



Integrity in the office

To work indoors, your manager will likely provide you with a desk, chair, computer, and phone, as well as access to facilities and other resources. You have responsibilities and obligations around using these public resources.

Using office resources

Public resources are those items or services paid for, owned, or controlled by public sector organisations. These include:

- ▼ corporate credit cards, taxi cards or vouchers
- ▼ vehicles and fuel cards
- ▼ stationery and other office supplies
- ▼ telecommunication devices, such as mobile phones and tablets
- ▼ files, records and archives, and
- ▼ office equipment, furniture and fittings.

Other specific resources include:

- ▼ your time at work
- ▼ equipment and tools
- ▼ information communication technology (ICT), and
- ▼ money such as petty cash.

See our other fact sheets for more information about these specific resources.

Credit cards

If your organisation gives you authority to use a work credit card, they will supply you with the policy and procedures concerning its use. Make sure you understand and follow the procedures carefully. For example:

- ▼ You are required to make good decisions about the quality and cost of the goods and services you purchase – all cardholders need to obtain value for money when making purchases.
- ▼ Unless you are expressly authorised to do so, you may not use your work credit card to purchase items or services for your personal use.

- ▼ Your organisation may place limitations on the amount you can spend or the number of items you may purchase. Your limitations may also include the type of purchases you can make. For example, many organisations do not allow employees to use their cards for entertainment.
- ▼ You mustn't allow anyone else to use the credit card issued to you unless you receive specific permission to do so. This includes giving someone else the PIN.
- ▼ If you no longer need your work credit card, make sure you return it, particularly when leaving the organisation.



CASE STUDY

In January 2014, a public servant who stole \$25,000 using a defence force credit card to fund his gambling habit received a suspended jail sentence in the ACT Magistrates Court.

The man pleaded guilty to 17 charges relating to the misuse and attempted misuse of a commonwealth credit card.

As an employee of the Department of Defence he was given a credit card which allowed him to pay for authorised work-related travel expenses such as accommodation and meals.

Between August and September 2012 he used the card to withdraw \$25,000 in 16 ATM transactions to fuel his gambling habit. The amount of the withdrawals gradually increased and varied from \$400 to \$4,700 at a time.

The Department launched an investigation after the credit card company gave notice of the large amounts of cash that had been withdrawn.

The prosecutor told the court the accused breached the trust of his employer with his misuse of the credit card and he had essentially gambled away his future with the defence force.

He was convicted on all charges and received a six-month suspended sentence and 15-month good behaviour order.

Extracted from ABC News [report](#)¹

Work vehicles, fuel cards and other charge cards

A work vehicle may be made available to you for use while doing your job – it must not be used for personal errands or taken home without permission.

Ensure you follow your organisation's procedures, which may include noting the odometer reading when you refuel the vehicle. Like a credit card, you may only use a fuel card to purchase fuel for the accompanying work vehicle – do not use it to pay for fuel for your private vehicle.

Your organisation may give you authority to use charge vouchers, such as Cabcharge, or store cards, such as those issued by Officeworks. These are, in effect, credit facilities where the organisation pays the account after they are billed.

You will be given the policy and procedures for each type of credit facility – it is your responsibility to follow them.



In 2016 the Victorian Ombudsman found that a Council employee had been using the Council's fuel card to purchase fuel for his own vehicle.

The investigation revealed that the employee had access to a council commuter vehicle when he acted in the role of team leader intermittently from 2008 to 2013. This ceased after his permanent appointment to the role in 2013 due to a change in classification, and he had been using his private vehicle since then.

The accused allegedly told other council staff that he had been using a council fuel card to fuel his private vehicle in order to 'get back at the council' for taking away his access to a commuter vehicle.

The council took disciplinary action against the employee and sought reimbursement of more than \$4,000 from him.

Extracted from a Victorian Ombudsman [report](#)²

Stationery, devices, records and equipment

Remember that public resources are provided to enable you and your colleagues to do your jobs efficiently and effectively.

Even if there is an abundance (for example, photocopying paper), or a resource is not being used (for example, outdated laptops), do not remove them from the office without permission.

Misuse of public resources

Common examples of misuse include:

- ▼ using a public sector organisation's credit card to purchase goods or services for private use
- ▼ using a photocopier to copy documents for a non-work purpose
- ▼ using work vehicles and fuel cards for non-work purposes without approval, and
- ▼ taking stationery or other resources for personal use, or for interests outside your public sector work, such as consulting work or sporting clubs.

Deliberate misuse is misconduct – repeated misuse of resources and serious misconduct will result in disciplinary action and may result in criminal prosecution.

Unauthorised disposal of equipment or supplies

Misuse of public resources also covers the unauthorised or inappropriate disposal or dispersal of equipment. Even if they are surplus to requirements, assets must be dispersed or written off according to applicable policies and procedures.

If you are unsure how to manage a public resource, speak to your manager.

¹ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-01-09/canberra-public-servant-sentenced-for-gambling-credit-card/5192526>

² https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/file_uploads/Ombudsman_-_Misuse_of_council_resources_hr9hFZq7.pdf



The Commission can help

We are available to provide support and assistance with identifying, reporting, investigating, managing and preventing misconduct: prevention@integrity.tas.gov.au or 1300 720 289.

For more Misconduct Prevention resources go to www.integrity.tas.gov.au/resources