

Trade Secret Laws: Connecticut

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A Q&A guide to state law on trade secrets and confidentiality for private employers in Connecticut. This Q&A addresses the state-specific definition of trade secrets and the legal requirements relating to protecting them. Federal, local, or municipal law may impose additional or different requirements. Answers to questions can be compared across several jurisdictions (see Trade Secret Laws: State Q&A Tool).

Overview of State Trade Secret Law

1. List the laws (statutes and regulations) by name and code number, both criminal and civil, that your state has adopted governing trade secrets.

Connecticut has adopted the Connecticut Uniform Trade Secrets Act (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. §§ 35-50 to 35-58), often referred to as the CUTSA to distinguish it from the model Uniform Trade Secrets Act (UTSA).

Connecticut does not have a criminal statute regarding trade secrets.

2. Has your state adopted the model Uniform Trade Secrets Act (UTSA)? If so, please:

- Identify which among the statutes listed in response to Question 1 is your state's adopted version of the UTSA.
- Describe any significant differences between your state's adopted version and the model UTSA.

Adopted Version of the Model UTSA

Connecticut has adopted the model Uniform Trade Secrets Act (UTSA) with slight modifications. It is referred to as the Connecticut Uniform Trade Secrets Act (CUTSA) (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. §§ 35-50 to 35-58). For an overview of the UTSA, see [Practice Note, Protection of Employers' Trade Secrets and Confidential Information: Trade Secrets](#).

Significant Differences Between Adopted Version and Model UTSA

The CUTSA:

- Expands the UTSA's definition of trade secret to include:
 - drawings;
 - cost data; and
 - customer lists.
- Expands the UTSA's definition of person to include a limited liability company.
- Entitles employees to information concerning the employer's use or production of toxic substances (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 31-40n).
- Expands the UTSA's definition of improper means to include searching through trash.
- Allows courts to condition the misappropriating party's continued use of trade secret information on the payment of a "reasonable royalty" (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-52(b)). While the CUTSA does not define exceptional circumstances, the UTSA does.
- Omits willful and malicious misappropriation as a basis for a prevailing party's entitlement to an award of reasonable attorneys' fees.
- Awards attorneys' fees for a bad faith claim of misappropriation or bad faith motion to terminate an injunction or resist an injunction.

(Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. §§ 35-51 and 35-54.)



Injunctive Relief

An injunction terminates when the trade secret ceases to exist, unless it is necessary to eliminate a commercial advantage derived from the misappropriation. The court may compel affirmative acts to protect a trade secret in appropriate circumstances. If an injunction to prohibit future use is unreasonable, the CUTSA may condition future use on payment of a reasonable royalty (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-52(b)). In contrast, Section 2(b) of the UTSA allows payment of a reasonable royalty only in exceptional circumstances. For more information about injunctive relief, see Question 7: Scope of Injunction Enjoining Use of Former Employer's Customer List.

3. List any common law protections afforded to trade secrets. If common law protections are afforded to trade secrets, are they preempted by available state statutes?

Connecticut Common Law Protections of Trade Secrets

Connecticut courts apply the Restatement (First) of Torts' definition of trade secrets (Restatement (First) of Torts § 757 cmt. b (1979)). For the Restatement's definition of trade secrets, see Question 4: Common Law Definition of Trade Secrets.

A trade secret may exist without an explicit, independent contractual obligation. For example, if an employment contract lacks provisions requiring the employee to maintain secrecy of the employer's trade secrets, courts may imply a confidentiality requirement (*Town & Country House & Homes Serv., Inc. v. Evans*, 189 A.2d 390, 393-94 (Conn. 1963); *Elm City Cheese Co., v. Federico*, 752 A. 2d 1037, 1052-53 (Conn. 1999)).

For cases where the plaintiff seeks damages for trade secret misappropriation, the parties have the right to a jury trial (*Evans v. Gen. Motors Corp.*, 893 A.2d 371, 381-84 (Conn. 2006)).

Connecticut Uniform Trade Secrets Act Preemption

The Connecticut Uniform Trade Secrets Act (CUTSA) supersedes any conflicting tort, restitutionary, or other Connecticut law providing civil remedies for trade secret misappropriation (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-57(a)).

