

Ethics Committee FAQs

1. Why do we need an Ethics Committee?

The Ethics Committee was formed as a result of the adoption of the Charter in 2022 as a tool to ensure transparency and trust in our elected and appointed officials (EAOs) in performing their roles and duties regarding Salem.

2. Who is subject to the Ethics rules?

Only town elected officials and members of the various boards, committees, and commissions appointed by the Town Council. (EAOs) Not included are town employees, agency heads such as police and fire chiefs, DPW, and Town Manager who are accountable under the terms of their employment contracts. The Salem School District is separate from the town and not covered by the Charter.

3. What conduct constitutes a violation of the Code of Ethics?

The charter lays out only twelve specific conditions that elected and appointed officials (EAOs) must observe:

1. [Conditions for holding office](#) (§6.3.1)
2. [No conflicts of interest](#) (§6.3.2)
3. [Duty to Recuse in quasi-judicial actions](#) (§6.3.3)
4. [Duty to disclose](#) (§6.3.4)
5. [No unfair personal use of town property](#) (§6.3.5)
6. [No misuse of confidential information](#) (§6.3.6)
7. [Use of influence](#) (§6.3.2)
8. [No improper gifts](#) (§6.3.8)
9. [Disposition of fees](#) (§6.3.9)
10. [Duty to cooperate](#) (§6.3.10)
11. [Fair and equal treatment](#) (§6.3.11)
12. [Future employment](#) (§6.3.12)

4. Who can file a complaint?

Anyone who believes an EAO has violated one of these provisions. There is no residency requirement.

5. How can I file a complaint?

Complaints must be filed using the [form](#) posted on the Ethics Committee website and submitted electronically or in hard copy.

6. Will my complaint be confidential?

An official complaint will remain confidential until the Ethics Committee determines a resolution. The Ethics Committee will then notify the Town Council chairman of the findings of

the investigation. Only then will the complaint be read into the public record, regardless of the outcome of the investigation.

7. Can I make an anonymous complaint?

No. All complaints must be signed and contact information provided to enable the Ethics Committee to conduct a proper investigation.

8. Can I discuss my dissatisfaction with an EAO on social media such as Facebook?

You have a free speech right to share your opinion online, but you cannot reveal that you have filed an Ethics complaint against an EAO. Until the investigation is complete and reported to the Town Council such disclosure violates confidentiality and will result in dismissal of your complaint.

9. Can I address an Ethics concern short of filing a formal complaint?

Yes. If you suspect misconduct on the part of a member of a board, committee, or commission you should bring it to the attention of the chairman of that body to see if a correction can be made at that level. Of course, if the chairman's conduct is the subject of your concern, you may have to file a formal complaint.

10. Can I find out in advance if certain conduct violates the rules?

Yes. The Ethics Committee will issue an advisory opinion at the request of anyone who inquires. [Forms](#) are available at the Ethics Committee website.

11. Is ethics training available for elected and appointed officials?

Yes. The Ethics Committee makes training available to all EAOs annually. You can view a video of a training session on the [Ethics Committee's home page](#).

12. Is information available about who has attended ethics training?

Yes. Attendance sheets for [2024](#) and [2025](#) training sessions are posted on the Ethics Committee website.