

Code of Conduct

Ministry of Health and Mass Media

Applicable to:

All staff members serving in the Ministry of Health and Mass Media.

Issued by:

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OUR VISION: HEALTH SECTION

"A healthier nation that contributes to its economic, social, mental and spiritual Development"

OUR VISION: MASS MEDIA SECTION

"A well-informed pluralistic and dynamic society "

OUR MISSION: HEALTH SECTION

"To contribute to social and economic development of Sri Lanka by achieving the highest attainable health status through promotive, preventive, creative and rehabilitative services of high quality made available and accessible to people of Sri Lanka"

OUR MISSION: MASS MEDIA SECTION

"Formulating, facilitating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies and strategies in order to establish a people friendly development oriented free and responsible Sri Lankan media culture."

1. Introduction

The Ministry of Health and Mass Media is a leading government institution entrusted with the responsibility of delivering essential and sensitive healthcare services and promoting a professional media culture. The successful, efficient, and reliable delivery of these services requires the highest standards of professional discipline, transparency and accountability.

Accordingly, this Code of Conduct has been introduced to provide ethical and behavioral guidelines for all employees of the Ministry of Health and Mass Media, to promote a corruption-free administration, and to safeguard the rights, dignity of service recipients, the general public, and journalists.

Further, this Code of Conduct establishes professional responsibilities for all members of staff and served as an indispensable guide for granting a respectable and fair healthcare service with higher standards to service recipients while promoting a professional media culture.

However, this Code of Conduct shall be implemented and interpreted in conjunction with the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, all applicable laws, rules and provisions in force from time to time, the Establishments Code, the Procedural Rules of the Public Service Commission, the Financial Regulations, circulars, and any other instructions or directives issued by the competent authorities. The provisions of this Code of Conduct shall be applied subject to the aforesaid legal and regulatory framework.

2. Objective

The objectives of this Code of Conduct are to guide professional behavior of the staff in Ministry of Health and Mass Media and enhancing reliability, transparency and quality of public service delivery while promoting dissemination of information to the General Public.

3. Professional Conduct

- I. All officers serving in the Ministry of Health and Mass Media shall maintain integrity, transparency, fairness, honesty, ethical conduct, prevention of irregularities, and accountability in the performance of their official duties.
- II. All official duties shall be performed in compliance with the Constitution, Acts, Establishments Code, Procedural Rules of the Public Service Commission, Financial Regulations, Government Procurement Guidelines, and the circulars, orders, and instructions applicable to the Ministry.
- III. Officers shall conduct themselves in a proper and dignified manner both during and outside official working hours and shall refrain from engaging in any unlawful, improper, disrespectful, or inappropriate conduct.
- IV. Shall maintain a professional standard of personal appearance in a manner that protects and upholds the reputation of the Ministry of Health and Mass Media.
- V. Shall be unreservedly loyal to the Government.
- VI. Shall report for duty and leave duty at the prescribed times and record their attendance accordingly and they shall perform the duties assigned to them with due diligence, in compliance with the applicable laws, guidelines, instructions, and professional standards and without delay.
- VII. Officers shall enhance their competencies to carry out their official responsibilities in an efficient manner and all staff members selected by the Ministry from time to time to participate in capacity building and training programmes shall be required to attend such programmes.
- VIII. Shall avoid using obscene, harassing, or discriminatory words, behaviour, or language when dealing with staff or the general public.
- IX. Officers shall ensure that all resources used in the performance of official duties are utilized efficiently and without waste.
- X. Officers shall strictly refrain from engaging in activities such as consuming liquor or narcotic drugs within the premises of place of work or during working hours.
- XI. Officers shall perform their official duties impartially and without influence from personal political opinions.

4. Public Relations

Services provided to service recipients by the Health and Mass Media sectors shall be delivered in a fair, safe, and transparent manner. Accordingly,

- I. In dealing with the general public, officers shall provide services respectfully, courteously, cordially, and with humility, while upholding the ethics of the public service.
- II. Services shall be provided to all persons and clients without discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, religion, political opinion, or social status. Services shall be provided appropriately to persons with special needs, as required.
- III. The confidentiality of all information and data provided by the general public shall be strictly protected and such information shall be used solely for official purposes.
- IV. Public concerns shall be listened to patiently, and guidance shall be provided. Officers shall actively assist members of the general public who lack awareness regarding legal procedures or other relevant requirements.
- V. Accurate information required shall be provided without delay, unless restricted by law.
- VI. In serving the general public, shall comply with the legal provisions relating to the Official Languages Policy.
- VII. Public complaints and requests shall be addressed impartially and promptly.

