

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

Subject:	Purchase of Non-Monetary Awards
Purpose:	The benefit of this Directive and Standard is to clarify the process for approval and purchase of non-monetary awards and to promote consistency across the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation).
Authority:	Pub. L. 109-125; 5 U.S.C. 4303, 4501-4506; 5 CFR 451.102, 104; 370 DM 451; Departmental Personnel Bulletin 02-11 (451)
Approving Official:	Director, Administration
Contact:	Human Resources Policy Management, 84-25100 Acquisition and Assistance Management Division, 84-27800

1. **Scope.** This Directive and Standard applies to all non-monetary award items. Supervisors must exercise care in selecting appropriate items for non-monetary recognition to avoid potential appearance of misuse of government funds.
2. **Non-Monetary Awards.** Non-monetary awards include, but are not limited to, the following items: tickets to events, balloons, lapel pins, coffee cups, key chains, pens, paperweights, pen and pencil sets, clocks, plaques, jackets, caps, T-shirts, watches, fruit baskets, or gift certificates (see Paragraph 2.E.).
 - A. **Criteria.** Items must be of a suitable nature to be presented in public. Where appropriate, non-monetary award items will contain the organizational name, logo, award title, and/or mission. Reclamation requirements concerning visual identity must be followed (see Reclamation Manual Policy, *Visual Identity* (ADM P05) and supporting Reclamation Manual Directives and Standards).
 - B. **Purchase.** Items will be purchased through normal procurement channels. Reclamation offices may order supplies of specific award items when appropriate to affect cost savings and provide for immediate recognition.
 - C. **Exclusions.** Under 5 U.S.C. 45, private-sector organizations and their employees, customers, and private citizens, whose contributions directly or indirectly support the Department of the Interior (Department) mission are not permitted to receive awards. This prohibition includes both contractors and the employees of contractors. Refer to [Pub. L. 109-125](#) which outlines awards as they relate to volunteers.
 - D. **Threshold.** The threshold for non-monetary recognition of nominal value within the Department is \$50 cash value. This rate may fluctuate based on the current inflation rate. The Department will notify bureaus of any change in the nominal value for non-monetary awards and will be disseminated by Reclamation. Items exceeding the nominal value (>\$50 and <\$250) are considered to have significant value, and must be

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included in the employee's gross wages for tax purposes, and must meet the following criteria:

- (1) The non-monetary item must be something that the recipient will value.
- (2) The item must have a lasting trophy value; earned in appreciation for good work.
- (3) The item must clearly either symbolize or express the employer-employee relationship in some manner.

E. **Special Considerations.** Gift certificates and U.S. Savings Bonds convey a sense of monetary value and must be reported as taxable income regardless of the dollar amount. The Internal Revenue Service considers both items to be taxable fringe benefits that must be taxed on their fair market value (face value of a gift certificate and the purchase price of the bond).

- (1) Gift certificates will be used only as informal recognition awards and must not exceed nominal value.
- (2) U.S. Savings Bonds require a minimum holding time period, giving them some lasting value. They are therefore considered to show an employer-employee relationship and can be of nominal value or can exceed the nominal value.

F. **Documentation.** Servicing Human Resource Office (SHRO) concurrence is not required for nominal value items. However, Form [DI-451](#), *Award Certification*, must be submitted to the SHRO for gift certificates or U.S. Savings Bonds of any value or if the non-monetary award exceeds the nominal value.

- (1) For charge card purchases of nominal value items (with the exception of gift certificates and U.S. Savings Bonds as described in Paragraph 2.E.), Form DI-451 with the supervisor's or manager's approval must be attached and filed with the monthly charge card statement. Consult with your SHRO to determine the need to send a copy of Form DI-451 to that office.
- (2) For charge card purchases of items which exceed the nominal value threshold, Form DI-451 must be completed and forwarded to the SHRO for processing prior to purchase and filed in accordance with record retention policies for charge card purchases.
- (3) For gift certificates of nominal value, or U.S. Savings Bonds of any dollar value, Form DI-451 must be completed and forwarded to the SHRO for processing as noted in Paragraph 2.F.(1). Charge card procedures are the same as stated in Paragraph 2.F.(2) for items exceeding the nominal value threshold.

3. Related References.

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- A. [Comptroller General \(CG\) Decision B-243025](#)
[CG Decision B-256399](#)
- B. Internal Revenue Service [Tax Trails - Employee Compensation - Employee Achievement Awards](#), [EP Examination Process Guide - Section 3 - Initiation of an Examination - Regulations on Gifts From Outside Sources](#)
- C. [5 U.S.C. 4303](#)
[5 U.S.C. 4501](#)
[5 U.S.C. 4502](#)
[5 U.S.C. 4503](#)
[5 U.S.C. 4504](#)
[5 U.S.C. 4505](#)
[5 U.S.C. 4506](#)
- D. [5 CFR 451.102, 104](#)
- E. [370 DM 451](#)
- F. [Departmental Personnel Bulletin 02-11 \(451\)](#)