The CUTSA, however, does not affect:

- Contractual remedies or other civil liability not based on trade secret misappropriation.
- Criminal liability for trade secret misappropriation.
- The duty of a person, state, or municipal agency to disclose information:
 - under the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act (Connecticut FOIA) (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 1-210);
 - on toxic substances from employers (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 31-40j to 31-40p);
 - on certain real property valuation and fair market sales documents required by the Connecticut FOIA (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 12-62(c)); and
 - where expressly provided by law.

(Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-57(b).)

For more information on preemption of other causes of action, see Question 19.

For the CUTSA's and Connecticut FOIA's definition of trade secrets, see Question 4: Connecticut Uniform Trade Secrets Act Definition of Trade Secrets.

Definition of Trade Secret

4. How does your state define a trade secret under each law identified in Question 1 (statute or regulation) and Question 3 (common law)?

Connecticut Uniform Trade Secrets Act Definition of Trade Secrets

The Connecticut Uniform Trade Secrets Act (CUTSA) defines a trade secret as information:

- Including a:
 - formula;
 - pattern;
 - compilation;
 - program;
 - device;
 - method;
 - technique;

- process;
- drawing;
- cost data; or
- customer list.
- That derives actual or potential independent economic value because it is:
 - generally unknown; and
 - not readily ascertainable by proper means by another person who can obtain economic value from its disclosure or use.
- That is the subject of reasonable efforts under the circumstances to maintain its secrecy.

(Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-51(d).)

The Connecticut Freedom of Information Act (Connecticut FOIA) expands the CUTSA's definition of trade secrets to also include:

- Film scripts.
- Television scripts.
- Detailed production budgets.

(Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 1-210(b)(5).)

For more information on trade secrets and the Connecticut FOIA, see:

- Question 3: CUTSA Preemption.
- Question 6.
- The Connecticut Freedom of Information Commission's [website](#).

Common Law Definition of Trade Secrets

In addition to the CUTSA's definition of trade secrets, Connecticut courts also apply the Restatement (First) of Torts's definition of a trade secret (Restatement (First) of Torts § 757 cmt. b). The Restatement notes that a trade secret:

- May include a:
 - formula;
 - chemical compound;
 - process of manufacturing;
 - treatment or preservation of materials;
 - pattern;
 - device; or
 - compilation of information, like a customer list.

- Gives a person a competitive advantage over other competitors who do not know or use the trade secret.
- Is a process or device for continuous use in business operations.
- Relates to the production or sale of goods.
- Requires a substantial element of secrecy.

(Restatement (First) of Torts, § 757 cmt. b; *Robert S. Weiss & Assocs., Inc. v. Wiederlight*, 546 A.2d 216, 223-24 (Conn. 1988).)

Whether information is a trade secret is a fact-based inquiry. Connecticut courts apply a six-factor balancing test from comment b to determine whether information qualifies as a trade secret. The six factors are:

- The extent to which the information is known outside of the business.
- The extent to which the information is known by employees and others involved in the business.
- The extent of measures taken by the employer to guard the secrecy of the information.
- The information's value to the employer and to competitors.
- The amount of effort or money spent in developing the information.
- The ease or difficulty with which the information could be properly acquired or duplicated by others.

(Restatement (First) of Torts, § 757 cmt. b; *Robert S. Weiss & Assocs., Inc.*, 546 A.2d at 224.)

5. Describe any significant cases in your state creating, modifying, or clarifying the definition of a trade secret.

The Connecticut Uniform Trade Secrets Act (CUTSA) defines trade secret (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-51(d); see Question 4: Connecticut Uniform Trade Secrets Act Definition of Trade Secrets). To be protected as a trade secret, courts also require that:

- A substantial element of secrecy exists so that it would be difficult to acquire the information except by using improper means.
- The information is private knowledge and is only known and used in a particular business.
- In the case of customer lists, the information cannot be readily accessible through ordinary business channels or classified business or trade directories (see Question 7: Customer Lists Can Be Protected as Trade Secrets).

(*Town & Country House & Homes Serv., Inc.*, 189 A.2d at 393-94.)

Courts also apply a fact-based balancing test of the six factors listed in comment b of Section 757 of the Restatement (First) of Torts. For more information on the six-factor balancing test, see Question 4: Common Law Definition of Trade Secrets.

Although beyond the scope of this Q&A, public agencies can create trade secrets that are protected from disclosure under the state's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The Connecticut Supreme Court held that the University of Connecticut's customer list databases were protected as trade secrets because the university was a "person" as defined by the CUTSA. The databases otherwise met the definition of a trade secret under the CUTSA, and therefore could not be obtained by a FOIA request. (*Univ. of Connecticut v. Freedom of Info. Comm'n*, 36 A.3d 663, 668-69 (Conn. 2012).)

