

**REPRESENTATION ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES PURSUANT TO THE
FOREIGN SERVICE ACT OF 1980**

1. PURPOSE

This Directive provides APHIS policy, delegation of authority, and procedures for representational expenditures by APHIS Foreign Service Officers and other employees authorized by International Services having representational responsibilities.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This Directive replaces APHIS Directive 6792.1, dated 7/18/05.

3. AUTHORITY

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 Foreign Service officers and other employees authorized by International Services 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. POLICY

- a. Representation allowances are intended to cover allowable items of expenditure by APHIS Foreign Service employees and other employees authorized by International Services 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 in the course of 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 the U.S. 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 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. Foreign Service National (FSN) 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 representatives of foreign countries and international organizations.

5. 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 business persons;
- (5) Hiring of extra waiters, busboys, or other temporary help to serve at official functions; and
- (6) Other representational expenses which the head of the Agency may authorize or approve as being of a type 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.

Exception: 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 International Services (IS) General Services Office at 301-734-7550 for specific information. When an item is not specifically mentioned in this Directive, err on the side of caution. Confer with supervisors or headquarters 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 Foreign Service officers (unless they are necessary to build bilateral relationships, the incoming officer is present, and there is at least 50 percent non-American presence).
- (6) Employee award banquets.
- (7) Gifts for FSN employees.
- (8) Printing of personal business cards.
- (9) Printing of Christmas 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 and their families.

6. FUNDING AND PAYMENT

- a. Representation allowance is an allocation of funds. In order 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 International Visitor's Center 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 of appropriate vouchers for allowable expenditures. To receive reimbursement for expenses, Foreign Service Officers must use E-FABS, a computerized claims application managed by Marketing and Regulatory Programs Business Services (MRPBS) Claims Team, Minneapolis, MN (phone: 612-336-3270 or 612-336-3269; fax: 612-336-3549). Other employees authorized by International Services seeking reimbursement should submit an SF-1164, Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business, to the MRPBS Claims Team. The following information is necessary in order 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.

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

7. INQUIRIES

a. Direct inquiries through administrative channels to the IS Administrative Services Director of Personnel and Travel.

Director of Personnel and Travel
USDA/APHIS/IS, Unit 65
4700 River Road
Riverdale, MD 20737
USA

b. This Directive is available on the internet at www.aphis.usda.gov/library

/s/

Gregory L. Parham
Deputy Administrator
MRP Business Services