# Internal Affairs Unit

Office of the Chief Secretary, North Central Province,
Anuradhapura

# Code of Ethics



Date of Issue:- 20.10.2026

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## 1. Introduction

With the objective of establishing an integrity-driven public service in Sri Lanka, this Code of Ethics is introduced to enhance professionalism and ethical behavior among public officers, and to build a respectful service culture that safeguards public trust, which must be upheld and followed by public officers. This Code of Ethics shall serve as a guideline for the professional conduct and ethical role in duty of all staff members employed at the Chief Secretariat.

This Code of Ethics shall be implemented in conjunction with, and subject to, the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, all relevant laws and provisions applicable from time to time, the Establishment Code, Procedural Rules of the Public Service Commission, Financial Regulations, circulars, and other instructions and directives issued by competent authorities. Accordingly, all staff members employed at the Office of the chief Secretary are strictly required to observe the following ethics and behavioral guidelines.

## 2. Objectives of the Code of Ethics

### I. Safeguarding Integrity and Transparency

Building an exemplary culture of integrity free from corruption, reflecting the highest standards of discipline, transparency, and honesty in the public service.

### II. Ensuring Commitment to Public Service, Responsibility, Accountability, and Public Trust

Working with enthusiasm and dedication to achieve the policy objectives of the government, thereby further strengthening public trust in governance.

### III. Ensuring Professional Competence, Efficient, and Effective Service Delivery

Providing a high-quality service by making maximum use of the skills possessed by the officers.

### IV. Ensuring a Pleasant Working Environment

Minimizing the stress of officers and ensuring the opportunity to work within a pleasant working environment.

## 3. Core Ethical Values

All staff members must observe principles such as compliance with rules and regulations, commitment to public service, professionalism and providing quality service, responsibility, accountability, integrity, equality and fairness, ensuring financial transparency, avoidance of negligence, politeness, dignified behavior, reliability, efficiency, professional competence, cooperation and mutual respect, and ethical conduct while performing their duties.

### 3.1. Compliance with Rules and Regulations

Must have an awareness of and act in compliance with the Constitution, Public Service Commission Procedural Rules, Financial Regulations, Establishment Code, financial regulatory circulars, Cabinet decisions, procurement guidelines, Public Administration circulars, contemporary directives/orders, regulations and provisions, and internal institutional circulars and other rules and regulations.

### 3.2. Commitment to Public Service and Professionalism

**I. Maintaining Professional Image and Reputation:**

Must maintain proper conduct as a public officer both during and outside working hours, and avoid illegal, wrongful, disrespectful, or unseemly behaviors. Must refrain from any activity that damages the reputation of the institution or the government. Must interact cordially with others. Must uphold high standards of responsibility and accountability in fulfilling one's role, avoid negligence, and act in a manner that builds trust. Furthermore, decisions and actions must be taken for public welfare without expecting financial or material benefits or personal gains for oneself or associates. Must attend the office dressed appropriately.

**II. Engaging in Duties Efficiently:**

Reporting/leaving and recording for duties must be done on time, and tasks entrusted must be carried out promptly and attentively in accordance with laws, guidelines, instructions, and professional standards.

**III. Avoiding Aberrant Behavior:**

Must refrain from dealing with staff or the public using obscene, harassing, or divisive words, behaviors, or language.

**IV. Proper Utilization of Official Leave:**

Except for genuine emergencies, prior approval must be obtained before taking leave.

**V. Identity:**

To ensure accountability, official identity cards or name tags must be worn during working hours, or identity must be readily disclosed without hesitation.

**VI. Guidance:**

To assist subordinate and new officers honestly and kindly to overcome their weaknesses and develop skills, and to provide opportunities for the same.

**VII. Freedom from Substance Abuse:**

Must completely refrain from activities such as consuming alcohol or using illegal substances within the institutional premises or during working hours.

**VIII. Political Neutrality:**

Performing duties without the influence of personal political views and respecting the authority of the government.

### 3.3. Responsibility

Officers must perform their duties honestly and faithfully, upholding the dignity of the public service, and executing the duties and responsibilities of their post in accordance with relevant rules, regulations, circulars, procedures, and policies.

### 3.4. Accountability

Must act in a manner that bears the responsibility of answering to the public, the law, and relevant authorities regarding the decisions made, projects implemented, and the utilization of public funds by the Provincial Council and its institutions for the people.

### 3.5. Integrity

Must fulfill the responsibilities of the public service with the highest degree of honesty, impartiality, and law-abidingness without succumbing to any undue advantage, so as to preserve public trust.

### 3.6. Equality and Fairness

**I. Equality:**

Treating all members of the public visiting the institution for services equally without discrimination based on race, religion, gender, social status, rank, or other reasons, providing equal opportunities to meet their needs, and treating them equally regarding rights and dignity.

**II. Fairness:**

Services must be provided impartially, and all members of the public must be treated politely, respectfully, fairly, and without discrimination.

### 3.7. Ensuring Financial Transparency

Acting truthfully, without confidentiality (except for matters where confidentiality must be maintained), and in a manner visible to all, in compliance with financial regulations when utilizing public funds and state money.

