

Port of Seattle Commission – Board of Ethics

Job Description

General Information

The Port of Seattle Commission's Board of Ethics was created by Resolution No. 3066 in August 1990. The Code of Ethics has since received updates and amendments, culminating in a complete re-codification of the Code in 2025.

The Port of Seattle Commission's Board of Ethics is comprised of three members, who are appointed by the Port Commission in an open public meeting. Members may not be a Port Commissioner or employee of the Port. Members appointed to the Board shall have diverse perspectives and areas of expertise and experience appropriate to the review of ethical matters and who are of a good general reputation and character.

The Board meets at least once annually for its organizational meeting and may meet as needed to address advisory questions pertaining to application of the Commission's Ethics Code or substantive complaints filed to the Board of Ethics. All matters of the Board of Ethics are confidential until otherwise becoming a part of the public record and Members of the Board are bound to this confidentiality requirement at all times.

This is a volunteer position and the position may require Board Members' time during working day hours from time to time as may be needed. Board Members shall be reimbursed by the port for pre-approved and reasonable expenses incurred in the exercise of official Board business and shall be paid a per diem equal to the per diem paid commissioners. The port shall provide sufficient investigative and administrative support to enable the Board to reasonably carry out its duties hereunder.

Responsibilities of the Board

The Board is responsible for

- Knowing and abiding by the Port's Code of Ethics.
- Maintaining a conflict-free relationship with the Port, as defined by the Code of Ethics.
- Conducting investigations and/or working with an investigator in the complaint process.
- Making factual findings and conclusions regarding if a violation of the Code has occurred and determining recommendations of corrective action.
- Reporting the Board's findings, conclusions, and if necessary recommended corrective action, to the Commission.
- Rendering advisory opinions to those who seek advice on the application of the Ethics Code per the parameters of the Code.

Information About the Code of Ethics & Its Requirements

Although the Code of Ethics is not a complicated document, it is broad in scope. The application of the Code to specific situations is a matter considered by the Board of Ethics based on the particular facts of each case. One role of the Board of Ethics is to develop guidelines for the application of the Code that are consistent with the stated language and general intent of the Code. Officially, this is done by rendering advisory opinions and issuing decisions after investigating complaints.

Ethical issues can be blatantly obvious, but are often nuanced and subtle. As a result, an essential part of evaluating compliance with the Code is an appreciation of all the relevant facts and circumstances and full investigation of complaints brought forward for review.

Prior Decisions & Opinions of the Board

Where in the public domain, prior actions and decisions of the Board are on file with the Commission Records Office.

Legislative Authority

Port Districts in Washington State derive their authority through RCW Chapter 53. The Port of Seattle Commission and all of its created boards and committees are subject to RCW 42.30, unless otherwise provided, as well as other codes and statutes governing public agencies and elected officials.