5. Compliance with Laws and Regulations

- Shall act in compliance with the Constitution of Sri Lanka, and the applicable laws, regulations, circulars, and internal orders.
- Shall not be involved in any unlawful, unjust, or improper conduct.

5.1 Prevention of Bribery and Corruption

- I. Offering, accepting, or requesting bribes, and engaging in corrupt practices constitute serious disciplinary offences and officers shall be mindful that such acts are punishable under the Rules of Disciplinary Procedure of the Public Service, other applicable laws, and the Anti-Corruption Act, and are subject to criminal prosecution. Accordingly, officers shall perform their duties with due care and responsibility.
- II. Special attention shall be drawn to fostering integrity and ethical conduct among public officers by strictly refraining from such practices.

III. Refraining from Acts of Bribery :

requesting, accepting, or offering of any present (money, property, favors, etc.) by any staff member of the Ministry, as an inducement to perform, expedite, delay, obstruct, or refrain from performing any official duty, shall be considered a bribe. Such acts must be strictly avoided.

All staff members of the Ministry shall immediately report to the Head of the Institution or the Internal Affairs Unit established within the Institution or the relevant authorities any instance in which they are offered a bribe, requested to make an unlawful payment, or become aware of any attempt of such nature.

IV. Refraining from Acts of Corruption:

Any act committed by a staff member of the Ministry, involving the misuse of his/her position with the intention of causing unlawful loss to the Government or obtaining an unlawful advantage for himself/herself or for another person, shall be considered an act of corruption, and such acts shall be strictly avoided.

All staff members of the Ministry, upon becoming aware of any corruption, attempted corruption, or any such act, shall immediately report it to the Head of the Institution or the Internal Affairs Unit established within the Institution or to the relevant authorities.

V. You must perform your duties responsibly, bearing in mind that giving, receiving, requesting bribes, and engaging in corrupt practices, are serious disciplinary offences and are punishable under the Rules of Disciplinary Procedure of the Public Service, other relevant laws, and the Anti-Corruption Act, and are subject to criminal prosecution.

VI. Your special attention should be given to the complete avoidance of such acts in order to promote integrity and ethical conduct among public officers.

5.2 Avoiding Conflicts of Interest

I. There shall be no conflict between a staff member's official duties and his/her personal, friendship, kinship, or business ties.

II. The following guidelines should be adhered when a conflict of interest exists or is known to exist in connection with any official decision or activity:

- The relevant interests should be reported in writing to the higher authority as soon as possible.
- If a conflict of interest is observed in any situation, the relevant supervisory officers should be informed, and the employee should withdraw from such acts.
- In the event of a conflict of interest, such a process should only be engaged in if direct written approval has been given by the relevant authority.

III Should not engage in business, secondary employment, or professional activities that conflict with their official duties or that may involve the use of confidential official information for personal gain.

IV. All official decisions should be made solely on the basis of fulfilling the objectives of the institution, public benefits, and public service ethics.

V. Failure to disclose conflicts between duties and personal interests, or performing duties without disclosing a conflict of interest, shall be considered as offences punishable under the Rules of Disciplinary Procedure of the Public Service, other relevant laws, and the Anti-Corruption Act, and shall be subject to criminal prosecution.

5.3 Refraining from Accepting Presents

I. All staff members serving in the Ministry are prohibited from requesting or accepting any gift, award, personal discount, free service, invitation, travel, loan, or any other benefit that may be perceived to influence, directly or indirectly, their official decisions or duties.

II. Violation of these rules shall be considered an offence under the Rules of Disciplinary Procedure of the Public Service, other relevant laws, and the Anti-Corruption Act.

6. Avoiding Financial Irregularities and Declaration of Assets

- I. Any act relating to the unlawful earning of income or any other financial irregularity should be avoided, and such acts shall not be supported.
- II. Any person who has knowledge or information regarding the illegal earning of income shall inform the competent authority thereof.
- III. Every relevant staff member shall submit his/her declaration of assets and liabilities within the prescribed time limit in accordance with the Anti-Corruption Act.
- IV. Violation of these terms shall be considered an offence punishable under the Rules of Disciplinary Procedure of the Public Service, other relevant laws, the Proceeds of Crime Act, and the Anti-Corruption Act.

