

GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS TO RUN FOR AND HOLD PUBLIC OFFICE

AGE/ CITIZENSHIP	A person is incapable of holding a civil office if at the time of his/her election or appointment he/she is not 18 years of age and a citizen of the state. (Gov. Code Sec. 1020)
REGISTERED VOTER/ DISTRICT RESIDENT	Unless otherwise specifically provided, no person is eligible to be elected or appointed to an elective office unless that person is a registered voter and otherwise qualified to vote for that office at the time that nomination papers are issued to the person or at the time of the person's appointment. (E.C. Sec. 201)
CONVICTION OF CRIMES	A person is disqualified from holding any office upon conviction of designated crimes as specified in the Constitution and laws of the State. (Gov. Code Sec. 1021)
SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD	Each member shall be a resident and registered voter of the school district. . . . Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall file nomination papers for more than one district office . . . at the same election. An employee of a school district may not be sworn into office as an elected or appointed member of that school district's governing board unless and until he or she resigns as an employee. If the employee does not resign, the employment will automatically terminate upon being sworn into office. (E. C. Sec. 10603, Ed. Code Sec. 35107)

INCOMPATIBILITY OF OFFICES

The Political Reform Act does not prohibit any office holder from holding multiple public offices or seeking more than one elective office. For example, a deputy district attorney can hold the office of city council member, or a water board director may also be elected to a park and recreation district. There are, however, instances of holding more than one office that are considered incompatible.

There is no single statute that defines "incompatibility of offices". The common law doctrine of incompatibility of offices, however, prevents an elected official from holding two offices simultaneously **if the offices have overlapping and conflicting public duties.**

The courts have defined this concept as follows: "One individual may not simultaneously hold two public offices where the functions of the offices concerned are inherently inconsistent, as where there are conflicting interests, or where the nature of the duties of the two offices is such as to render it improper due to considerations of public policy for one person to retain both."

The State of California Attorney General's Office has issued many opinions of particular compatibility questions. Here are six examples of incompatible offices:

1. The offices of city councilman and school district board member where the city and the school district have territory in common;
2. Fire chief of a county fire protection district and member of the board of supervisors of the same county;
3. High school district trustee and trustee of an elementary school district which is wholly within the geographic boundaries of the high school district;
4. Water district director and a city council member,
5. Water district director and a school district trustee having territory in common; and
6. Deputy sheriff and county supervisor.

If you have a question about whether two public offices which you hold or seek to hold would be considered incompatible, contact the Attorney General's office at (916) 324-5437 or visit their website, oag.ca.gov. For further information about conflict of interest or incompatibility of offices, contact the Fair Political Practices Commission's website at fppc.ca.gov, or phone toll free 1-866-275-3772.