

Special Privileges for Officials?

Sarah Jefferies had worked in the rehabilitation agency of the State Welfare Department for almost 20 years and had become the administrative secretary to the agency manager, Edward Foster. Jefferies always received superior job-performance ratings from her supervisors and had several letters of commendation for assuming responsibilities beyond those given in her job description. Foster, who had managed the agency for five years, was considered a “good man for the job” and respected for his ability “to get the job done right.” The central office frequently depended on him for assistance.

During the past nine months, Jefferies had noticed that Foster and other officials often reported to work late in the morning and left the office early in the afternoon. Every agency employee earned 10 hours of annual leave a month and could receive payment for the unused portion of accumulated leave at the end of each year. In addition, employees received nine paid holidays a year. Overtime was compensated for by allowing employees to take the equivalent time off. Jefferies was responsible for recording employee hours and leave time and felt that the agency officials were taking more time off than allowed by the state. Her coworkers also noticed this and were becoming upset. At a water-fountain conference Jefferies was selected by the other employees to speak with Foster about the situation.

Jefferies told Foster that some of the employees were disturbed by the agency officials’ disregard for the rules governing office hours, leave time, and compensation time. She also informed him that with his approval one official improperly received two weeks’ compensation. Foster explained that administrators had more privileges than subordinate staff members. “They are not punching a time clock,” he said, “and if they get their work done, that’s all that counts.”

After her discussion with Foster, Jefferies wondered what she should do.

Questions and Instructions:

1. Suggest several courses of action that are open to Jefferies in resolving her dilemma.
2. What are the legal and moral implications of the perceived abuses? Are they too trivial to bother with?
3. Does Jefferies have an obligation to “blow the whistle” about the abuses? If she decides to do so, should she tell Foster of her intention?

4. Should Foster consider more carefully the impact of his behavior on the organization?

5. Would you suggest that the agency policy governing tardiness, absenteeism, and sick leave be applied equally to all employees or differentiated according to administrative rank?

6. Should a flex-time approach be recommended in resolving the issues raised in this situation?

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Case 2: Special Privileges for Officials

Name:

Case Log and Administrative Journal Entry

This case analysis and learning assessment is printed on perforated pages and may be removed from the book for evaluation purposes.

Case Analysis:

Major case concepts and theories identified:

What is the relevance of the concepts, theories, ideas and techniques presented in the case to that of public management?

Facts — what do we know *for sure* about the case? Please list.

Who is involved in the case (people, departments, agencies, units, etc.)? Were the problems of an “intra/interagency” nature? Be specific.

Are there any rules, laws, regulations or standard operating procedures identified in the case study that might limit decision-making? If so, what are they?

Are there any clues presented in the case as to the major actor’s interests, needs, motivations and personalities? If so, please list them.

Learning Assessment:

What do the administrative theories presented in this case mean to you as an administrator?

How can this learning be put to use outside the classroom? Are there any problems you envision during the implementation phase?

Several possible courses of action were identified during the class discussion. Which action was considered to be most practical by the group? Which was deemed most feasible? Based on your personal experience, did the group reach a conclusion that was desirable, feasible, and practical? Please explain why or why not.

Did the group reach a decision that would solve the problem on a short-term or long-term basis? Please explain.

What could you have done to receive more learning value from this case?