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**United States Department of Agriculture  
Marketing and Regulatory Programs  
Agricultural Marketing Service  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service**

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**APHIS Directive**

**APHIS 6792.1**

**06/16/2022**

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REPRESENTATION ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES

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**1. PURPOSE**

This Directive provides Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) policy, delegation of authority, and procedures for representational expenditures by APHIS Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) and other employees authorized by International Services (IS) having representational responsibilities.

**2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

This Directive replaces APHIS Directive 6792.1, dated 07/18/2008.

**3. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES**

The legal and regulatory authority is Congressional Appropriation and Section 905 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended (22 U.S.C. 4085). Representation funds may be used by APHIS FSOs and other employees authorized by IS in the performance of diplomatic responsibilities as representatives of the United States Government for official entertainment and necessary courtesies extended to representatives of foreign

governments and international organizations in furthering foreign policy objectives. This is the only reason for the availability of such funds and the only criterion for their use. Funds available for this purpose are authorized annually in the Agency's appropriation language and may not be exceeded without violating the Anti-Deficiency Act.

#### 4. SCOPE

This directive covers all IS FSOs and other employees authorized by IS whose positions entail the responsibility for establishing and furthering the interest of the United States.

#### 5. POLICY

- a. Representation allowances are intended to cover allowable items of expenditure by APHIS FSOs and other employees authorized by IS whose official positions entail responsibility for establishing and maintaining relationships of value to the United States. These expenses are generally incurred overseas but also may be incurred domestically while hosting high level foreign delegations.
- b. Selected APHIS representatives are authorized to expend APHIS funds for allowable items used to further the interests of the United States.
- c. The wealth of United States as a nation should not be flaunted and requires a certain restraint, coupled with the standards of local customs. The ability to make effective but conservative use of limited resources is an art that usually must be learned. Thus, it is incumbent upon senior officials, including the chief of mission, to give guidance to those less experienced in the proper use of representation funds. A great deal of work that could be called "representation" involves little or no expenditure of money. Further, lavish expenditures are questionable in most circumstances.
- d. APHIS will continue to review representational activities to ensure effective use of available funds. To the maximum extent practicable, authorized officials will purchase American products, including wine, for authorized gift-giving occasions. Officers also should stay within the dollar limits for the various types of approved representation activities at their overseas posts.
- e. Expenditures for tickets or admission to unhosted events (where APHIS is not hosting the event) normally are a poor use of representation funds, and, while not prohibited, are considered allowable only in those instances where the highest

levels of host country officials are present, and the attending employee has the necessity and opportunity to fulfill the purpose of the representation allowance.

- f. No more than 50 percent of the guests invited to representational functions should be United States Government executive branch employees. Locally Employed Staff (LES) and bilateral commission employees count toward the American presence.
- g. United States Government employees on temporary duty who attend representational meals will not be included in representational expense claims. Instead, they will pay for their meal out of their Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) funds on their travel vouchers.
- h. While expenditures for tangible gifts normally do not fulfill the purpose of representation allowance, it is occasionally necessary for senior APHIS officials to extend courtesies by giving gifts to officials of foreign countries and international organizations. Representational gifts can be purchased as soon as the Representation, Foreign Visitors and Protocol Office (RFVPO), is notified of a meeting with a foreign government official or international organization (applies to Headquarters).

## 6. ALLOWANCE EXPENSES

- a. Uses. Expenses for the following types of items in a foreign country or area of assignment may be approved for payment:
  - (1) Entertainment undertaken to promote personal and protocol relationships necessary to perform official duties.
  - (2) Tips and gratuities (in addition to those related to entertainment) to persons not employed by the United States, where such gratuities are customary in a foreign country and are necessary or desirable for the promotion of the United States' national interests.
  - (3) Purchase of flowers, wreaths, or similar tokens for presentation in accordance with local custom on appropriate occasions such as weddings, births, or deaths of important officials.
  - (4) Entertainment of members and employees of the legislative and/or judicial branches of the United States Government, or other American citizens

who are not employees of the Federal Government, including State and local officials and businesspersons.

- (5) Hiring of extra waitstaff, or other temporary help to serve at official functions; and
- (6) Other representational expenses which the head of the Agency may authorize or approve to promote the interests of the United States.

b. Prohibitions. Representation allowances will not be used for the following purposes:

- (1) The hire, purchase, operation, or repair of any motor-propelled, passenger-carrying vehicle, including aircraft.
- (2) Membership fees or dues in any society, club, or association.
- (3) Expenses for printing or engraving.

Exceptions: Expenses for printing or engraving invitations for official functions may be charged to representational funds where such expenses are incurred in conformity with Government Printing and Binding Regulations or where printing or engraving is done abroad pursuant to Agency authority for such printing. Arrangements must be made through the Embassy for the procurement, payment, printing, or engraving services for invitations for official functions. APHIS has no legal authority for direct procurement of invitations.

