FORT SILL POST CLAIMS

Operational Deployments

1. REQUIREMENTS BEFORE THE ARMY CAN PAY A CLAIM:

a. Substantiation: There must be some substantiation of the soldier's claim that property was lost or damaged.

b. Lost incident to service.

c. Value claimed: There must be some evidence of the value of the items claimed.

d. Possession was reasonable and useful: The claims approval authority must determine that possession of the property was reasonable and useful under the circumstances.

e. No negligence or wrongful act: No part of the loss was caused by any negligent or wrongful act of the claimant.

2. PREVENTIVE MEASURES:

a. Properly inventory and secure property of soldiers who live in the barracks. A copy of the inventory should be retained by the soldier, and the company commander should retain a copy.

b. Prepare inventories of high value items that soldiers can carry with them on deployment or that they purchase in the theatre of operations.

c. If the unit's soldiers are directed to place their property in boxes for pickup by a commercial company, some precautions must be taken. In this situation, contact the claims office for details.

3. **STORAGE OF POV:**

a. Before we can pay for damage that allegedly occurred during storage in a government owned/government operated storage facility, there must be some evidence that this damage did not exist before storage. Therefore, it is important that a joint inspection of the exterior and interior of each vehicle be conducted at the time soldiers' POVs are placed in storage. The DD Form 788 can be used for this purpose or a vehicle inspection form used by the claims office can be provided to the units to copy. The inspection should not be just a walk-around inspection looking for scratches and dents. Rather, the inspector should sit in the drivers' seat, turn on the vehicle and operate systems such as the windshield washers, lights, electric door locks, electric windows, heater and air conditioner. The inspector should observe the condition of the carpets, seats, dash board, and headliner. The operation of the vehicle should be observed as it is driven up to the inspection point to detect any problems with the suspension or transmission.

b. We recommend that the inspection form should be prepared in three copies, with one being retained by the storage facility manager, one left in the glove box of the POV, and one retained by the member.

4. LOSSES IN THEATER:

a. All soldiers wear watches, but if a soldier elects to wear a Rolex instead of a Timex, the soldier will have to prove that he or she owned the more expensive type of watch in the event it is lost or stolen. There are wide varieties in quality and cost for most items, without proof that a claimant lost the more expensive model, the claimant will only be paid an average cost for a low-end model. Soldiers on deployment usually do not have ready access to their purchase receipts or canceled checks, but they can prove what they owned, and its value, if units do an inventory before deployment.

b. All units planning for an operation deployment should require their soldiers, shortly before departure, to prepare an inventory of the high value items of personal property that they are taking with them. This inventory does not need to include normal items of clothing, uniforms, or issued items. It can be limited to electronic items such as laptop computers, CD players, DVD players, GPS systems, and video games. It should include any expensive jewelry and watches, or separate equipment bought for the deployment.

c. The inventory should be signed and dated by the claimant and verified by someone in the soldier's chain of command.

d. Several copies can be made of these inventories. The soldier should retain one and carry it on deployment. Another copy should be left at home with the soldier's family. If time permits, single soldiers should mail a copy home to their next of kin. A copy should be retained by the company, squadron, or detachment commander/first sergeant.

The Fort Sill Claims Office is located at 4700 Mow-Way Road, Suite 400 in the Client Services Center. Our office operates on a walk-in basis from the hours of 09:00 – 16:00, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. On Thursdays, hours are from 13:00 – 16:00. Our telephone number is (580) 442-2317.

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