

**IF IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO DECLINE A GIFT** or if you believe it is beneficial for PAHO to accept a gift, you must consult the Ethics Office, which will notify you in writing as to whether you or PAHO:

- (i) can keep the gift;
- (ii) must decline or return the gift;
- (iii) should donate the gift to charity; or
- (iv) must dispose of the gift entirely.

If you have a question about the receipt or award of a gift, please contact the Ethics office. If you prefer, you can always use the Ethics Help Line and remain anonymous.

The Ethics Helpline

On the web at:

[www.navexglobal.com](http://www.navexglobal.com) or  
[www.pahoethics.org](http://www.pahoethics.org)

Or by telephone toll-free at:  
1-888-448-4715

Pan American Health Organization  
Regional Office for the Americas  
World Health Organization  
525 Twenty-third Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20037  
[www.paho.org](http://www.paho.org)

## GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

### Avoiding the Quid Pro Quo

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October 2014

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## IS IT OK...

- for a supervisor to give a subordinate an expensive birthday present?
- for the company that provides travel services to PAHO to give complimentary airlines tickets as a thank you for PAHO's continued business relationship?
- for staff to get together to purchase a gift for someone who is retiring from the Organization?
- to attend a professional soccer game courtesy of the Ministry of Health during a mission to a Member country?
- to accept a dinner invitation from a company that is bidding on a contract in PAHO?
- to accept an award, along with a substantial monetary gift, as a token of appreciation for giving a lecture or leading a workshop?
- to raffle an iPad to the attendees at an international public health meeting?

## THE ANSWERS TO THESE

**QUESTIONS** are important because giving or accepting gifts or hospitality may be perceived as an attempt to influence a person's actions or decisions or to obtain a quid pro quo ("something for something".) Traditionally, offering and receiving business gifts, entertainment or travel strengthens relationships and can help an organization attain its goals and objectives. When done within reasonable limits, these activities continue to be an appropriate business practice within PAHO. However, when dealing with suppliers, partners, and/or government officials, PAHO personnel must exercise proper discretion to ensure that any gift or hospitality complies with PAHO's Code of Ethical Principles and Conduct and is not intended to improperly influence the normal course of business or a person's actions or decisions.

**A GIFT CAN BE DIRECT**, given or received directly from one individual or company to another, **OR IT CAN BE INDIRECT**. An indirect gift is a gift given with your knowledge and approval to someone with whom you have a close personal relationship such as family, a spouse or friends. An indirect gift can also be a donation to a person or organization based on your direction or recommendation.

## GIFTS FROM SOURCES OUTSIDE OF PAHO

Gifts or hospitality provided to you by anyone outside the Organization may only be accepted if the gift is infrequent and costs less than US\$50 (or its equivalent in local currency) for a single item or less than \$100 for multiple items received during the same calendar year and does not compromise in any way – or appear to compromise – your integrity or that of the Organization.

## GIFTS BETWEEN PEOPLE WORKING FOR PAHO

Gifts among work colleagues are acceptable for special occasions such as birthdays, marriages and retirements but each gift must also cost less than \$50. Collective gifts are acceptable, and may cost more than \$50, but staff should not feel pressured or compelled by anyone to contribute to the cost of the gift.