

Information Notice for public office holders

Conflict of interest screens

This document is intended to provide general information about your obligations under the Conflict of Interest Act. It must be read in conjunction with other [relevant information notices](#). Public office holders are encouraged to contact the Office for confidential advice about their individual situation. Please call 613-995-0721 or [send us an email](#).

Source: [Section 29](#) of the [Conflict of Interest Act](#)

1. What is authorized by the *Conflict of Interest Act*?

The Act gives the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner the authority to:

- [determine the appropriate measures](#) you must take to comply with the Act and, in doing so, the Commissioner will try to achieve agreement with you; and
- [order you](#), in respect of any matter, to take any compliance measures the Commissioner determines necessary to comply with the Act.

These compliance measures may include [divestment](#), [confidential disclosure](#), [public declarations](#), [recusal](#), or other measures. Conflict of interest screens are also used to achieve compliance with the Act.

2. What is a conflict of interest screen?

A conflict of interest screen is a preventive compliance measure, agreed upon pursuant to section 29 of the Act by a public office holder and the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, to assist the public office holder in avoiding conflicts of interest. A screen also seeks to minimize the possibility of conflicts arising between the public duties of the public office holder and their private interests or those of their relatives and friends.

A **screen** includes:

- a description of the conflict of interest;
- the names of the individuals and/or entities involved;
- the title of the screen administrator and a description of their responsibilities; and
- a statement that you agree to abstain from any discussions, decisions, debate or votes concerning the matter that forms the subject of the conflict of interest.

Conflict of interest screens are established with your agreement where it is likely that you will be involved in discussions or decision-making processes that provide an opportunity to further your private interests or those of a relative or friend, or to improperly further another person's private interests. Although there is no obligation under the Act to make conflict of interest screens public, the Commissioner [has the discretion](#) to formalize these measures and post them on the Office's [public registry](#).

The Office will help you identify areas where it is likely that a conflict of interest will arise. Arrangements are then made with your department or organization to ensure that you are not involved in decision-making processes or discussions in respect of matters that could give rise to a conflict of interest.

Someone from within your department or organization is tasked with administering the conflict of interest screen. Individuals within your department or organization are also notified of its existence. Other officials may also be notified. In this way, matters that pose a risk of conflict of interest will not be brought to your attention.

Because such matters are not brought to your attention, you are not placed in a conflict of interest and are therefore not required to recuse yourself from these matters. If a matter that forms part of the screen is brought to your attention, you must still recuse yourself and make a public declaration of your recusal within 60 days after the day on which the recusal took place. The declaration must provide sufficient detail to identify the conflict of interest that was avoided.

In some cases, the Office will determine that the possibility of your involvement in a matter is so remote or the risk of conflict of interest is so low that the establishment of a screen is not appropriate. However, if any conflict of interest situation does arise, your [obligation to recuse yourself](#) remains.

Your organization may establish additional conflict of interest measures not required under the Act for you to avoid dealing with certain matters. Any such measures should be disclosed to the Office.

Examples of existing conflict of interest screens can be found on our [public registry](#).

You may also be interested in reading our information notice on [recusal obligations](#).