

HR NEWS – JUNE 2009

FROM THE DESK OF THE TEAM AT PSC

Code of Conduct

The Commission cannot emphasise strongly the need for all public servants to observe and to abide by the Public Service Values and Code of Conduct. The major purpose for having the Code is to encourage good behaviour, lift the quality of our performance and service delivery and strengthen the level of trust that the public, Cabinet and Parliament have in the Public Service. As public servants, we have a collective responsibility to make sure this happens. Where change is needed, we must make them. Don't wait for someone else to make them because we might not like it. And more importantly, to quote US President Barack Obama: *"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek"*.

This is not to say that our performance has been sub-standard or that there is a lack of trust in the Service by the public. What the Code and other checks and balances like the Treasury Instructions does, is to ensure that we do not become complacent or fall into bad habits.

The main Principles underpinning the Code are:

1. Public servants should fulfill their lawful obligations to Government with professionalism and integrity. (Section 17 & 19 of the PS Act 2004)
2. Public servants should perform their official duties honestly, faithfully and efficiently, respecting the rights of the public as well as those of their colleagues. (Section 17 & 19 of the PS Act 2004)
3. Public servants should not bring the Public Service into disrepute through

their private activities. (Section 17 & 19 of the PS Act 2004)

4. Public servants must not abuse their official position for personal gain. **They must not expect, ask for or accept gifts, monies, or any benefits or rewards, or be seen to compromise their integrity or the integrity of their Ministry.** (Section 19 of the PS Act 2004 and Sections 35 & 40 of the Public Service Regulations 2008)

Among other things, PS Values and the Code of Conduct together, reinforces in us, **as servants of the public, the 'spirit of service'**, while warning that corrupt behaviour is not tolerated; that any breach of the standards may well lead, not only to termination of employment, but to the offender facing criminal.

The Commission's Office has a supply of give-away bookmarks that spells out clearly what these Samoa Public Service Values are. We encourage everyone to have one on their desks. If possible, you can have these Values printed on the flipside of your business cards.



Annual Leave

As part of PSC's Monitoring & Evaluation role, we recently carried out a spot check of Ministries Leave Records. It is pleasing to see that most Ministries, especially some large ones, have already updated their Leave Records. However, there are still others who need to work on theirs before we next call. And to remind you all again, except for leave for the current year, all untaken leave from the previous year should have been forfeited by now. (Working Conditions and Entitlements Manual 2009, 13A 7.7 p31). **They are not to be paid out.**

HR NEWS – JUNE 2009

FROM THE DESK OF THE TEAM AT PSC

Appointments must be merit-based

All appointments to the Public Service are to be made on the basis of merit (Sections 18(a) and 36 of the PS Act 2004). This requires the assessment of applicants according to their skills and abilities, experience, qualifications, personal attributes and past work performance. Personal attributes include being honest. Section 9 of the Job Application Form requires the applicant to declare whether he/she has any criminal conviction or disciplinary action taken against them. False declaration may result in one's appointment being revoked. And past performance include attendance. As stated in the Recruitment and Selection Manual, "referee reports provide valuable insight into an applicant's current work performance. It is desirable that reports be gained for all interviewed applicants preferably from those who can comment on their work performance [and attendance] such as current or previous supervisors".

Chairperson of the interview panel must ensure that these checks are carried out before sending their Selection Outcome Report to the PSC.

Again, be reminded that Section 19(b) - Code of Conduct - requires us to 'work carefully and diligently'.

Gentle reminder



A fair number of Job Applications including those for contract positions are noted for their lack of information. The reason why you are required to complete each section of the application form fully, and to use extra paper if necessary, is to enable the interview panel to carry out a fair assessment on you. Interview panellists are not mind readers. They can only assess you on the information you have provided. One ACEO found out the hard way recently, when his position was advertised,

that not filling the application form properly, not only cost him an interview, (he wasn't short listed); it cost him his job. As said in previous newsletters, contract officers **must not** take their position for granted. Once their contract is over, they are back to zero and will be treated like every other applicant. And their performance record may well speak against them. **We therefore encourage everyone eligible to apply when these contract positions are advertised and let the Commission know if your superior(s) discouraged you from applying.**

Progress Report of Review - Contract Employment

Workshops will be conducted by the PSC from 8-9 July 2009 to present to all contract employees "Issues" identified during the review whereby CEOs and all contract employees were requested to attend when our Office carried out consultations from 31st March - 8th May 2009. Contract employees will be asked during these workshops to review current policies and identify issues that need to be addressed for the development of policies to guide the employment of the executive level. It is very important that all contract employees attend these workshops to share their views and suggestions in the formulation of policies pertaining to Working Conditions & Entitlements, Performance Management and the Recruitment and Selection process.

And from the editing team, we say:

A public servant, who is afraid of doing what is right, is a public servant who is afraid of his conscience.

Please send any feedback to co-editor Moira Avalii Vitale (mavalii@psc.gov.ws)



Coming soon July's HR News!

Access the HR News on-line at <http://www.psc.gov.ws>

PSCNL/11