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Description of document: National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA)  
Instruction (NI) 1000.7R1: NGA Instruction for Personal Relationships in the Workplace, 2004

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## NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL-INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

7500 GEOINT Drive  
Springfield, Virginia 22150

NGA-2016-FOI-00028

MAR 22 2016

RE: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request #2016-FOI-00028

This letter is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request submitted to the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) dated February 28, 2016, in which you requested: "NGA Instruction (NI) 1000.7R1, Personal Relationships in the Workplace."

After a careful review of the documents responsive to your request, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) subject matter experts have determined that the documents may be released in full.

Appeals to this determination should be made in writing within 60 calendar days from the date of this letter. In the appeal, you should reference FOIA case 2016-FOI-00028, detailing your reasons for reconsideration and include a copy of this letter. Your appeal should be mailed to the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, FOIA/Privacy Act Program Office, Mail Stop N81-SISCS, 7500 GEOINT Drive, Springfield, VA 22150.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this request, please contact Tiffany Richardson, at (571) 557-4141 or via-email at [FOIANGA@nga.mil](mailto:FOIANGA@nga.mil).

Sincerely,

Claudia Williams  
FOIA/PA Program Manager

1 Enclosure

1. NGA Instruction (NI) 1000.7R1, Personal Relationships in the Workplace (6 pages)

## **NGA Instruction for Personal Relationships in the Workplace**

### **1. References.**

- a. Primary. NGA PD 1000R4, Policy Directive for Workforce and Personnel, 5 January 2004.
- b. Secondary. Secondary references are listing in appendix 1.

**2. Purpose.** Define professional and unprofessional relationships, establish guidelines for avoiding unprofessional relationships, discuss individual responsibility to maintain professional relationships, and outline the actions that will be taken in response to unprofessional relationships. This instruction supersedes NI 1000.7, same title, 2 December 2003.

**3. Policy.** Professional relationships are essential to the effective operation of all organizations and to the efficiency of the Agency. While personal relationships between NGA employees or between NGA employees and military members are normally matters of individual choice and judgment, they become matters of official concern when they violate existing law or impede the efficiency of the Agency. All NGA personnel are required to maintain professional work relationships at all times, to act impartially, to not give preferential treatment to any person, and to avoid the appearance of not being impartial or of giving preferential treatment.

**4. Applicability and Scope.** This instruction applies to civilian employees and military members of NGA. This instruction does not replace military members' responsibilities to their Service regulations and policies.

**5. Definitions.** Terms are defined in appendix 2.

### **6. Responsibilities.**

a. Office of Inspector General (OIG), the office of primary responsibility for this instruction, investigates any reported cases referred to them.

b. Human Development Directorate (HD)

(1) Facilitates job exchanges or assignments to appropriate positions when a personal relationship between a manager or supervisor and subordinate is formed or when the perception of favoritism occurs as determined by the Office of General Counsel (OGC) or OIG.

(2) Advises managers and supervisors and employees of the serious consequences of unprofessional conduct after consultation with OGC.

c. Managers, supervisors, and official superiors

- (1) Maintain professional work relationships and conduct themselves to avoid any real or perceived favoritism regarding their official duties.
- (2) Notify and seek guidance from the OGC when engaging in a personal relationship with a subordinate to determine if such a relationship would raise a question regarding appearance or impartiality.

d. OGC

- (1) Advises management on any standards of conduct or ethical issues related to relationships between employees.
- (2) Advises managers, supervisors, official superiors, and employees of the serious consequences of unprofessional conduct.

e. Employees. All NGA personnel (civilian and military) share the responsibility for maintaining professional relationships. However, official superiors, supervisors, and managers in personal relationships bear primary responsibility for maintaining the professionalism of that relationship. Official superiors, supervisors and managers are in leadership positions, which require the maturity and judgment to avoid relationships that impede the efficiency of the Agency or adversely affect mission performance. All NGA civilian and military personnel must comply with the Guidelines for Avoiding Unprofessional Relationships in appendix 3.

**7. Procedures.** When unprofessional relationships impede the efficiency of the Agency or adversely affect mission performance, appropriate corrective action in accordance with NI 1455.1R2 (appendix 1, reference 7) or appropriate military service regulations is taken.

a. Official superiors, managers, and supervisors. Official superiors, managers, and supervisors will disqualify themselves from participation in employment matters that involve an employee with whom the official superior, manager, or supervisor has a personal relationship that undermines his or her authority and that results in, or creates the appearance of, favoritism or misuse of office or position and adversely affects the efficiency of NGA. Examples of employment matters include, but are not limited to the following:

- (1) Recruitment and hiring.
- (2) Work assignments and training opportunities.
- (3) Performance appraisals and performance pay.
- (4) Promotion and awards.
- (5) Disciplinary actions, grievances, or appeals.

