

ANSWERS FROM THE CITY ETHICIST

#3: What about the Thin Mints?

Question: *I am an administrative assistant at DEP. My daughter is selling Girl Scout cookies. Can I sell cookies at my City job?*

--City Scout-Mom, Queens

Answer: Yes and no. City employees are prohibited from pursuing non-City activities using City time, City resources, or City property. However, City workers may occasionally, over their lunch hour, for example, solicit charitable donations from co-workers or sell goods to them, subject to several restrictions.

A few boxes of Girl Scout cookies to co-workers over lunch may be acceptable. It would NEVER be acceptable to sell them to private citizens you deal with in your City job. No one should feel like they need to pay something extra to City employees in order to get their call directed, their garbage collected, their applications expedited, or anything else.

Likewise, no one should feel like their evaluation depends on their passion for Thin Mints. Supervisors may NEVER sell anything to a subordinate. However, in the case of Girl Scout cookies and other charity-driven activities, you can sell a small amount (under \$25) to your supervisor. S/he just can't sell any to you.

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