



# Oklahoma Conservation Commission

## District Directors' Responsibilities:

### A 10-Minute Guide Series

This is one in a continuing series of informational/discussion topics designed to help conservation district directors become more informed and knowledgeable about their responsibilities. It is suggested that board members review these guides before a board meeting and then have a ten minute discussion on them at a meeting.

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#### *Guide No. 19 - Code of Ethics*

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission, Conservation Districts and the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts are committed to a high standard of conduct by and among conservation district board members in the performance of their public duties. Individual and collective adherence to high ethical standards by public officials is central to the maintenance of public trust and confidence in government.

**Conservation district boards must be accountable to themselves on matters of conduct. Proper ethics begin with each individual board member.**

The principles contained in the Ethics Statements below provide valuable guidance in reaching decisions which are governed, ultimately, by the dictates of the individual conscience of the public official and his or her commitment to the public good.

#### **As a Member of the Board I Will:**

- Properly administer the affairs of the district.
- Listen carefully to my fellow board members and the constituents I serve.
- Respect the opinion of my fellow board members.
- Respect and support the majority decisions of the board.
- Promote decisions which only benefit the public interest.
- Recognize that all authority is vested in the board when it meets in legal session and not with individual board members.
- Keep safe all funds and other properties of the district.
- Conduct and perform the duties of my office diligently.
- Maintain a positive image to pass constant public scrutiny.
- Keep well-informed of developments that are relevant to issues that may come before the board.
- Participate actively in board meetings and actions.
- Treat all employees fairly and equitably. Above all else be consistent in management of all employees.

- Call to the attention of the board any issues that I believe will have an adverse effect on the District or to our constituents.
- Vote to hire the best possible person to work for the district.
- Represent all constituents of the District and not a particular geographic area or special interest group.
- Consider myself a "trustee" of the District and do my best to ensure that the District is well maintained, financially secure, growing and always operating on the best interests of constituents.
- Always work to learn more about the board member's job and how to do the job better.
- Declare any conflicts of interest between my personal life and my position on the District board, and avoid voting on issues that appear to be a conflict of interest.

#### **As a Member of the Board I Will Not:**

- Be critical, in or outside of the board meeting, of fellow board members or their opinions.
- Use the District or any part of the organization for my personal advantage or the personal advantage of my friends and relatives.
- Engage in outside interests that are not compatible with the impartial and objective performance of my duties.
- Improperly influence or attempt to influence other officials to act in my own benefit.
- Accept anything of value from any source which is offered to influence my actions as a public official.
- Discuss the confidential proceedings of the board outside the board meeting.
- Promise prior to the meeting how I will vote on any issue in the meeting.

## Loyalty Oath

As public officials of a local unit of government, Conservation District Directors are required to be administered the Loyalty Oath and have it duly filed with the county clerk of the county in which the district resides.

Oklahoma Statute Title 51 Section 36.1 – 36.2A states that every officer and employee of the State of Oklahoma, or of a county, school district, municipality, public agency, public authority, or public district thereof, who is appointed or elected to office, or who after said date is employed, for a continuous period of thirty (30) days or more, in order to qualify and enter upon the duties of his or her office or employment and/or receive compensation, if any, therefore, shall first take and subscribe to the loyalty oath or affirmation as required.

### The oath is as follows:

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America and the Constitution and the laws of the State of Oklahoma, and that I will faithfully discharge, according to the best of my ability, the duties of my office or employment during such time as I am

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(Here put name of office, or, if an employee, insert "An Employee Of \_\_\_\_\_" followed by the complete designation of the employing officer, agency, authority, commission, department or institution.)

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Affiant

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Notary Public or other officer authorized  
to administer oaths or affirmations