



Kansas Conservation Districts

“Ethics”

Module XI

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS MODULE

Ethics and accountability

Oath of Office

Fiduciary responsibility

Conduct

Unethical behavior

ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- The conservation district board is ultimately responsible for ensuring adherence to legal standards and ethical norms.
- As public officials, conservation district supervisors must faithfully perform their duties in the best interest of the conservation district and for the benefit of the people.

OATH OF OFFICE

- All conservation district supervisors, as officers elected or appointed under Kansas law, are required to take and subscribe an oath in which they swear to support the constitution of the United States and the constitution of the state of Kansas, and faithfully discharge the duties of a conservation district supervisor.

OATH OF OFFICE (CONTINUED)

- Pursuant to K.S.A 54-106 et seq. “All officers elected or appointed under any law of the state of Kansas shall, before entering upon the duties of their respective offices, take and subscribe an oath or affirmation, as follows:

I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the constitution of the United States and the constitution of the state of Kansas, and faithfully discharge the duties of the _____ County Conservation District supervisor. So help me God.”

- A fiduciary does not put personal gain above duties to the district
- A fiduciary is expected to uphold good faith, loyalty and trust
- A fiduciary duty is a legal relationship between two or more parties
- District board members have a fiduciary obligation to the district
- A fiduciary is a person to whom property or power is entrusted for the benefit of another

FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITY

CONDUCT

- Supervisors are expected:
 - To perform their duties in a professional manner
 - To ensure fair and equitable program delivery to all
 - To actively participate in the management of the district
 - To avoid conflicts of interest

UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR

Any activity that violates the public trust is unethical behavior such as:

- Using the conservation district or any part of the organization for personal advantage or the personal advantage of friends and relatives, including information obtained, unless the information is available to the public.
- Improperly influencing or attempting to influence other officials to act in own benefit.

UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR

(CONTINUED)

Any activity that violates the public trust is unethical behavior such as:

- Giving preferential treatment to any person
- Accepting anything of value from any source which is offered to influence my actions as a public official
- Discussing the confidential proceedings of the board outside the board meeting

REVIEW QUESTION

1. Only elected conservation district supervisors are required to take an oath of office?

True or False?

REVIEW ANSWER

1. Only elected conservation district supervisors are required to take an oath of office?

False – elected and appointed supervisors

REVIEW QUESTION

2. A fiduciary duty is an important but not legal relationship between two or more parties.

True or False?

REVIEW ANSWER

2. A fiduciary duty is an important but not legal relationship between two or more parties.

False

REVIEW QUESTION

3. It is acceptable to take a gift offered to influence my actions as a public official as long as the value does not exceed \$40.

True or False?

REVIEW ANSWER

3. It is acceptable to take a gift offered to influence my actions as a public official as long as the value does not exceed \$40.

False

SUMMARY

Strengthening ethics and accountability should be an ongoing commitment by boards.

Individual and collective adherence to high ethical standards by public officials is central to the maintenance of public trust and confidence in government.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE & WHERE TO FIND THEM

Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission

Location:

109 W. 9th St., 2A,
Topeka, KS 66612-
1287

785-296-3600

Conservation District Handbook

Location:

Conservation
district office &
CSIMS