



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

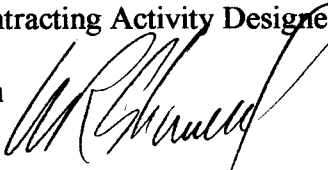
Office of the
Assistant Secretary
for Administration

Office of
Procurement and
Property
Management

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Southwest
Room 302
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Washington, DC
20024-9300

TO: Head of the Contracting Activity Designees

FROM: W. R. Ashworth  **SEP 9 2005**
Director

SUBJECT: Waiver for Use of Convenience Checks for Disaster Recovery

The purpose of this memorandum is to grant a waiver from AGAR Advisory 52, Prohibition on Using Convenience Checks, and a waiver from the maximum single purchase limit in Departmental Directive 5013-6, Use of the Purchase Card and Convenience Check, in direct support of Hurricane Katrina disaster recovery efforts.

AGAR Advisory 52 states, "Agencies and cardholders may not use convenience checks unless an applicable waiver allows such use." Each agency's annual waiver authority (cap) covers normal declining needs based on projected convenience check use where payments cannot be made by other means. The advisory states, "In the event of an unforeseen emergency, agencies may request authority to use convenience checks for transactions to cope with the emergency." Department Regulation 5013-6, paragraph 14 d, states, "The single purchase limit established for a warranted individual may not exceed the lesser amount of the individual's delegated authority or \$1 million, unless a waiver is authorized by the APC." Agencies have requested authority to use convenience checks to expedite recovery efforts from the effects of Hurricane Katrina and facilitate payments for disaster recovery contracts up to the warrant levels of contracting officers where there are no other practical methods under the circumstances.

Therefore, I hereby authorize, for a period of 180 calendar days from the date of this memorandum, the following:

1. Use of convenience checks in direct support of Hurricane Katrina disaster recovery efforts. Convenience checks used for such purpose will not count against annual waiver limits (caps); and,
2. Use of convenience checks over \$2,500 by warranted contracting officers up to the limits of their warrants for payment of new emergency contracts in direct support of hurricane disaster recovery efforts. Contracting officers are responsible to track payments made under such contracts.

Convenience checks are not authorized to pay invoices under existing non-disaster recovery contracts. Payment for these transactions will be made via the IAS to FFIS

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interface or directly in FFIS as applicable when agency access to FFIS production is restored.

To aid the National Finance Center in issuing correct Internal Revenue Service Miscellaneous Income Form 1099s to vendors, cardholders shall require vendors to fill out and sign a Form W-9, Request for Tax Payer Identification Number and Certification, before issuing convenience checks. The W-9 should be retained by the cardholder for transaction reconciliation in PCMS.

For questions, contact Joe Taylor, OPPM, Procurement Policy Division, 202-401-0787.

cc: Agency Purchase Card Coordinators