



PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

POLITICAL NEUTRALITY OR BEING APOLITICAL

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does “apolitical” or “non-political” mean?

Broadly it means not having a political leaning one way or the other or favouring one side over the other.

Under the Public Service Act, it means “Non-political” or “Apolitical” means employees performing their duties in an impartial, ethical and professional manner without involving in any political activities including not associating with any association that has a political mandate which is or may be contrary to Government policy.”

Under the Code of Ethics and Conduct, employees must uphold political neutrality, avoid conflicts of interest and cannot use their positions to influence or support political agendas.

	Questions		PSC Response
1	Can I be a member of a political party?	✓	Yes, you can. However, you must not use that membership to pass on information about the Government or Ministry. You must not use your position in government to progress one political side. You must not attend public functions where it would be difficult for an ordinary person to determine if you were there in an official capacity. The more senior you are in the public service, the more difficult it is to differentiate as others may perceive otherwise.
Political Rallies			
2	Can I attend political rallies?	✓	a. Yes, you may attend rallies in your personal capacity. You are permitted to ask neutral questions about the policies or commitments being presented. However, you must not make speeches, criticise the Government, or show affiliation or support for a candidate, as this may compromise perceived neutrality. b. Avoid participating in political activities during official working hours or while representing the Government in functions or events.
3	Can I ask questions at a political rally?	✓	Yes, you may ask neutral questions to better understand a candidate’s policies or proposals. However, you must not frame questions in a way that promotes, endorses, or criticises a candidate, party, or the Government. Your role

			is to seek clarification, not to influence or sway political positions.
4	What if my family member is running for election?	X	You must not use your official position to support them in any way per Section 6(d) of the Code of Ethics and Conduct. You should also avoid being seen as involved in their campaign to maintain impartiality. As mentioned above, you can attend the rallies but cannot make a speech etc.
5	My union/association/church or women's club wants me to come and listen to a candidate they endorse. Can I do that?	✓	Yes, but refrain from making any comments or asking questions that might sway political positions. You are not there to defend the Government or share confidential information regarding matters within the Government.
6	I am attending a political rally before/after work and I'm in my work uniform. Is this ok?	X	No, you must not affiliate Government or your Ministry with your political preference as it is a direct breach of Section 7(b) of the Code of Ethics and Conduct.
7	Can I speak to the press about Government policy?	X	You must refrain from doing so as all matters such as this should be referred to your respective Chief Executive Officers as per Section 4(f) or 7(i) of the Code of Ethics and Conduct. Civil servants should not comment publicly on political matters, especially during the election period.
8	Can I comment in public to anyone about Government policy?	X	You cannot voice comment in public about government policy unless authorised to do so as it is a breach of Section 4(c) and (e) of the Code of Ethics and Conduct
9	Can I talk to the public about why one party would be better than the other?	X	No. This is classified as public comment and is not allowed as already mentioned above.
10	A senior in my Ministry has asked if I can drop them at a political rally on the way to taking someone else. Can I do that? Its on the way.	X	You must refrain from the use of government resources for political purposes as it is in direct conflict with Section 6(d) of the Code of Ethics and Conduct.
In the Office			
11	Can I use the photocopier/printer at work to print 5 flyers for my church about which party to vote for?	X	No, this is use of government resources for a political purpose which is a direct breach of Section 4(h) of the Code of Ethics and Conduct.
12	Can I wear campaign merchandise such as t-shirts or hats to work ?	X	No. Wearing or displaying political material while on duty or in Government workplaces is not permitted.
13	Can I send an email while at work to some people I know about a friend/relative/member of my church running for election? Its free and it will only take a minute.	X	No, if this is using government resources for a political purpose. If from your own phone or laptop, and it is purely to inform, not to persuade, this is fine.

14	Can I use my work email to send a message of support for a friend/relative or member of my church who is standing for election?	X	No, this is using government resources for a political purpose (refer to No. 8 & No. 15).
15	What if a supervisor pressures me to support a particular candidate or party?	X	This is inappropriate. You should report such behavior through proper grievance channels.
Actions via the Social Media Platforms			
16	Am I allowed to publicly express my political opinions on social media?	X	While you have a right to your personal choice and views, however, civil servants are strongly advised not to post or share partisan content that may undermine the public's trust in the neutrality of the civil service. You must not be perceived to have used your duty, status, power or authority in order to gain or seek to gain a benefit or advantage for themselves or for any other person.
17	I have a friend/relative/member of my church running for election. Can I like their Facebook page?	X	It is best to avoid any comments or likes/dislikes or reactions which may have political affiliations.
18	Can I like a Minister's Facebook page?	✓	Yes, but do not make a comment on their page.
19	Can I like my Line Ministry Facebook page?	✓	There is no harm in following your Ministry or another Ministry's page as these platforms usually holds important information and regular update regarding the Ministry.
20	Can I post photos of me, on my personal page, at an awesome political rally I went to over the weekend?	X	You rather not. Perhaps keep it in your personal archive at home as doing so is considered your public comment and is not allowed.
21	I was tagged at an awesome political rally I went to over the weekend. Is this ok?	X	No. Kindly un-tag yourself and ask the person who posted this not to tag you again as it compromises the way your professionalism is perceived by Government and/or public.
Election Day			
22	Can I work in an election booth on election day?	✓	a. The Commission recognise this as a part of your civic duties and it does not violate neutrality. Refer to section 2B.22.6 of the Public Service Policy Instruction for related policies on being in polling duties. b. However, the Policy for electoral workers says you cannot show favouritism to one party or the other.
Ramifications			
23	What can happen if I ignore these?		Breach of Code of Ethics and Conduct Section 8 <i>A breach of this Code will be deemed a breach of discipline pursuant to the Public Service (Disciplinary Procedures) Regulations as amended.</i>

24	<p>What about if I was not aware of these related Policies?</p>	<p>All employees under Schedule 1 must become familiar with policies that govern the civil service. As per Section 5 of the policy instructions. You are obligated to know. You should try to find out. You can ask your respective Ministries' HR Divisions or get in touch with the Public Service Commission if you're unsure where to find this information. We will be pleased to help you.</p>
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