Some of these items (e.g., printing, business cards, and award banquets) can be procured legally under certain conditions. Contact the IS General Services Office at 301-851-3789 for specific information. When an item is not specifically mentioned in this Directive, err on the side of caution. Confer with RFPVO before making purchases that may lead to questions. Be aware that items not accepted for representation will not be reimbursed.

- (4) Internal office parties.
- (5) Going away parties for FSOs (unless they are necessary to build bilateral relationships, the incoming officer is present, and there is at least 50 percent foreign presence).

- (6) Employee award banquets.
- (7) Gifts for LES employees.
- (8) Printing of personal business cards.
- (9) Printing of Holiday cards or other types of greeting cards.
- (10) Compensation for cost of living and quarters expenses, or for assignment under difficult environmental conditions, including expenses of recreation and entertainment solely for employees of the executive branch of the United States Government.

## 7. FUNDING AND PAYMENT

- a. Representation allowance is an allocation of funds. To ensure that the annual cap on representational expenses is not exceeded, officials planning representational events must present a budget and description of the planned event to the APHIS Protocol Officer who is the Director of the RFVPO and receives a pre-authorization for the event.
- b. Vouchers. Representation allowance claims are not to be processed through embassies or imprest/petty cash funds. Claims may be reimbursed to an employee or be paid directly to a vendor upon presentation or appropriate vouchers for allowable expenditures. To receive a reimbursement for expenses, FSOs must use the Electronic Foreign Allowance and Benefit System (eFABS) --a computerized claims application managed by Marketing and Regulatory Programs Business Services (MRPBS), International Operations and Accounting Team (IOAT), Minneapolis, MN (phone: or 612-336-3269; email [IOAT@usda.gov](mailto:IOAT@usda.gov) ). Other employees authorized by IS seeking reimbursement should submit an OF-1164, Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business, to the RFVPO ([RFVPOrequests@usda.gov](mailto:RFVPOrequests@usda.gov)). The following information is necessary to process a claim:
  - (1) Entertainment vouchers must show:
    - (a) Type, purpose, and location of function.
    - (b) Names and titles of American and foreign guests of honor; and

(c) A brief description of the official business conducted.

(2) Representation Other Than Entertainment. Vouchers must show:

(a) Occasion.

(b) Name and title of recipient(s); and

(c) Reason for expense.

(3) Confirm Reimbursement.

(a) Contact the RFVPO once reimbursement has been received to confirm amount spent and submit a copy of invoice for financial tracking.

(b) Or send copy of eFABS or OF-1164 to RFVPO.

c. Receipts. Expenditures must be supported by receipt, copy of canceled check, credit card charges, admission ticket stub, or other similar physical means. For each expenditure of less than \$75, the employee's certification will be sufficient when it is impracticable to obtain a receipt or when the validity of the claimed expense is not in question.

The MRPBS IOAT will review the submission, determine that no prohibited items are included, and forward the completed claim for payment. When necessary, they will consult with the IS Deputy Administrator's office. The MRPBS IOAT will maintain copies of all invoices for employees to whom representation allowance authority has been extended.

## 8. FORMS

The form(s) that are referenced and/or required for use as established by this Directive include:

1. Rep Allowance Request Form (Request via APHIS-Riverdale Visitors Center [RFVPOrequests@usda.gov](mailto:RFVPOrequests@usda.gov))
2. OF-1164 for a copy of this form, click here [Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business | GSA](#) and [1164-Instructions.pdf \(usda.gov\)](#).

3. eFABS for FSOs.

The form(s) listed above can be electronically accessed in the [U.S. General Services Administration \(GSA\)](#) Master Electronic Forms Library.

9. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Federal records created by this Directive must be maintained in accordance with the established [General Records Schedule \(GRS\)](#) and/or the [APHIS](#) Records Management Handbook when applicable. If employees are named in an active litigation hold, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, and/or other action, those records, regardless of media, must be preserved and maintained in their native format until otherwise notified by your Agency Records Officer and/or the Office of the General Counsel.

- a. [MRP Information Technology, Information Management Branch \(MRP-IT, IMB\)](#) is the official recordkeeper of this Directive which is to be preserved permanently, per [Paperwork and Data Management \(PDM\) 4-1](#).
- b. The RFVPO is the official recordkeeper of the Representational Allowance related records which will be destroyed 6 years after reimbursement, in accordance with GRS 1.1, item(s) 010-011  
[GRS 1.1: Financial Management and Reporting Records \(archives.gov\)](#)

10. INQUIRIES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Multiple points of contacts may be needed to assist with elements of the Directive. Note that items a and b are required and cannot be removed.

- a. General inquiries concerning this Directive may be directed to the (Branch/Office) via email to APHIS-Riverdale Visitors Center [RFVPOrequests@usda.gov](mailto:RFVPOrequests@usda.gov)
- b. Records management inquiries should be directed to the Program Records Management Liaison for [APHIS](#).