

4 FAM 430 VOUCHER CERTIFICATION AND PAYMENT

4 FAM 431 SCOPE

(TL:FIN-352; 5-30-95)

Subchapter 430 contains the Department's policies for the certification and payment of vouchers and voucher schedules, including the electronic transfer of funds. Statutory requirements state that an authorized certifying officer (7 GAO 19-1) must certify all voucher schedules in accordance with 31 U.S.C. sections 3325 and 3528. Responsible officers are authorized certifying officers for the Department of State as designated in 4 FAM 060 .

4 FAM 432 CERTIFYING OFFICERS' PERSONAL LIABILITY AND RELIEF

(TL:FIN-352; 5-30-95)

a. The responsibilities and accountability of a certifying officer are provided in 31 U.S.C. sections 3325 and 3528. A certifying officer assumes personal financial liability for the correctness and legality of all payments certified (31 U.S.C. 3528). When certifying a voucher, a certifying officer is held responsible for:

- (1) Information stated in the certified voucher and supporting records;
- (2) Computation of the certified voucher;
- (3) Legality of the proposed payment from the appropriation or fund involved; and
- (4) Certifying vouchers of other U.S. Agencies as authorized to certify (see 4 FAM 060).

b. In accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3528, the Comptroller General may relieve a certifying official from a liability in the following cases:

- (1) When the Comptroller General decides that the certification was based on official records and the official did not know, and by reasonable diligence and inquiry, could not have discovered, the correct information; or
- (2) When the obligation was made in good faith and no law specifically prohibited the payment and the U.S. Government received value for payments.

c. A certifying official may be relieved from liability from an overpayment in the following cases:

(1) When such payment is made to a common carrier under 31 U.S.C. 3726 and the Comptroller General decides that overpayment occurred because the administrative audit before payment did not verify transportation rates, freight classifications, or land-grant deductions; or

(2) When such payment is provided under a U.S. Government bill-of-lading or transportation request and the overpayment was the result of using improper transportation rates or classifications, or the failure to deduct the proper amount under a land-grant law or agreement.

4 FAM 433 CERTIFICATION PROCESS

(TL:FIN-352; 5-30-95)

Officers and staff should refer to 4 FAH-3 H-433 for the procedures related to the verifying of obligation legality and information accuracy; computing of voucher schedules, advance notification for large payments, certifying for other locations, signing and dating of the certifying officer, and the procedures when a question of law or fact exists.

4 FAM 434 PAYING VOUCHERS

(TL:FIN-352; 5-30-95)

a. Upon completion of the certification process, the certifying officer must promptly forward the voucher schedules to the designated disbursing office for payment and distribution or electronically transfer them for payment.

b. Only the USDO (or assistant USDO) and the Department of the Treasury are authorized to make direct disbursements of U.S. Government funds (see 4 FAM 330). Principal cashiers and subcashiers overseas are authorized to make payments from an operating cash advance received from the USDO. Domestic cashiers are authorized to make payments from an operating cash advance received from FMP. Cashiers can make disbursements only as authorized (see 4 FAM 390).

c. The Prompt Payment Act, as amended (Pub. L. 97-177 and Pub. L. 100-496), requires the Department to pay its bills on time, to pay interest penalties when payments are made late, and to take discounts only when payments are made within the discount period. The Department is required to comply with the Prompt Payment Act and make disbursements promptly upon receipt of the necessary schedules and supporting documentation (see 4 FAH-3 H-422 for details).

d. Certification and payment made by telegraphic request from a paying post to the receiving post (USDO) should only be used where a delay in payment would cause severe hardship to a payee or severely disrupt a U.S. Government organization's activity at the requesting post. Certification and payment is also authorized under the automated system of Disbursing and Accounting, Telegraphically (DATEL). Any electronic certification system used in execution of payments must comply with the control requirements of GAO Title 7, Chapter 7.4C. See 4 FAH-3 H-434 for the control procedures that must be met.

e. All disbursements through the Treasury Financial Communications System (TFCS), formerly known as the Treasury Electronic Funds System, shall be supported by standard disbursing voucher forms as prescribed in 1 TFM 4-2560, unless the use of different forms has been specifically authorized. Only authorized disbursing offices are to process TFCS payment requests. However, U.S. agencies may submit their voucher schedules to the Treasury disbursing office that processes their check payments for forwarding on to the TFCS processing office. 1 TFM 4-2560 provides for the forms to be used in scheduling payments through the TFCS (see 4 FAH-3 H-434). When scheduling payments through TFCS, the Treasury Department must approve in writing the use of voucher schedules, other than those mentioned above, before they are used. U.S. agencies must receive written approval from the U.S. Treasury before using the TFCS for a particular class or type of payment. Verbal approval may be given in emergency cases. Written approval must follow.

4 FAM 435 THROUGH 439 UNASSIGNED