

Susan W. Brooks, Indiana
Chairwoman
Theodore E. Deutch, Florida
Ranking Member



Thomas A. Rust
Staff Director and Chief Counsel

Donna Herbert
Director of Administration

Megan Savage
*Chief of Staff and Counsel to
the Chairwoman*

Daniel J. Taylor
Counsel to the Ranking Member

1015 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6328
Telephone: (202) 225-7103
Facsimile: (202) 225-7392

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

December 21, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL MEMBERS, OFFICERS, AND EMPLOYEES

FROM: Committee on Ethics
Susan W. Brooks, Chairwoman
Theodore E. Deutch, Ranking Member

SUBJECT: Reminder about Annual Ethics Training Requirements for 2017

This memorandum is a reminder to all offices about ethics training requirements. The Committee on Ethics is required to provide annual ethics training to each Member, Delegate, Resident Commissioner, officer, and employee of the House.¹ The Committee offers ethics training both through online video courses and in-person training sessions. For the 115th Congress to date, the Committee has held 66 in-person ethics training sessions and provided in-person ethics training to more than 2,100 Members, officers, and employees. The dates of additional in-person ethics training sessions for 2017 are included later in this memorandum.

Existing Members are not required to take ethics training, but are encouraged to do so. New House Members must complete a training session specifically designated for new Members within 60 days of joining the House. Existing House officers and employees are required to take one hour of general ethics training each calendar year. New House employees must complete a training session specifically designated for new employees within 60 days of commencing House employment.² In addition, the Committee requires all senior staff³ – whether new or existing employees – to take an additional hour of specialized training at least once per Congress.⁴

¹ House Rule 11, clause 3(a)(6)(A). The Committee defines an “officer or employee” as an individual appointed to a position of employment in the U.S. House of Representatives by an authorized employing authority who is receiving a salary disbursed by the Chief Administrative Officer or is on a leave without pay or furlough status.

² House Rule 11, clause 3(a)(6)(B)(i).

³ “Senior staff” for training purposes are employees who are paid at the “senior staff annual salary rate” for at least 60 days in either (or both) calendar years of a Congress. For 2017, the senior staff annual salary rate is \$124,406, or a monthly pay rate at or above \$10,367. Please note that the senior staff annual salary rate is subject to change in 2018.

⁴ The 115th Congress ends on January 3, 2019.

By January 31 of each year, all House employees must certify to the Ethics Committee that they have completed ethics training during the preceding calendar year.⁵ Employees who pre-register for and sign the attendance sheet at a live training *or* fully complete one of the online training options available through HouseConnect will have made their necessary certification to the Committee. The following are the ethics training requirements for 2017 for Members and staff, as well as the details of how to complete the registration and/or certification process for both live and online ethics training programs.

2017 ETHICS TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Members

Existing Members are not required to take ethics training, but are encouraged to do so, either by attending an ethics training session or requesting a briefing for their office. New House Members must complete a training session specifically designated for new Members within 60 days of joining the House. Before each Congress, the Committee on Ethics provides ethics training for incoming new Members at the New Member Orientation organized by the Committee on House Administration. The Committee also provides training to Members throughout the year.

“New” House Employees

All new Members and new employees must complete ethics training within 60 days of beginning House employment. A “new” Member for the purposes of the 2017 training requirement is an individual who was *first* sworn in on after January 3, 2017. A “new” House employee for purposes of the 2017 training requirement is an individual who first began employment with the House on or after January 3, 2017. Any former House employee who returns to House employment after a gap of more than 90 consecutive calendar days is considered to be a “new” employee. Interns paid by the House for more than 60 days also must comply with this requirement.⁶ New employees, depending on their work location, may satisfy their training requirement in the following manner:

- New employees who work in Capitol Hill offices are required to attend a *live* training session. The schedule of upcoming new employee live ethics training sessions is available on the Committee website, <https://ethics.house.gov>.
- New employees who do not work in Capitol Hill offices may either attend a live training session *or* watch the “2017 New District Staff” training video online through the HouseConnect website. No other video satisfies the training requirement for new employees.

⁵ House Rule 11, clause 3(a)(6)(B)(ii).

⁶ Detailees, fellows, unpaid interns, and any individuals who are employed by the House and paid for fewer than 60 days are not required to attend ethics training in 2017. The Ethics Committee nonetheless encourages these individuals to complete ethics training so they become familiar with the House ethics rules while working in a House office or for a House committee.

