

# Prohibited Personnel Practices: Employee Perceptions



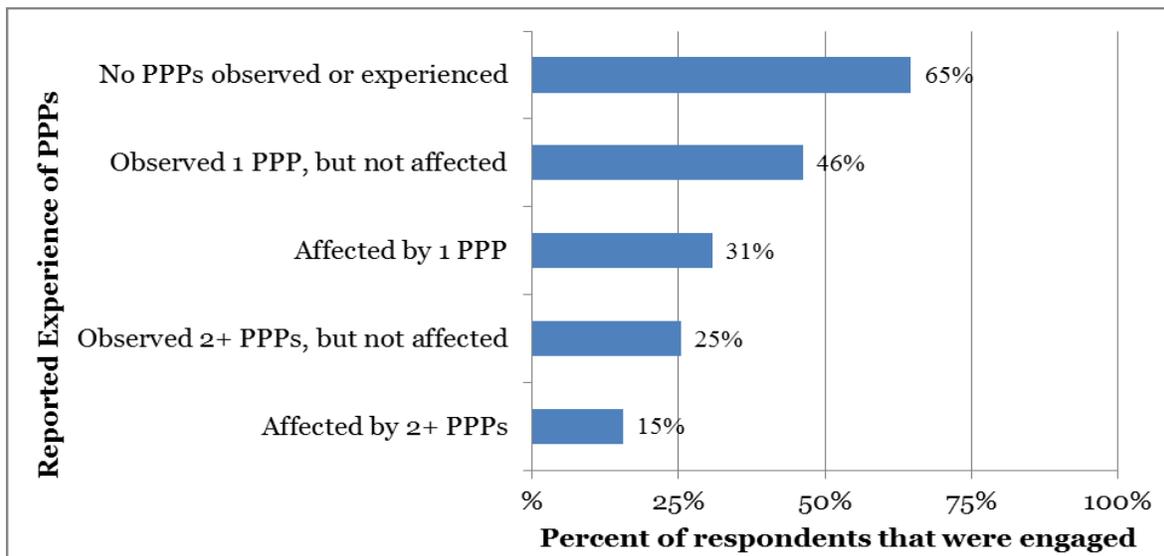
This August 2011 MSPB report describes the 12 prohibited personnel practices (PPPs) codified at 5 U.S.C. §2302(b), what each means, the frequency with which Federal employees perceive that PPPs occur, and the deleterious effect of actual or perceived PPPs on employees and the work environment.

## What Are The PPPs?

The PPPs specify that agency officials may not—

- Discriminate;
- Consider improper recommendations;
- Coerce political activity;
- Obstruct a job competition;
- Grant an unauthorized preference;
- Engage in nepotism;
- Knowingly violate the preference rights of a veteran;
- Take an action that would violate a law, rule, or regulation that implements a merit system principle;
- Retaliate for whistleblowing or the exercise of certain rights; or
- Implement a non-disclosure policy unless the policy comports with the laws regarding whistleblower protection and disclosures to Congress or Inspectors General.

Data from a 2010 survey indicated that perceptions of occurrences of most PPPs were at an 18-year low. However, there was room for improvement. One important insight from this study is the extent to which employees observe how their coworkers are treated in the workplace—and how those observations affect attitudes and performance. As illustrated in the chart, an employee who believes that others have been subjected to a PPP is markedly less likely to be engaged, even when the employee was not personally affected. As many employees may observe a single management action or decision, even a low incidence of actual or perceived PPPs has real consequences for morale and organizational effectiveness.



For the full report, including detailed survey results, please visit [www.mspb.gov/studies](http://www.mspb.gov/studies).