

Hatch Act Do's and Don'ts

The Hatch Act prohibits Postal Service and many other federal government employees from engaging in political activity at the following times:

- **While on duty.**
- **While wearing a uniform, badge, insignia, or similar item that identifies the employee's agency or position.**
- **While on government-owned or -leased property.**
- **While using a government-owned or -leased vehicle.**
- **While using a privately-owned vehicle in the discharge of official duties.**

(All of the above are referred to below as "while on duty or in the workplace".)

In some cases, the Hatch Act prohibits political activity even while not on duty or in the workplace.

"Political activity" is defined as activity directed toward the success or failure of a political party, a candidate for a partisan political office, or a partisan political group.

DO's

Examples of permitted political activity include the following, as limited by the below-noted "DON'Ts", including that you may not engage in political activity while on duty or in the workplace or while using government property such as a computer, phone, or email system:

- ✓ Express my opinions about political subjects such as candidates for partisan political office, current events, policy issues, or matters of public interest
- ✓ Campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, changes in municipal ordinances, or pending legislation
- ✓ Campaign for or against a candidate for a public office
- ✓ Initiate or circulate a nominating petition for a candidate for a public office
- ✓ Sign a nominating petition for a candidate for

a public office

- ✓ Distribute campaign literature for or against a candidate for a public office
- ✓ Endorse or oppose a candidate for a public office
- ✓ Attend and be active at a political caucus, convention, rally, or meeting
- ✓ Give a speech at a political caucus, convention, rally, or meeting
- ✓ Make a campaign speech for or against a candidate for a public office
- ✓ Volunteer for the campaign of a candidate for a public office
- ✓ Take an active part in managing the campaign of a candidate for a public office
- ✓ Canvass for votes for or against a candidate for a public office
- ✓ Wear a badge, button, shirt, hat, or other article for or against a candidate for a partisan political office, or a partisan political group
- ✓ Make political contributions
- ✓ Attend a political fundraising event
- ✓ Give a speech or keynote address at a political fundraising event
- ✓ Assist in a voter registration drive
- ✓ Register to vote as I choose
- ✓ Vote in an election as I choose
- ✓ Be a candidate in a non-partisan election
- ✓ Personally solicit, accept, or receive contributions for my own campaign from persons other than my subordinate employees if I am a candidate in a non-partisan election
- ✓ Be appointed to a public office
- ✓ Serve out the remainder of my elected term to a public office after I become a Postal Service employee
- ✓ Join and be active in a political party or a partisan political group
- ✓ Be a candidate for an office within a political party or a partisan political group



Don'ts

Examples of prohibited political activity include the following, which limit the above-noted "DO's":

- Engage in political activity while on duty
- Engage in political activity while wearing a uniform, badge, insignia, or similar item that identifies the Postal Service or my position
- Engage in political activity while on government-owned or -leased property
- Engage in political activity while using a government-owned or -leased vehicle
- Engage in political activity while using a privately-owned vehicle in the discharge of official duties
- Use government property such as a computer, phone, or email system to engage in political activity
- Use my official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the result of an election
- Use my official title/position while participating in political activity
- Use my authority to coerce another person to participate in political activity
- Invite my subordinate employees to political events or otherwise suggest to them that they attend political events or engage in political activity
- Personally solicit, accept, or receive political contributions from other persons
- Host, sell tickets for, or invite other persons to a political fundraising event
- Personally solicit political contributions in a speech or keynote address given at a political

fundraising event

*Note: There are limited exceptions to the prohibition on personally soliciting, accepting, or receiving political contributions that involve (under certain conditions) union members and employees residing in a small number of designated localities. Contact the Ethics Office for additional information on these limited exceptions.

- Allow my official title/position to be used on the invitation to a political fundraising event

- Be a candidate for nomination or election to a partisan political office

*Note: There are limited exceptions to the prohibition on being a candidate for nomination or election to a partisan political office. Under certain circumstances, you may be an independent candidate for nomination or election to a local partisan political office in a small number of designated localities. Contact the Ethics Office for additional information on these limited exceptions.

- Solicit or discourage the participation in political activity of a person who has business with or before the Postal Service

What happens if I violate the Hatch Act? You can be disciplined (up to and including removal) and assessed a civil penalty if you violate the Hatch Act.

If you have questions about the Hatch Act or political activity, call the USPS Ethics Office at (202) 268-6346 or email Ethics.Help@usps.gov.

Source: USPS