6. What are examples of information that courts in your state have found:

- To be trade secrets?
- Not to be trade secrets?
- Not to be trade secrets as a matter of law?

Trade Secrets

Connecticut courts and federal courts applying Connecticut law have found the following types of information to be trade secrets under the circumstances present:

- The design of mechanical devices (*Gen. Clutch Corp. v. Lowry*, 10 F. Supp. 2d 124, 127 (D. Conn. 1998)).
- Components of a strategic business plan, but not a business plan as a whole (*Lydall, Inc. v. Ruschmeyer*, 919 A.2d 421, 433-35 (Conn. 2007)).
- A business plan as a whole, where the business plan was unique in the industry and the business only had three clients (*Elm City Cheese Co.*, 752 A.2d at 1047-48).
- A manufacturing process (*Elm City Cheese Co.*, 752 A.2d at 1049).
- Customer lists that do not include readily ascertainable information (*Robert S. Weiss & Assocs.*, 546 A.2d at 224).
- Computer-controlled systems and accompanying software (*Otis Elevator Co. v. Intelligent Sys., Inc.*, 1990 WL 269219, at *9 (Conn. Super. Ct. July 18, 1990)).

- Confidential and proprietary information that included the identities, policies, addresses, sizes, renewal dates, and premium rate calculations of the customers stored on a computer system (*Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Conn., Inc. v. DiMartino*, 1991 WL 127094, at *6 (Conn. Super. Ct. July 2, 1991)).
- Identity of and detailed data about clients that company took steps to maintain in confidence (*Genworth Fin. Wealth Mgmt., Inc. v. McMullan*, 721 F. Supp. 2d 122, 127 (D. Conn. 2010)).
- Scientific biofilm compounds not previously disclosed to the public and before patent protection (*Sequoia Scis., Inc. v. Wood*, 2006 WL 860475, at *2 (D. Conn. Mar. 31, 2006)).

Not Trade Secrets

The following information was found not to be trade secrets by Connecticut courts and federal courts applying Connecticut law under the circumstances present:

- Insurance policy holder files when the contents of the files were not adequately protected and readily available from another source (*Nationwide Mut. Ins. Co. v. Mortensen*, 606 F.3d 22, 29 (2d Cir. 2010)).
- Known manufacturing processes used among businesses in the same industry (*Pressure Sci., Inc. v. Kramer*, 413 F. Supp. 618, 626-27 (D. Conn. 1976)).
- Materials used in the manufacture of a device for testing the circuitry of computer chips, where some materials were disclosed to the public and all of the materials were readily ascertainable through proper means and well known to the industry (*Wentworth Labs., Inc. v. Probe 2000, Inc.*, 2002 WL 31758350, at *6 (Conn. Super. Ct. Nov. 19, 2002)).
- Customer lists that include only the names and addresses of customers, and no information about the customer's buying habits, requirements, or preferences. Notably in this case, no restrictive covenant existed and the employer knew that the employee refused to sign the restrictive covenant not to compete. (*Holiday Food Co. v. Munroe*, 426 A.2d 814, 818 (Conn. Super. Ct. 1981).) For more information on protection of customer lists, see Question 7: Customer Lists Can Be Protected as Trade Secrets.

Not Trade Secrets as a Matter of Law

Whether information is a trade secret is a question of fact for the trial court (*Elm City Cheese Co.*, 752 A.2d 1037, 1043 (Conn. 1999)).

7. To what extent have:

- Customer, client, or subscriber lists been given trade secret protection?
- Former employees been enjoined from using a former employer's customer information?

Customer Lists Can Be Protected as Trade Secrets

Customer lists may qualify as trade secrets under the Connecticut Uniform Trade Secrets Act (CUTSA) (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-51(d)).

Courts applying Connecticut law have held that a customer list may be entitled to trade secret protection when:

- The customer list was developed from years of business effort, advertising, time, and money.
- The employee acquired the list in confidence from the employer.
- Customers' names cannot be readily ascertained through ordinary business channels or reference resources.

(*Town & Country House & Homes Serv., Inc.*, 189 A.2d at 393-94; *Robert S. Weiss & Assocs., Inc.*, 546 A.2d at 224.)

