



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

LERD Conduct 101 Training Video

Study Guide



Contents

Welcome	3
Short Answer Questions.....	3
Answer Key	4
Essay Format Questions.....	5
Glossary of Key Terms.....	5

Welcome

This study guide is designed to help you review and solidify your understanding of appropriate conduct and integrity standards for FSIS employees, as presented in the LERD training material.

Short Answer Questions

Directions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. Absent Without Leave (AWOL): What are the key steps an employee should take to avoid being marked AWOL when they are sick and cannot report for duty?
2. Government Issued Travel Charge Card Misuse: Under what specific circumstances is an FSIS employee authorized to use a Government Issued Travel Charge Card?
3. Conflict of Interest/Accepting Gifts: Describe the appropriate action an FSIS employee should take if offered a substantial gift (e.g., a large box of expensive steaks) from plant personnel they regulate.
4. Off-Duty Misconduct: Explain how off-duty conduct, such as road rage, can become punishable misconduct for an FSIS employee.
5. Misuse of Official Position: Provide an example from the material that illustrates the misuse of an official position by an FSIS employee.
6. Social Media Use: What are two key restrictions FSIS employees should be aware of regarding social media posts, particularly concerning internal policies or their official title?
7. Marijuana/CBD Policy: What is the Federal Government's stance on Marijuana/CBD use, and what are the implications for FSIS employees, even if it's legal in their state?

8. Government Vehicle (GOV) Misuse: Identify two specific examples of GOV misuse explicitly prohibited in the training material.
9. Reporting Misconduct: If an employee is unsure about a situation that could lead to misconduct, what resources are available for guidance?
10. Public Perception: According to the training, why is an FSIS employee's conduct so important in the eyes of the public and industry?

Answer Key

1. To avoid being marked AWOL, an employee must call their supervisor before the start of their shift, request leave (e.g., sick leave), and ensure they receive approval for that leave. Failing to follow these procedures can result in an AWOL designation.
2. An FSIS employee is authorized to use a Government Issued Travel Charge Card only while on official travel and for authorized purchases related to that travel. They are responsible for paying the full balance by the deadline, even if not yet reimbursed.
3. If offered a substantial gift from plant personnel, an FSIS employee should immediately decline the gift and report the incident to their supervisor. Accepting such gifts can create the appearance of a conflict of interest or an actual conflict.
4. Off-duty conduct can become punishable misconduct if an employee's inappropriate actions connect their personal behavior to their work with FSIS, especially if they identify themselves as an FSIS employee or attempt to use their position for preferential treatment.
5. The District Manager showing her inspection badge to a police officer after engaging in road rage and asking for preferential treatment is an example of misusing an official position. She leveraged her federal employment to try and avoid consequences for her personal actions.
6. FSIS employees should not discuss internal guidance, policies, or protocols on social media without Agency approval. Additionally, they should not use their official title or position in social media posts without FSIS permission.
7. The Federal Government has not legalized Marijuana/CBD, even if individual states have. FSIS employees are prohibited from possessing or being under the influence of Marijuana/CBD while on official duty or in any Federal office or vehicle.

8. Two specific examples of GOV misuse prohibited in the training include using the GOV for personal errands (like taking a pet to the groomer) and operating the GOV in an unsafe or erratic manner (like speeding).
9. If an employee is unsure about a situation that could lead to misconduct, they should ask their supervisor for guidance or reach out to the Labor and Employee Relations Division (LERD).
10. An FSIS employee's conduct is crucial because it serves as the gauge by which the public and industry perceive not only that individual but also their peers, the entire FSIS organization, and the Federal Government as a whole.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the various types of misconduct highlighted in the training material. Choose three different types and, for each, explain why it is problematic for an FSIS employee and how the "correct" scenario in the training demonstrated avoidance of that misconduct.
2. Analyze the concept of "integrity" as presented in the LERD training. How does the training define or illustrate integrity, and why is upholding the "highest standards of honesty and integrity" considered crucial for all FSIS employees? Provide specific examples from the scenarios to support your answer.
3. The training emphasizes the distinction between personal and official conduct, particularly concerning Government-Issued Travel Charge Cards, Off-Duty Misconduct, and Government Vehicles. Explain why it is vital for FSIS employees to clearly separate these two spheres of their lives and the potential repercussions if they fail to do so.
4. Consider the role of the Narrator in the training material. How does the Narrator facilitate learning about employee conduct? Discuss the different techniques the Narrator uses (e.g., direct address, pausing, rewinding, commentary) to reinforce the key messages about integrity and misconduct.
5. The training covers common conduct issues. Identify what you believe to be the two most significant themes or overarching principles that connect all these diverse misconduct types. Provide specific examples from at least four different misconduct scenarios to illustrate these themes.

Glossary of Key Terms

Absent Without Leave (AWOL): Failing to report for duty without obtaining prior approval for leave. This occurs when an employee does not follow proper call-in procedures and leave is not granted.

Conflict of Interest: A situation in which an individual's personal interests or relationships could potentially compromise or appear to compromise their professional judgment or actions in their official capacity.

Accepting Gifts: Receiving items of value from individuals or entities that could be perceived as an attempt to influence official duties, especially from those regulated by FSIS.

Government Issued Credit Card Misuse (Government Issued Travel Charge Card Misuse): Using a federally issued credit card for unauthorized purchases, personal expenses, or outside of official travel.

Off Duty Misconduct: Inappropriate or illegal actions taken by an employee while not on official duty that may still reflect negatively on their agency or position, especially if they identify themselves as a federal employee.

Social Media Use: Posting content online that may be inappropriate for a federal employee, especially if it discusses internal policies without permission, uses an official title without authorization, or promotes behavior contrary to agency policy.

Marijuana/Cannabidiol (CBD): Cannabis-derived substances. While legal in some states, federal law prohibits their possession or influence on federal employees while on duty or in federal facilities/vehicles.

Government Vehicle (GOV) Misuse: Using a government-owned vehicle for personal errands, transporting unauthorized individuals or items, or operating it in an unsafe or illegal manner.

Misuse of Official Position: Using one's federal employment or authority for personal gain, preferential treatment, or to circumvent laws and regulations.

FSIS (Food Safety and Inspection Service): The agency within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) responsible for ensuring the nation's commercial supply of meat, poultry, and egg products is safe, wholesome, and correctly labeled and packaged.

LERD (Labor and Employee Relations Division): The division responsible for providing training and guidance on labor and employee relations matters, including employee conduct and integrity, within FSIS.

Non-compliance Report (NR): A formal document issued by an inspector indicating that a facility or operation is not meeting regulatory requirements.