

CAN'T ESCAPE HATCH

Leading up to the 2012 election, an Air Force federal civilian employee sent numerous partisan political e-mails using a government account to as many as 60 federal employees. The e-mails were often disrespectful, and conveyed a negative view of a particular candidate.

NOTE

RESPECT is inherent in the Air Force Core Values and is the lifeblood of our profession. Always act in the certain knowledge that all persons possess fundamental worth as human beings.

Under a settlement agreement with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel, the employee agreed to serve a 40-day suspension without pay for repeatedly violating the Hatch Act, despite warnings to stop his behavior.

CAUTION

The Hatch Act prohibits federal employees from engaging in political activity while on duty, while in any room or building occupied in the discharge of official duties by an individual employed by the Government, while wearing a uniform, or while in a Government vehicle.

WHAT APPLIES TO ME?

- DoD Civilians: Hatch Act
- Officers: Article 88 and AFI 51-902
- Enlisted: AFI 51-902
- Contractors: terms of contract

The Hatch Act does not prohibit "water cooler"-type discussions among co-workers about current events, and consequently does not prohibit "water cooler" discussion over e-mail. E-mail can be used as an alternative mode for casual conversation, but a line is crossed when federal employees disseminate their message to a mass audience, enabling them to engage in an electronic form of leafleting at the worksite.