/CBD while on official duty or in any Federal office or vehicle, despite state-level legalization. "While Marijuana/CBD is legal in some states, it is important to know that the Federal Government has not legalized it."

Solution: "Don't possess Marijuana or CBD or be under the influence of Marijuana/CBD while on official duty or in any Federal office or vehicle." This is presented as a way to avoid both social media and substance-related misconduct.

## 7. Government Vehicle (GOV) Misuse

Problem: Using a GOV for personal errands, transporting pets, or operating it unsafely. Compliance Investigator Carol speeding and transporting her dog "Spike" in a GOV illustrates prohibited personal use.

Solution: GOVs must be used "only for official purposes" and employees must "obey all traffic laws." Employees are explicitly reminded: "any employee who knowingly and willfully misused a G-O-V may be subjected to a mandatory 30-day suspension." No pets are allowed in GOVs.

## III. Call to Action

The training repeatedly emphasizes the importance of individual responsibility and the direct impact of personal conduct on the entire agency. Employees are encouraged to:

- Be mindful of their conduct, as it shapes public and industry perception.
- "When in doubt ask your supervisor for guidance or reach out to LERD."
- Recognize that their actions are a "direct reflection on your coworkers, FSIS, and the Federal Government."