



## Scenario: Working the System

### Group Size: 4-15

***This scenario may contain explicit language and references to harmful situations which may be emotionally activating for some people. If you need support, services are available through the [CAF Member Assistance Program \(CFMAP\)](#) and the [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#).***

You are a Chief Clerk (CC) and have a subordinate who supervises the claims section. While reviewing finalized claims, you discover a questionable one. A claimant spent a week on a visit where the host country covered all their expenses. However, the claim included a reimbursement for three meals. The file reveals that your subordinate reviewed the claim and that the Personnel Administration Officer (Pers Admin O), your immediate supervisor, authorized the payment.

When you ask about the claim, you receive evasive answers. There is a message on the file from National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ), indicating that they were satisfied with the claim. When pushed a bit harder, your subordinate admits that he asked the claimant the same questions. She explained that the host country had indeed provided these meals. However, she and her colleagues on the trip were encouraged to bring Canadian gifts for their hosts.

Since the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) accounting system does not permit reimbursement for such purchases, the NDHQ trip sponsor recommended claiming an equivalent amount, as meals, as a method of compensation. The sponsor explained that this was their usual approach to “get around this restriction.” She and her colleagues agreed to claim the same meals to avoid suspicion and the NDHQ sponsor assured the travelers that questions would not be asked at their end. You ask your subordinate if the Pers Admin O was aware of this arrangement when he signed section 34. The claims supervisor responds by saying that he was not informed and, apparently, missed the discrepancy when he signed the claim. The claims supervisor decided that it might be best not to inform your immediate supervisor.

### Categories

Principles:	Obey and Support Lawful Authority
Values:	Integrity, Courage, Stewardship, Excellence, Loyalty
Cultural Themes:	Service, Identity, Leadership
Misconduct Types:	Abuse of Power, General Misconduct
GBA Plus Themes:	Not Specific
Audience:	Canadian Armed Forces

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# Facilitator's Guide

## Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the ethical principles to “Obey and Support Lawful Authority” and “Serve Canada before Self” in the workplace.
- Discuss the ethical values of integrity, courage, stewardship, loyalty and excellence in the workplace.

## Facilitation Questions:

1. What would you do in this situation? What are the considerations?
  - Allow open discussion from the group.
  - Ethical concerns: There is a clear message that rules viewed as inappropriate or inconvenient can simply be ignored or broken. This appears to be a common practice. Although apparent that the people involved did not personally profit from the process, the system was circumvented.
  - Personal factors: You know that fraud has been committed and action should be taken. However, the claim has been signed and processed. If you choose to do nothing, it will compromise your professional integrity and send a message affirming that this practice is acceptable.
  - Environmental factors: The claims supervisor was not initially honest with you. It is obvious that your immediate supervisor did not receive full support from your subordinate. By signing the claim, the supervisor has authorized an inappropriate reimbursement. The staff should make aware of all discrepancies. A failure to advise the supervisor of the situation is unethical and disloyal.
2. What is the ethical dilemma in this situation?
  - This is an uncertainty dilemma. Any situation in which it is not clear or uncertain about what is the right thing to do or what is the wrong thing to do.
  - An irregularity has been committed and the sponsor supported it. Nevertheless, you may feel compelled to act. If these actions lead to an investigation, it may be discovered that countless people have followed the same direction. In other words, the situation goes beyond one claim and people may suffer unwarranted consequences for getting around an inappropriate policy.
  - The policy related to gift giving and receiving is [DAOD 7021-4, Solicitations, Sponsorships and Donations - Canada.ca](#).
3. What are some potential courses of action that could be taken in this scenario?
  - Option 1: Speak directly to the claimants and explain that they will have to reimburse the system and inform the sponsor that this practice is unacceptable. The sponsor will most likely come under a microscope for his/her manipulation of the system.
  - Option 2: Make the Pers Admin O aware of the situation and let him decide. As a result, the claims supervisor is prone to administrative/disciplinary measures. Others in the claims section that were aware could also come under scrutiny.
  - Option 3: Leave the situation the way it is. If revealed, you will have to be accountable for your non-action. Your credibility in the eyes of your supervisors and subordinates will be tarnished.