Courts have denied trade secret protection to customer lists when:

- The list only includes names and addresses of customer information, which is readily ascertainable.
- The employer does not attempt to protect the customer list in any way.
- No special relationship of trust and confidentiality exists between the employer and employee.

(*Holiday Food Co.*, 426 A.2d at 818.)

Scope of Injunction Enjoining Use of Former Employer's Customer List

The CUTSA provides injunctive relief for either actual or threatened misappropriation. The scope of injunctive relief may include:

- A temporary restraining order.
- A preliminary injunction.

(Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-52.)

The CUTSA states that the injunction terminates when the trade secret no longer exists. However, courts may continue the injunction for a reasonable period of time to eliminate commercial advantage that could result from the misappropriation. (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-52(a).)

The CUTSA also allows payment of a reasonable royalty if an injunction to prohibit future use is unreasonable (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-52(b)). For more information on reasonable royalties, see Question 14: Remedies.

To grant a preliminary injunction, courts consider:

- The plaintiff's likelihood of success on the merits of their claim.
- Whether the plaintiff will suffer immediate and irreparable harm or loss.
- A favorable balancing of the results or harm which may be caused to one party or the other, as well as to the public.

(*MacDermid, Inc. v. Selle*, 535 F. Supp. 2d 308, 315 (D. Conn. 2008); *Fleet Nat'l Bank v. Burke*, 727 A.2d 823, 826 (Conn. 1998).)

The threatened loss of goodwill and customers may support a finding of irreparable harm (*Gentworth Fin. Wealth Mgmt., Inc.*, 721 F. Supp. 2d at 129) (applying Connecticut law).

A court may grant a temporary injunction if the plaintiff:

- Does not have an adequate legal remedy.
- Will suffer irreparable harm without the issuance of a temporary injunction.

The court balances the equities to determine whether the plaintiff will suffer more harm with or without a temporary injunction. Because injunctive relief is provided by statute in Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-52, the plaintiff does not have the burden of proving irreparable harm and the absence of an adequate remedy at law. (*Avery Dennison Corp. v. Finkle*, 2002 WL 241284, at *3-4 (Conn. Super. Ct. Feb. 1, 2002).)

For example, the US District Court for the District of Connecticut, analyzing Connecticut law, awarded a preliminary injunction that heavily restricted the defendant's use of the plaintiff's customer lists and information. The injunction:

- Prohibited the defendant from communicating with the plaintiff's current or prospective clients included in the customer list, unless the client already entered into a contract with the defendant.

- Prohibited the defendant's use and disclosure of the plaintiff's client information, lists, or data.
- Required the defendant to return to the plaintiff any customer information previously disclosed to third parties, unless the disclosure was authorized by a client under a binding contract.

(*Gentworth Fin. Wealth Mgmt., Inc.*, 721 F. Supp. 2d at 131.)

Reasonable Efforts to Maintain Secrecy

8. What efforts to maintain secrecy have been deemed reasonable or sufficient for trade secret protection by:

- Courts in your state?
- Statutes or regulations in your state?

Courts

Under Connecticut law, examples of reasonable efforts by the employer or trade secret owner to protect information as trade secrets include:

- Maintaining documents on secure computer systems, labeling documents as confidential, and requiring employees to sign confidentiality and non-compete agreements (*Siemiatkaska v. Acme-Monaco Corp.*, 2009 WL 1140366, at *3 (Conn. Super. Ct. Mar. 30, 2009)).
- Having employees sign non-compete agreements, having suppliers, where possible, sign non-disclosure agreements, having workers keep logs as to the products on which they work, giving employees yearly refresher courses in intellectual property and trademarks, using read-only files to prevent the printing of confidential information, and having employees sign non-disclosure agreements on end of employment (*Avery Dennison Corp. v. Finkle*, 2002 WL 241284, at *3 (Conn. Super. Ct. Feb. 1, 2002)).
- Requiring employees to sign a confidentiality agreement.
- Limiting access to the information, maintaining confidential computer access codes for employees, and conducting employee training on the importance of maintaining confidentiality of the information (*Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Conn., Inc.*, 1991 WL 127094, at *2).
- Tracking the whereabouts of each computer system and the person responsible for each computer system's security, requiring the system to be kept in locked

rooms when not in use, threatening employees with termination should the system fall into the hands of anyone outside the business, limiting the service of the product by only employees, not outside contractors, strictly limiting access to proprietary information, and contractually forbidding disassembling, repair, or duplication of the product (*Otis Elevator Sys., Inc.*, 1990 WL 269219, at *2-*3).

