

## **Solicitation in the Workplace**

### **Guideline**

The WCB is primarily a place of business. Although normal social intercourse between individuals is expected, or even encouraged by the employer, the primary activity within the workplace and the primary concern of its employees must be the advancement of the WCB's business interests.

Employees must be respected. Every employee is entitled to do his or her job free of harassment, sales pitches, and pressure to buy or contribute, whether overt or subtle.

Corporate resources must be respected. They are primarily intended for business use. Use of corporate resources such as tables, display space, meeting rooms, e-mail and telephone for non-business purposes must be done reasonably and with restraint.

Solicitation in the workplace may occur if it meets the following guidelines:

### **Charitable or Personal Purposes**

Solicitation for a non-profit cause or purpose that has registered charitable status in Canada is permitted. This also includes causes or purposes that may not have registered charitable status, but where the individual in question has a vested personal interest in engaging in the activity, is doing so purely for altruistic reasons and does not stand to personally benefit.

Example - the solicitation of funds in the workplace for the annual campaign of the Heart and Stroke Foundation; requesting sponsorships for the MS Bike Tour, or the Stollery Children's Foundation, Wake-A-Thon; selling food products in the workplace or requesting sponsorships to support a school trip or a child's sports team.

### **Commercial Purposes**

Solicitation for commercial or profit driven purposes, should not occur, whether selling handmade products or acting as a distributor for a company. It puts the employee in question into an immediate conflict of interest, using corporate time and resources to earn personal income.

Example - selling handcrafted knickknacks; operating a business that resells frozen meat products, selling Amway products.

Exceptions would be:

- Where the product or service has been sanctioned by management and is made available to all employees by the vendor. Example - the selling of Costco memberships; social club discount plans.
- Where the activity is held for morale purposes and allows for equal participation by all employees in the area. Example - a Christmas craft sale where all employees in the area may participate and half the proceeds go to charity.

### **Political or Religious Purposes**

Solicitation for political and religious purposes should not occur as:

- The workplace is non-partisan and non-denominational.
- The political and religious beliefs of all persons in the workplace need to be respected.

In all cases it is left to the discretion of the supervisor of the area to determine whether a particular activity should take place. The factors that should be considered are:

- The use of corporate resources such as employee time, display space, tables, meeting rooms, e-mail must be reasonable.
- The activity must be unobtrusive and must not disrupt the normal flow of business in the area.
- No employee should be made to feel pressured to buy something or contribute money. This might be the

case where it is the supervisor who is the person carrying out the activity.

- The norms in one area of the WCB are not necessarily the same as another. It is up to each supervisor to establish expectations. While this might create inconsistency of practice throughout the organization, strict rules are difficult to apply and don't take into account diverse work environments. What might be acceptable in one area is not necessarily acceptable in another.
- In all cases, the supervisor should apply the three Stage 1 tests from the Corporate Ethics program when making the decision.