

Actions You Can Take as a Federal Employee

Types of Tactics and Implications

Action	General Description	Potential Retaliation & For Your Consideration
Nonviolent Direct Action Protests / Rallies	Can participate outside of work hours freely in person or during work hours if taking annual leave.	Be sure participation, online or in person, is not occurring within work hours unless you are on leave. Do not wear any federal insignias or identification when participating.
Discuss Ethical Ramifications of Laws/Policies with Colleagues	Discuss impacts, potentials, and unintended consequences with colleagues in strategy meetings or happy hours. Evaluate current events and impacts on work activities in terms of serving the Constitution.	Be sure to not force views on other colleagues, particularly if you are a supervisor. Foster spaces of communication and inquiry.
Demand Direction in Writing to Implement	Oftentimes, administrative officials will not want to admit their direction in a manner that could be forwarded, taken out of context, or leaked. Even just asking for direction in writing can weaken the intensity of the action being asked.	Supervisors/colleagues may perceive you as difficult.
Go Public With Critiques	Share information on social media, with trusted press, with certain Congressional offices about issues, incompetence, or unethical behavior.	If non-confidential information is shared after hours on social media, speech is generally protected. Safest to use anonymous or "alt" federal profiles to protect professional status.
Slowdown / Intentional Incompetence	Reduce the pace of carrying out unethical activities (e.g., do fewer things). Malicious compliance - painstakingly adhere to every single detailed procedure and requirement	Consider limitations of efforts that could cause work to be rerouted for efficiency.
Additional Workload	Continue activities after hours or beyond written work scope to support the mission (e.g., do what they tell you to do, and also other things). Could be particularly important if capacity on your work has been reduced.	Consider work/life balance limitations and self care needs. Argue for the need to increase capacity.
Refuse and/or whistle blow illegal orders	Request written legal authority for action Pursue legal counsel to argue against carrying out activities in opposition to Congressional authorization or direction.	Could freeze other work efforts and result in FOIA requests. Ensure all information, including spoken requests of you, are fully documented.
Fed Flu	Coordinate sick days across workforces.	Could be found to be misusing allotted sick days. Feds are not allowed to strike legally

Tactics Depending On Your Role

Many Tools in the Toolbox			
Type of Role	General Description	Actions for Everyone	Actions for Some if Strategic
Policy Enforcement	Roles in environmental management, regulatory commissions, customs, and border patrol. Little wiggle room to interpret rules or orders, but can apply enforcement based on personal expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine your own lines in the sand • Explain what it means for democracy to be under attack to family, friends, colleagues • Use strong cyber-hygiene • Share opinions on social media outside of work hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refuse orders • Strike in coalition • Slow-walk enforcement, gum up bureaucratic processes • Question legal authority for action • Stage a sick out
Research, Development & Program Management	Roles in researching, developing, validating, managing, and evaluating government tools, resources, programs. Functions more open to interpretation within mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to your colleagues about what is happening • Foster safe spaces for your coworkers • Talk to your union leaders about actions, statements (if applicable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebrand work but continue thrust of efforts • Publicly refuse orders • Strike in coalition • Continue work in volunteer capacity
Administrative Management & Logistics	Roles in budget management, human resources, and general operations. Have clear directives but often complex bureaucratic policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend rallies / protests after work, on weekends • Take leave to attend protests during work • Demand all administrative direction in writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicly refuse orders • Strike in coalition • Strategically slow-walk certain activities • Stage a sick out
Armed Service	Roles in Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, & Space Force. Over 1M in armed service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategize with non-federal /external organizers, unions, religious groups • Question legal authority for action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refuse orders • Strike in coalition • Strategically resign • Question legal authority for action
Political Appointee	Oversee implementation of administrative priorities. Also subject to Hatch Act and other laws from Congress.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicly denounce attacks on democracy • Leak information • Publicly resign