b. If a NGA employee, as a result of a selection for a new position, or organizational realignment, becomes an official superior, manager, or supervisor of a subordinate with whom he or she has a personal relationship, the subordinate or the official superior, manager, or supervisor will be assigned to another NGA organizational element over which he or she has no chain of command responsibility.

c. The assignment action will be effected no later than 90 calendar days after the official superior, manager, or supervisor and subordinate relationship is identified.

d. If assignment within the current organization is not possible, HD will facilitate assignments with other organizations in which an appropriate vacant position exists. The term "appropriate" in this context means a vacant position at the same pay band level for which the official superior, manager, or supervisor or employee is qualified. The relevant Directorate or Office Directors approve assignments between NGA organizations.

Appendix 1  
**References**

1. 10 U.S.C. Section 1612, Merit system principles and civil service protections: applicability, (b), 23 September 1966.
2. U.S.C., Section 2302, Prohibited Personnel Practices, 5 January 1999.
3. Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), Article 134.
4. 5 CFR Part 2635, Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, 1 January 1999.
5. 29 CFR Part 1604, Guidelines on Discrimination because of Sex, 1 July 2002.
6. DoD 5500.7-R, Joint Ethics Regulation (JER), 6 August 1998.
7. NI 1455.1R2, NGA Instruction for Employee Adverse Action and Discipline, 5 January 2004.
8. NI 5500.11R3, NGA Instruction for Standards of Conduct, 5 January 2004.

**Appendix 2**  
**Definitions**

1. Official superior. 5 CFR Part 2635, (appendix 1, reference 4) Subpart C-Gifts Between Employees, Section 2635.303, paragraph (d) defines an "official superior" as "...any other employee, other than the President and the Vice President, including but not limited to an immediate supervisor, whose official responsibilities include directing or evaluating the performance of the employee's official duties or those of any other official superior of the employee. For purposes of this subpart, an employee is considered to be the subordinate of any of his official superiors."

2. Professional relationships. Professional relationships are those that contribute to the effective operation of NGA, thus promoting the efficiency of the Agency. NGA encourages personnel to communicate freely with their superiors regarding their careers, performance, duties, and missions. Such communications enhance morale, further NGA's mission, and preserve the proper respect among employees, supervisors, and managers. Participation by employees of all grades in organizational activities enhances morale and office cohesion.

3. Unprofessional relationships. Unprofessional relationships are relationships, whether pursued on or off-duty, that detract from the authority of supervisors and managers or result in, or reasonably create the appearance of, favoritism, misuse of office or position, or the abandonment of organizational goals, and adversely affect the efficiency of the Agency. Unprofessional relationships can exist between civilian employees (including team leaders and team members), military personnel and civilian employees, between officers, between enlisted members, between officers and enlisted members, between contractor personnel and military personnel, between contractor personnel and civilian employees, between recruiters and applicants, and between instructors and trainees (students). Unprofessional relationships are gender neutral, and may occur between males, between females, and between males and females. Fraternalism is one form of unprofessional relationship and is a recognized offense under Article 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) (appendix 1, reference 3). Additional examples of unprofessional relationships are included in appendix 3, Guidelines for Avoiding Unprofessional Relationships.

Appendix 3  
**Guidelines for Avoiding Unprofessional Relationships**

Experience has shown that certain kinds of relationships present a high risk for being or developing into unprofessional relationships. While some personal relationships are not in and of themselves unprofessional, they may be or become unprofessional when other facts or circumstances are taken into consideration.

- **Relationships within organizations.** Unduly familiar relationships between individuals in which one person exercises supervisory authority over the other can easily be or become unprofessional. The danger of abuse of authority and perception of favoritism is always present. The ability of an official superior, supervisor, manager, or team leader to influence, directly or indirectly, assignments, promotions, training opportunities, awards, and other employment opportunities places both the official superior, supervisor, manager, or team leader and the subordinate in a vulnerable position.
- **Dating and close friendships.** Dating and courtship between an official superior, supervisor, manager, or team leader, and an employee under his or her supervision invariably raise the perception of favoritism, and are generally prohibited. Such relationships can adversely affect morale and impede the efficiency of the Agency.
- **Shared activities.** Shared activities include sharing living accommodations, vacations, transportation, and off-duty interests on a frequent or recurring basis.
- **Other relationships.** Other relationships not specifically addressed above can, depending on the circumstances, lead to actual or perceived favoritism or preferential treatment and must be avoided. Examples of such activities, but by no means all-inclusive examples, are soliciting or making solicited sales to personnel who are junior in grade or position (with specific exceptions stated in the Joint Ethics Regulation (appendix 1, reference 6), paragraph 5-409), joint business ventures between supervisors and employees under their supervision, and serving on promotion or hiring panels for relatives or close friends and not disclosing the relationship.