Connecticut courts do not require nondisclosure agreements or that the employer maintain exclusive possession of the information to find that an employer's efforts to maintain secrecy are reasonable (*Robert S. Weiss & Assoc., Inc.*, 546 A.2d at 224; *Allen Mfg. Co. v. Loika*, 144 A.2d 306, 309 (Conn. 1958); *Elm City Cheese Co., Inc.*, 752 A. 2d at 1050). However, those circumstances provide evidentiary support to show that the employer took reasonable efforts to maintain secrecy of the information. For more information on nondisclosure agreements, see Question 15.

Statutes or Regulations

For information to be considered a trade secret, the Connecticut Uniform Trade Secrets Act requires reasonable efforts under the circumstances to keep information secret (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-51(d)).

Courts may also preserve the secrecy of an alleged trade secret by reasonable means by:

- Granting protective orders in connection with discovery proceedings.
- Holding in-camera inspections.
- Sealing the records of the action.
- Ordering any person involved in the litigation to not disclose an alleged trade secret without prior court approval.

(Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-55.)

Trade Secret Misappropriation Claims

9. For any law identified in Question 1 (statutes or regulations) or Question 3 (common law), what must a plaintiff show to prove trade secret misappropriation?

The Connecticut Uniform Trade Secrets Act defines misappropriation in three different ways:

- Acquisition.
- Disclosure.
- Use.

(Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-51(b).)

Two elements necessary to assert trade secret misappropriation are:

- The existence of a trade secret (see Question 4: Connecticut Uniform Trade Secrets Act Definition of Trade Secrets).
- Actual or threatened misappropriation.

(Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. §§ 35-51 and 35-52.)

Acquisition as Misuse

A trade secret can be misappropriated where the acquirer knew or had reason to know that the trade secret was acquired by improper means (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-51(b); see Definition of Improper Means).

Disclosure or Use of Trade Secret as Misuse

Disclosure or use of another's trade secret without express or implied consent constitutes misappropriation where the person either:

- Used improper means to acquire knowledge of the trade secret.
- At the time of disclosure or use, knew or had reason to know that the knowledge of the trade secret was:
 - derived from or through a person who had used improper means to acquire it;
 - acquired under circumstances giving rise to a duty to maintain its secrecy or limit its use; or
 - derived from or through a person who owed a duty to the person seeking relief to maintain its secrecy or limit its use.
- Before a material change of position, knew or had reason to know that:
 - it was a trade secret; and
 - knowledge of it had been acquired by accident or mistake.

(Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-51(b).)

Definition of Improper Means

Improper means include:

- Theft.
- Bribery.
- Misrepresentation.
- Breach or inducement of a breach of duty to maintain secrecy.
- Espionage through electronic or other means, including searching through trash.

(Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-51(a).)

10. Can corporations, corporate officers, and employees of a competing company in possession of the trade secrets of others be held liable for misappropriation in your state? If so, under what circumstances?

Under the Connecticut Uniform Trade Secrets Act, persons who may be liable for trade secret misappropriation include a:

- Natural person.
- Corporation.
- Limited liability company.
- Business trust.
- Estate.
- Trust.
- Partnership.
- Association.
- Joint venture.
- Government.
- Governmental subdivision or agency.
- Any other legal or commercial entity.

(Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-51(c).)

The elements in Question 9 are necessary to prove misappropriation of the trade secret by both individuals, and legal and commercial entities.

Defenses

11. For any law identified in Question 1 (statutes and regulations) or Question 3 (common law), what defenses are available to defend against claims under the statute or common law?

Defenses to a trade secret misappropriation claim in Connecticut include:

- The information is not a trade secret (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-51(d)).
- There is no actual or threatened misappropriation (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-51(b)).
- The three-year statute of limitations has expired (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-56).
- The trade secret has not been described with the required particularity in the pleading.
- Lack of standing to sue.
- Common law claims have been preempted (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-57).
- Failure to maintain and protect the secrecy (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-51(d)).
- Equitable defense, for example:
 - laches;
 - estoppel;
 - waiver; and
 - unclean hands.

Statute of Limitations

12. For any law identified in Question 1 (statutes and regulations) or Question 3 (common law), please identify the relevant statute of limitations for bringing a claim.

