



INFORMATION SHEET

CUSTOMS

CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

What is it?

Customs generally deals with four key issues: revenue collection, community protection, trade facilitation and protection of national security.

To effectively deal with these issues, a high level of integrity is critical. The presence of corruption can destroy the legitimacy of a Customs administration and severely limit its capacity to effectively accomplish its mission.

The adverse effects of corruption within a Customs administration include:

- A reduction in public trust and confidence in government institutions;
- A reduction in the level of trust and co-operation between Customs administrations and other government agencies;
- Low staff morale and "esprit de corps";
- Increased costs that are ultimately borne by the community;
- A reduction in the level of voluntary compliance with Customs laws and regulations;
- Revenue leakage;
- Distortion of economic incentives;
- A reduction in national security and community protection; and

- Creating an unnecessary barrier to international trade and economic growth.

What is corruption?

For an act to be considered corrupt, it usually needs to involve the contravention of public duty, the receipt of some form of improper inducement, and it needs to occur in an environment of secrecy, or at least without official sanction.

There are many specific behaviours and combinations of behaviours that are generally regarded as corrupt. These typically fall under three broad headings: bribery, nepotism and misappropriation.

Many aspects of Customs work are vulnerable to these forms of corruption, particularly as Customs often has monopoly power over certain services such as the release of cargo or the clearance of passengers.

What is Customs doing about it?

Customs has developed and implemented a code of ethics and conduct policy. Each officer has undergone training and has signed an acknowledgement that they have received a copy of the policy, and read and understood it.

What should I do?

The question should more properly read – ‘what should I not do?’ Customs asks that you NOI offer any of our officers money, gifts or any other consideration for them, or anyone else, to do their jobs.

If you are asked by any Customs officer to give them ‘something extra’ to get the job done then please refuse and report the matter to The Regional Director in each region or the IRC Internal Affairs Division in Port Moresby.

All Customs duties, taxes and charges are properly assessed and documented. You will receive an official receipt and this is proof of their validity.

Although you may think such payments, gifts or considerations are getting you better service this is not the case and, more importantly, with the advent of automation you will receive no return on your payments as the officer has little opportunity to interfere with the computer processing.

Importantly, you should note that not only does the officer breach the code of ethics and conduct but you both may be committing a crime against the Criminal Code.

What about the wantok system?

The wantok system is a very important element of life in PNG. Customs requests your cooperation in using it responsibly. Asking a wantok to do something that they are not allowed to do, especially when he is a public servant, is an abuse of the system.

Is it just about corruption?

No, the Code of Ethics and Conduct requires officers to be smart in their appearance, polite and helpful in their attitude and

punctual and efficient in their time management.

Officers are not allowed to drink alcohol, smoke tobacco products or chew beetlenut when working or wearing official uniform.

If I report someone what happens?

Many people fear that they will be penalised by Customs officers and their future business with Customs will face delays or extra charges. This is not the case and you can communicate your concerns to us if you feel you are being unnecessarily targeted.

While all reports of corrupt or unethical behaviour by our officers is treated in confidence you should be aware that in order to fully investigate such reports the nature of the allegation must be put to the officer.

Evidence will be gathered from all available sources and if the allegation is substantiated the officer may face internal disciplinary charges or, depending on the circumstances, criminal charges.

A joint IRC Internal Affairs and RPNG Police unit investigates serious allegations of corruption within Customs.

This information is provided as a guide only.

For more information please contact your nearest Customs office or write to The Commissioner of Customs, PO Box 777, Port Moresby, NCD or visit our website at

www.customs.gov.pg

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