New employees will *not* receive credit for attending or watching any training sessions other than those specifically designated “New Employee” or “New District Staff.” New employees in Capitol Hill offices will not receive credit for completing online, rather than live, training. Note that new employees who are senior staff have an additional hour of training to complete, as explained more fully below under “Senior Staff Training.”

Existing House Employees

“Existing” (*i.e.*, not new) House employees must complete one hour of training before the end of the calendar year. For 2017, this means all existing House employees must complete one hour of training by **December 31, 2017**. **There are no extensions to this deadline, for any reason.** In addition, employees who are senior staff may have an additional hour of training to complete, as explained more fully in the next section. Employees are responsible for knowing whether they are considered senior staff.

As a general matter, existing employees will fulfill their general ethics training requirement by completing an online session designated for general ethics training through the HouseConnect website. The Ethics Committee will also offer some live training sessions that fulfill the general ethics training requirement. Note that attending a live training session for *new* employees does not satisfy the annual ethics requirement for *existing* House employees.

Senior Staff Training

All employees who are “senior staff”⁷ are required to take an additional hour of training at least once per Congress on issues primarily of concern to senior staff or supervisors. For the 115th Congress, this means all senior staff must complete one hour of training by **January 3, 2019**. This “senior staff” hour is required *in addition to* the one hour of general ethics training all officers and staff are required to complete annually. Senior staff employees may fulfill the requirement for an additional hour by attending a live senior staff training session or completing an online senior staff training session through the HouseConnect website.

Briefings that satisfy the senior staff training requirement include general sessions on issues of concern to senior staff, sessions on completing financial disclosure (FD) statements or Periodic Transaction Reports (PTRs), or sessions on the post-employment restrictions. However, employees may *not* complete more than one hour of senior staff training in lieu of completing their annual general ethics training requirement.

ONLINE REGISTRATION & CERTIFICATION PROCESS

For live ethics training

Employees who plan to attend any live training session **must** preregister at <https://registerme.house.gov> **and** sign in on the attendance form prior to the start of the training. Even if employees preregister, they must sign in and attend the full hour to fulfill their ethics training requirement. Attendees must arrive within five minutes of the start of the training to be

⁷ See *supra* note 3.

able to sign the attendance sheet. **Any late arrivals who miss the sign-in period will not receive credit.** After their attendance, employees who have signed the attendance sheet and attended the full hour of training will receive email certificates, which they should preserve for their own records. The email certificates are confirmation for employees that they have satisfied the annual training and certification requirement. Any employee who has received this email confirmation statement has made the necessary certification to the Committee that they have completed their ethics training requirement.

The list of upcoming live training sessions for the remainder of 2017 is listed below and also available on the Ethics Committee website: <https://ethics.house.gov>. All scheduled training sessions – whether for new, existing, or senior staff – will be listed on the Committee calendar on an ongoing basis.

<p align="center">Senior Staff Ethics Training</p>	<p>Longworth B249-B and C</p>	<p>December 21, 2017, 10:00am–11:00am</p>
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For online ethics training

Employees who want to complete ethics training online can access the training through the HouseConnect website: <https://houseconnect.house.gov>. Employees must complete the entire online training program to receive credit. You must use a House computer to access the HouseConnect website. Employees who do not have access to a House computer or do not have a House email account should contact the Ethics Committee to make alternate arrangements for completing their training.

After completing an online training program, the system will automatically log the employee as “complete.” This information is automatically transmitted to the Ethics Committee. Thus, once the system labels an employee as “complete,” the employee has satisfied the annual training and certification requirement. Employees will be able to check HouseConnect at any time to verify completion of their own annual ethics training requirement. The Ethics Committee does not have access to this information prior to the end of the calendar year and therefore cannot check your completion status for you with regard to online training.

To access your own record in HouseConnect, you should log in to your own account page in the HouseConnect website: <https://houseconnect.house.gov>. On your account page, the entry in the “Complete” column next to the particular training session read “True” if the session has been completed. (If the session has not been completed, the column will read “False.”) Anyone needing to check whether they have completed an online training session can view and print their own screen for verification. Their name appears in the upper right corner of the screen.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Failure to satisfy the annual training requirement is a violation of House rules⁸ and may result in any of the specified disciplinary sanctions for House employees, informing employees’

⁸ See House Rule 11, clause 3(a)(6)(B)(ii).

supervisors of their noncompliance, publication of noncompliant employees' names and employing offices, additional ethics training, or other actions the Committee deems appropriate. If you have any questions regarding this guidance, please feel free to contact the Committee's Office of Advice and Education at (202) 225-7103,

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