7. Financial management and Procurement

- I. Public finance shall be utilized economically, transparently and responsibly in accordance with financial rules and regulations.
- II. All transactions involving public funds shall be recorded accurately in accounts. The decisions relating to incurrence of expenditure shall be taken only by duly authorized persons.
- III. Reimbursement of expenses incurred in the performance of official duties shall be limited strictly to actual and properly incurred expenditures, and shall be carried out in an honest and equitable manner.
- IV. All the purchasing processes shall be carried out on the principles of fairness, transparency and competitiveness.
- V. It shall be ensured that all procurement activities, including the evaluation of tenders and the awarding of contracts, are conducted on the principles of fairness, legality, competitiveness, and impartiality.

8. Utilization of resources and property of the Ministry

- I. Public property shall be utilized effectively solely for official tasks and shall not be misused. The assets and facilities of the Ministry shall not be used for personal gains and private profits.
- II. Officers who use official vehicles, official residences, and other State property shall ensure that such assets are properly maintained in accordance with all applicable standards and safety procedures.
- III. In a transfer or retirement, all government owned inventory items including equipment, files shall be duly and systematically handed over.
- IV. Computer systems, network software, internet and official email shall be used solely for official purposes.
- V. In the event of purchasing a State property by a member of staff, it shall be done in compliance with applicable laws, Gazette notifications and prescribed procedures ensuring transparency, fairness and due authorization.
- VI. Any officer engaged in the Ministry's asset disposal process or in the valuation of auction items shall abstain from purchasing such assets or property and shall ensure that no actions are taken to confer undue benefit or advantage to friends or associates.
- VIII. Wherever damage to, or misuse of, State property is observed, it is a responsibility of all members of staff to report such incidents to the relevant authorities or the Internal Affairs Unit, either with or without disclosure of identity, or to take appropriate measures to prevent such damage.

9. Confidentiality and Protection of Information

- I. All personal, professional, and sensitive data and information received in the course of official duties shall be maintained in strict confidence. Such information shall not be disclosed orally, in writing or by any other means without permission.
- II. Protection of information systems shall be a responsibility of all staff members and authorized users. User names, pass words and access codes shall be treated as confidential and shall not be shared with unauthorized parties.

III. Data systems in computers shall not be altered, copied and destroyed. The responsibility of maintaining accuracy and reliability of all information systems, databases and communication networks shall be assigned to the members of staff. .

IV. No member of staff or authorized user shall express opinions to the media or through social media in an official capacity without prior authorization.

V. All members of staff shall be responsible for promptly reporting any suspicious activity affecting the protection of information to the relevant authority.

10. Participation in political activities

I. Participation in political activities shall be strictly in accordance with the laws applicable to public officers, the Establishments Code, and the circulars issued by the Government.

II. Official powers, Government resources, buildings, vehicles, equipment, information systems, or official working hours shall not be used to support or promote any political party, candidate, or political campaign.

11. Workplace environment

I. A cordial and conducive working environment shall be maintained to enable all officers to perform their official duties to the best of their ability.

II. Maintaining a clean, safe, and orderly working environment, and ensuring adherence to health and safety procedures and standards in both office and field activities, shall be the responsibility of both the staff and the Ministry.

III. A safe and peaceful working environment, free from harassment, intimidation, and threats, shall be ensured to enable all members of staff to discharge their duties effectively.

IV. An alcohol and drug-free environment shall be maintained within the office premises during office hours.

IV. It is the responsibility of staff members to work collectively with mutual trust and harmony to achieve the objectives of the Ministry.

12. Compliance with the Code of Conduct

I. This Code of Conduct helps to maintain workplace discipline and proper conduct among all staff members. Therefore, staff members should read, understand, and comply with this Code of Conduct. In case of doubt, clarification should be sought from the competent authority.

II. Violation of this Code of Conduct by any staff member shall be considered a violation of existing rules, circulars, and orders of the Head of Institution and such actions may be dealt with under the relevant provisions.

III. By adhering to this Code of Conduct, the Ministry of Health and Mass Media will ensure the provision of reliable, respectful, and efficient service to the general public of Sri Lanka.