### 3.8. Maintaining Good Public Relations

Achieving a level of professional behavior that enhances and maintains public trust and recognition at a good level, giving clients a good reception, addressing them respectfully, and providing a cordial service.

### 3.9. Reliability

Must build trust in the system among the public and senior officers by executing duties accurately and honestly.

### 3.10. Displaying the Citizens' Charter

Must display the Citizens' Charter and provide an efficient and effective service to clients in compliance with it.

### 3.11. Ensuring the Right to Information

Must ensure the right of the public to know information about the officers providing services to them.

### 3.12. Non-misuse of State Resources and Services

State resources must be used exclusively for government functions and must not be used for personal matters.

## 4. Refusal of Gifts

All staff members are prohibited from requesting or accepting any gift, money, gratuity, commission, personal discount, award, free service, invitation, employment, contract, tour, loan, release or settlement of any other obligation, sexual favor, or any other advantage that could be perceived or is likely to influence directly or indirectly their official decisions or duty-related activities. Violation of these regulations shall be considered an offense subject to disciplinary rules in the public service, other relevant laws, as well as the Anti-Corruption Act.

## 5. Avoidance of Bribery and Corruption

### I. Abstaining from Acts of Bribery:

Requesting or accepting any gift (money, property, favor, etc.) as an inducement or reward for performing, expediting, delaying, obstructing, or refraining from performing any official duty by a staff member shall be considered a bribe, and all such actions must be completely avoided.

All staff members of the institution, upon being offered a bribe, requested to make an illegal payment, or becoming aware of information regarding such an attempt, must immediately report it to the Head of the Institution, the Internal Affairs Unit established within the institution, or the relevant authorities.

### II. Abstaining from Corrupt Practices:

Performing any act by misusing one's position as a staff member with the intention of causing illegal loss to the government or securing an illegal advantage for oneself or another person shall be considered the commission of a corrupt practice, and all such actions must be completely avoided.

All staff members of the institution, upon becoming aware of corruption, an attempt at corruption, or information regarding such an act, must immediately report it to the Head of the Institution, the Internal Affairs Unit established within the institution, or the designated authorities.

All forms of activities, including offering, accepting, or soliciting bribes, and engaging in corrupt practices, constitute severe disciplinary offenses and shall be considered criminal offenses subject to prosecution and punishment under the relevant laws.

## 6. Maintaining Financial Transparency and Declaration of Assets

### I. Financial Discipline:

Must refrain from any act related to illicit generation of income or any other financial irregularity, and must not abet such actions.

### II. Reporting Illegal Activities:

Any person having knowledge or information regarding any illegal income generation must report the same to the appropriate authorities.

### III. Declaration of Assets and Liabilities:

In accordance with the Anti-Corruption Act No. 9 of 2023, all relevant staff members must submit declarations of assets and liabilities on or before the specified date in the relevant instances as stipulated therein.

Violation of these regulations shall be considered an offense subject to disciplinary rules of the public service, other relevant laws, as well as the Proceeds of Crime Act and the Anti-Corruption Act.

## 7. Prevention of Conflicts of Interest

This refers to the risk where an official decision taken by a staff member is not impartial, fair, or public-friendly due to family ties, business connections, or personal or friendly relationships.

When a conflict of interest exists, the following guidelines must be strictly observed:



**I**. When it is known that a conflict of interest exists or appears to exist in relation to any official decision or activity, it must be reported in writing to the superior authority as soon as possible.

**II**. Must refrain from being a member of a decision-making committee where such a conflict of interest exists, and shall only be involved in the process if direct written approval has been granted by the designated authority.

**III**. Shall not hold businesses, secondary employments, professional activities, or board memberships that conflict with official responsibilities or through which confidential official information could be used for personal gain.

**IV**. All official decisions must be taken solely based on achieving the objectives of one's institution, public benefit, and public service ethics.

Instances of failing to obey the above guidelines constitute disciplinary offenses and shall be considered offenses subject to prosecution and punishment under the relevant laws.

## 8. Public Financial Management and Procurement

**I**. Financial Management: Financial management must be carried out prudently and with due care, in compliance with financial laws and regulations.

**II**. Value for Money: It must be ensured that public funds are utilized wisely, economically, and exclusively for official duties.

**III.** Financial Responsibility: It must be ensured that all transactions related to public funds are accurately accounted for, and only authorized persons shall make expenditure decisions.

**IV**. Procurement Transparency: It must be ensured that all procurement processes, including tender evaluations, awarding of contracts, and project approvals, are conducted fairly, lawfully, based on competitiveness, and without bias, in accordance with procurement guidelines.

**V**. Conduct Regarding Financial Matters: Non-misuse of public funds. Acting in accordance with Provincial Financial Rules, guidelines of the Finance Commission, and other circulars.

## 9. Utilization of Institutional Assets and Resources

**I.** Utilization of State Resources: Institutional vehicles, equipment, assets, and facilities must not be used for personal purposes or profit.