The Connecticut Uniform Trade Secrets Act imposes a three-year statute of limitations for misappropriation of trade secrets. Specifically, the three-year period begins to run when the misappropriation either:

- Is discovered.
- Should have been discovered by exercising reasonable diligence.

A continuing misappropriation constitutes a single claim. (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-56.)

Other Related Claims

13. What other claims, statutory or common law, can a plaintiff bring in your state against a defendant in the event of wrongful acquisition, misuse, or disclosure of a trade secret?

A plaintiff can allege claims for:

- Contractual remedies not based on misappropriation of a trade secret.
- Other civil remedies not based on misappropriation of a trade secret.
- Criminal remedies for misappropriation of a trade secret.
- Remedies under the Connecticut Unfair Trade Practices Act (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. §§ 42-110a to 42-110q).
- Remedies based on statutory computer-related offenses, for example, employees who access and misuse the employer's computer systems without authorization (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 52-570b).

(Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-57(b).)

Remedies

14. For any law identified in Question 1 (statutes and regulations) and Question 3 (common law), please describe the potential relief available to plaintiffs.

Under the Connecticut Uniform Trade Secrets Act (CUTSA) potential relief may include:

- **Monetary damages.** Monetary damages can include actual loss or unjust enrichment caused by misappropriation (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-53(a)).
- **A reasonable royalty.** If a court determines that an injunction to prohibit future use is unreasonable, it may award a reasonable royalty instead. For example, the Superior Court of Connecticut awarded a five-year reasonable royalty of \$10,000 each month for a product that had been marketed nationwide for five years (*Dur-a-Flex, Inc. v. Laticrete Int'l, Inc.*, 2010 WL 2822742, at *9 (Conn. Super. Ct. June 21, 2010)). Additionally, if determining the award for the plaintiff's loss of

profits or the defendant's unjust enrichment is difficult, then a reasonable royalty may be particularly useful (*Evans v. General Motors Corp.*, 2003 WL 21040255, at *2-3 (Conn. Super. Ct. Apr. 22, 2003)).

- **Protective order.** A court may award a protective order if the court determines that the information is a trade secret and the plaintiff shows good cause (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-55; *Print Source, Ltd. v. Lighthouse Litho, LLC*, 2013 WL 1277176 at *4-5 (Conn. Super. Ct. Mar. 8, 2013)).
- **Reasonable attorneys' fees.** A court may award reasonable attorneys' fees if:
 - the defendant committed willful and malicious misappropriation;
 - the misappropriation claim was made in bad faith; or
 - a motion to terminate an injunction is made or resisted in bad faith.
- **Punitive damages.** If the defendant willfully and maliciously misappropriated the trade secret, punitive damages may be awarded up to twice the monetary damages amount. Willful and malicious misappropriation requires a specific intent to cause actual or constructive harm (*Dura-A-Flex, Inc.*, 2010 WL 2822742, at *3).
- **Affirmative acts.** A court may order compelling affirmative acts to protect a trade secret.
- **Injunctive relief.** Examples of injunctive relief include:
 - restricting the defendant from disclosing, using, or selling the product, customer lists and information, or business method (*Elm City Cheese Co.*, 752 A. 2d at 1058);
 - preventing development or use of information about the production of the product (*Elm City Cheese Co.*, 752 A. 2d at 1058); and
 - prohibiting the defendant from working for a competitor in the specific area of the trade secret (*Avery Dennison Corp.*, 2002 WL 241284, at *3-4).

(Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. §§ 35-52 to 35-55.)

Contractual Protections

15. What factors do courts in your state consider when assessing the enforceability of a nondisclosure or confidentiality agreement?

Nondisclosure and confidentiality agreements are restrictive covenants that may be used to ensure that the employer's trade secrets are kept confidential by the employee. In assessing the enforceability of nondisclosure and confidentiality agreements, Connecticut courts apply a reasonableness standard similar to that applied to non-compete provisions (*Newinno, Inc. v. Peregrim Dev., Inc.*, 2003 WL 21493838, at *2 (Conn. Super. Ct. June 3, 2003)). For more information on non-competes in Connecticut, see [State Q&A, Non-Compete Laws: Connecticut](#).

Connecticut courts use a five-factor test to determine whether a restrictive covenant is reasonable under the circumstances. The five factors are:

- The time the restriction is to be in effect.
- The geographical area covered by the restriction.
- The degree of protection given to the interest of the party in whose favor the covenant is made.
- The restrictions imposed on the employee's ability to pursue their occupation.
- The potential for undue interference with the interests of the public.