**II.** Prevention of Waste: Misuse, wastage, or unauthorized use of institutional assets must be actively prevented.

**III.** Security of State Property: Officers using vehicles and other equipment must comply with all standards and safety regulations. Assets must be recorded in relevant registers and maintained systematically.

**IV**. Technological Usage: Computer systems, network software, equipment, the internet, and office email must be used strictly for official duties, and unauthorized software must not be installed.

**V**. Returning of Assets: Upon transfer or retirement, all government-owned equipment, files, and identity cards received in custody must be returned.

**VI**. Purchase of State Property: A person involved in duties related to the disposal process of institutional goods or the valuation of auction items must refrain from purchasing such assets/property and must ensure they do not act for the benefit or profit of friends. When a purchase of state property is made by a staff member, relevant laws, gazette notifications, and procedures must be fully complied with, ensuring transparency, fairness, and proper authorized approval.

**VII**. Reporting Illegal Activities: It is the responsibility of all staff members to prevent the wastage, damage, illegal, or unauthorized use of state property and services, and to promptly report such incidents to senior administration.

## 10. Confidentiality and Security of Data and Information

**I**. **Confidentiality**: All personal, professional, or sensitive data and information received during the course of all official duties must be maintained confidentially, and such information shall only be disclosed when explicitly authorized by the Head of the Institution, an officer empowered by the Head of the Institution, or when expressly permitted by law.

**II. Prohibition of Misuse**: Must completely refrain from providing information obtained during the performance of official duties to unauthorized parties for personal gain or commercial benefits.

**III. Information Systems Security:** Usernames, passwords, and access codes must be kept confidential and under no circumstances shared with unauthorized parties. Modifying, copying, or destroying software and data systems on computers is strictly prohibited.

**IV**. **Media Relations:** Must refrain from expressing views to the media or releasing any official matter concerning ministry/institutional policies to social media without due authorized permission.

**V**. **Reporting:** If any suspicious incidents regarding information security occur, they must be promptly reported to the relevant authority.

**VI**. **Confidentiality and Security:** The responsibility of maintaining all utilized information systems, databases, and communication networks in a secure, clear, and reliable manner is vested in all staff members.

## 11. Purchase of State Property by Public Servants

Staff members must not participate in such purchases when purchasing state property through auctions, tenders, or sales processes conducted by the government results in an unfair advantage being gained by them due to their official status.

When a purchase of state property is made by a staff member, relevant laws, gazette notifications, and procedures must be fully complied with, ensuring transparency, fairness, and proper authorized approval.

## 12. Working Environment and Culture

**I**. Peaceful Working Environment: A peaceful working environment free from harassment, threats, and intimidation must be created so that all staff members can properly carry out their duties.

**II.** Sexual Harassment: Any behavior related to sexual harassment must be strictly prevented, and a safe working environment must be ensured for all staff members.

**III**. Freedom from Substance Abuse: An environment free from alcohol and drugs must be maintained within the office premises and during working hours.

**IV**. Avoidance of Smoking: Smoking must not be carried out within the office premises and in areas where smoking is prohibited.

**V**. Health and Well-being: It is the responsibility of the staff to maintain the working environment in a clean, safe, and sound manner, to follow safety procedures and standards in all office and field operations, and to care for their physical and mental well-being.

**VI**. Respect for Others: All staff members bear the responsibility of acting in a manner that preserves mutual respect, regardless of grade or position, ensuring that staff are not divided, oppressed, or subjected to other unfair activities.

**VII**. Teamwork: It is the responsibility of the staff to work collectively with mutual trust and harmony to achieve the goals of the institution.

## 13. Restrictions on Political Activities

**I**. Participation in Political Activities: Must be carried out strictly in accordance with the laws, Establishment Code, and circulars issued by the government concerning public servants.

**II**. Expressing Political Views: While staff members have the right to hold personal political views, strict political neutrality must be maintained when performing official duties.

**III**. Non-use of Office Resources for Political Activities: It is prohibited to use official authority, state resources, buildings, vehicles, equipment, information systems, or working hours for the promotion of political parties, candidates, or campaigns.

## 14. Compliance with the Code of Ethics

**I**. This Code of Ethics helps all staff members maintain official discipline and proper conduct. Therefore, the staff must read, understand, and follow this Code of Conduct. If any doubtful situation arises, necessary clarifications must be obtained from the appropriate authority.

**II**. The violation of this Code of Ethics by any staff member shall be considered a violation of existing rules, regulations, circulars, and orders of the Head of the Institution, and actions may be taken regarding such acts under the relevant provisions.

**III**. By following this Code of Ethics, it will ensure that the Office of the Chief Secretariat of the North Central Province provides a reliable, respectful, and efficient service to the Sri Lankan public.

## 15. Acknowledgment Form

I have read and thoroughly understood the Code of Ethics of the Office of the Chief Secretariat of the North Central Province. I agree to act in compliance with the guidelines set forth herein, and I also understand that violation of these guidelines may lead to penalties under existing laws.

| No | Officer's Full Name | Officer's Designation | Officer's Signature | Date |
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