(*Hart, Nininger & Campbell Assocs., Inc. v. Rogers*, 548 A.2d 758, 767 (Conn. App. Ct. 1988).)

If a court finds any one of the factors unreasonable, that determination is enough to find the agreement unenforceable (*New Haven Tobacco Co. v. Perrelli*, 559 A.2d 715, 718-19 (Conn. App. Ct. 1989)).

Nondisclosure and confidentiality agreements require sufficient consideration. Sufficient consideration may include an offer for employment. However, there is contradictory authority as to whether continued employment is sufficient consideration (see *RKR Dance Studios, Inc. v. Makowski*, 2008 WL 4379579, at *3-5 (Conn. Super. Ct. Sept. 12, 2008)).

Generally, Connecticut courts do not blue pencil agreements that are found unreasonable. However, courts may blue pencil an agreement if it explicitly authorizes the court to reform the agreement and make the terms severable (*Gartner Group, Inc. v. Mewes*, 1992 WL 4766, at *4-5 (Conn. Super. Ct. Jan. 3, 1992)).

For general information on nondisclosure and confidentiality agreements, see [Practice Note, Confidentiality and Nondisclosure Agreements](#).

Miscellaneous

16. What common law duties are recognized in your state that prohibit employees from disclosing employer information even absent an independent contractual obligation?

Connecticut courts impose a common law fiduciary duty of loyalty on employees not to use their employer's trade secrets or other confidential information. The employee remains subject to a duty of loyalty not to use trade secrets acquired during employment for the employee's own benefit or for a competitor and to the former employer's detriment even without an independent contractual obligation. (*Allen Mfg. Co.*, 144 A.2d at 309.)

17. Does your state recognize the doctrine of inevitable disclosure?

Connecticut recognizes the doctrine of inevitable disclosure (see *Branson Ultrasonics Corp. v. Stratman*, 921 F. Supp. 909, 913 (D. Conn. 1996) (applying Connecticut law); *Aetna, Inc. v. Fluegel*, 2008 WL 544504, at *5 (Conn. Super. Feb. 7, 2008)).

For general information on the inevitable disclosure doctrine, see [Practice Note, Non-Compete Agreements with Employees: Protection in the Absence of Non-Competes: Inevitable Disclosure](#). For more information on the inevitable disclosure doctrine in Connecticut, see [State Q&A: Non-Compete Laws: Connecticut](#).

18. What, if anything, have courts held regarding trade secret misappropriation claims involving memorizing trade secrets rather than the taking of tangible representations of information?

The Connecticut Uniform Trade Secrets Act does not address whether committing trade secrets to memory

amounts to misappropriation. The courts apply the same analysis to memorized trade secrets and tangible representations of information. There is no exception for use of memorized trade secrets. However, Connecticut courts recognize the thin line between generalized experience that a former employee can use during future employment and specific confidential information that the employee may not use (*Gen. Reinsurance Corp. v. Arch Capital Grp., Ltd.*, 2007 WL 3121766 at *10 (Conn. Super. Ct. Oct. 17, 2007)).

19. Do any of the laws identified in Question 1 (statutes and regulations) or Question 3 (common law) preempt other causes of action a plaintiff could assert related to trade secret misappropriation (for example, conversion, breach of fiduciary duty, unfair competition, or tortious interference)?

The Connecticut Uniform Trade Secrets Act (CUTSA) generally supersedes conflicting tort, restitutionary, or other Connecticut laws providing civil remedies for trade secret misappropriation (Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 35-57(a)).

Because contractual duties not based on trade secret misappropriation are not superseded by the CUTSA, the statute does not preempt certain breach of contract claims, like a breach of non-compete provisions in an employment contract.

Because the elements of tortious interference do not conflict with the CUTSA, the statute does not preempt claims of tortious interference. The elements of tortious interference include:

- The existence of a contractual or beneficial relationship.
- The defendant's knowledge of that relationship.
- The intent to interfere with that relationship.
- The actual loss suffered by the plaintiff.

(*Hart, Nininger & Campbell Assocs., Inc.*, 548 A.2d at 764.)

Claims of an unenforceable non-compete or confidentiality agreement are not preempted by the CUTSA (*Hart, Nininger & Campbell Assocs., Inc.*, 548 A.2d at 767-68).

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