



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON DC

Office Of The Assistant Secretary

08 NOV 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR ALMAJCOM/FOA/DRU/CC  
DISTRIBUTION C

FROM: SAF/FM  
1130 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20330-1130

SUBJECT: Appointing Certifying Officers

References: (a) 31 USC Sections 3321, 3325, 3527, and 3528

(b) DoD Directive 7000.15, 8 Jul 98, DoD Accountable Officials and Certifying Officers

(c) DoD FMR Vol 5, Chap 33, Accountable Officials and Certifying Officers

The referenced legislation and publications establish the requirement for the Heads of the DoD Components to appoint certifying officers. The Assistant Secretary (Financial Management and Comptroller) has been authorized to further delegate this authority. The purpose of this memorandum is to delegate the authority to appoint certifying officers to the individuals in the positions described in attachment 1.

In the past, disbursing officers were the only individuals within the DoD who had pecuniary liability for fiscal irregularities, including erroneous payments. In the Air Force, our accounting and finance officers routinely appointed certifying officers for payments. Therefore, appointing certifying officers is not a new process. However, since the release of DoD Directive 7000.15, the certifying officer who attests to the legality, propriety, and correctness of the payment now shares pecuniary liability with the disbursing officer. Certifying officers have pecuniary liability for the entire amount of any illegal, improper, or incorrect payment that cannot be collected from the payee.

In order to implement this directive, commanders who receive this memorandum should forward it to their base and installation commanders with instructions to ensure certifying officers are appointed as outlined in attachment 1. To assist with the appointment process, we have included an example of an appointment letter in attachment 2.

The DoD Directive 7000.15 also contains provisions for designating accountable officials. The concept of accountable officials is not new. People have always been accountable for funds, property, and equipment. Military and civilian personnel are subject to disciplinary action for improper or illegal acts concerning these resources. The policy in DoD Directive

7000.15 reinforces the concept of accountability by allowing the assessment of pecuniary liability for accountable officials. The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) is in the process of coordinating and publishing a change to the DoD FMR Volume 5, Chapter 33, concerning accountable officials. Our intention is to issue implementing guidance once this change has been incorporated into the regulation.

The long-range goal is to integrate the appointment and designation of certifying officers and accountable officials into the new payment systems being developed, such as the Defense Travel System. In the future, when certifying officers or accountable officials enter a system to update any financial information, the system will inform them of their pecuniary liability and will not let the users proceed until they acknowledge their responsibilities. Until that time, we appreciate your help and cooperation in implementing this legislation and DoD policy concerning certifying officers. If you need further information, contact Mr. John Nethery, SAF/FMP, (703) 697-2905 or DSN 227-2905, or SMSgt George Varga, SAF/FMPC, (703) 614-5399, or DSN 224-5399.



ROBERT F. HALE  
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force  
(Financial Management and Comptroller)

Attachments:

1. Certifying Officer Matrix
2. Sample Certifying Officer Appointment/Acknowledgment Memorandum

cc:

AFAFO  
DFAS

FINANCIAL SERVICES OFFICE/OPERATING LOCATION OPERATION (FSO/OPLOC)		
Type of Payment	Certifying Official	Certifying Officer Appointing Official:
Purchase Card Program	Accounting Liaison Technician	Financial Services Officer*
TDY Travel (Defense Travel System (DTS))	Orders Authorizing Official	Unit Commander
TDY Travel (non- DTS)	Customer Support Technicians	Financial Services Officer*
TDY Travel (Travel Reengineering Test sites)	Orders Authorizing Official	Unit Commander
Contract and Vendor Payments -Emergency	Accounting Liaison Technician	Financial Services Officer*
Military Pay (One Time Payments)		
a. Advance Payments	Customer Service Technician	Financial Services Officer*
b. Separation/Retirement Payments	Customer Service Technician	Financial Services Officer*
c. Casual/Partial Payments	Customer Service Technician	Financial Services Officer*
Transportation Billings (PowerTrack)	Transportation Officer	Unit Commander
PCS-Military Travel Allowances (Non-DTS)	Customer Service Technician	Financial Services Officer*
PCS-Military Travel Allowances (DTS)	Orders Authorizing Official	Military Personnel Officer
PCS-Civilian Travel Allowances (Non-DTS)	Customer Service Technician	Financial Services Officer*

\* If the Financial Services Officer is the Deputy Disbursing Officer, then the Comptroller should appoint the certifying officers.

FINANCIAL SERVICES OFFICE/REGIONAL ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE OFFICE FSO/RAFO OPERATION		
Type of Payment	Certifying Official	Certifying Officer Appointing Official:
Purchase Card Program	Accounting Liaison Technician	Financial Services Officer*
TDY Travel (DTS)	Orders Authorizing Official	Unit Commander
TDY Travel (non- DTS)	Customer Support Technicians	Financial Services Officer*
TDY Travel (Travel Reengineering Test sites)	Orders Authorizing Official	Unit Commander
Contract and Vendor Pay	RAFO Technician	RAFO Commander
Contract and Vendor Payments -Emergency	Accounting Liaison Technician	Financial Services Officer*
Military Pay (One Time /Local) Payments)		
a. Advance Payments	Customer Service Technician	Financial Services Officer*
b. Separation/Retirement Payments	Customer Service Technician	Financial Services Officer*
c. Casual/Partial Payments	Customer Service Technician	Financial Services Officer*
Transportation Billings (PowerTrack)	Transportation Officer	Unit Commander
PCS-Military Travel Allowances (Non-DTS)	Customer Service Technician	Financial Services Officer*
PCS-Military Travel Allowances (DTS)	Orders Authorizing Official	Military Personnel Officer
PCS-Civilian Travel Allowances (Non-DTS)	Customer Service Technician	Financial Services Officer*
PCS-Civilian Travel Allowances (DTS)	Orders Authorizing Official	Civilian Personnel Officer

\* If the Financial Services Officer is the Deputy Disbursing Officer, then the Comptroller should appoint the certifying officers.

CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS		
Type of Payment	Certifying Official	Certifying Officer Appointing Official:
TDY Travel (non- DTS)	Technician in the Agent Office	Disbursing Agent
Contract and Vendor Pay	Technician in the Agent Office	Disbursing Agent
Military Pay (One Time Payments)		
a. Advance Payments	Technician in the Agent Office	Disbursing Agent
b. Casual/Partial Payments	Technician in the Agent Office	Disbursing Agent

SAMPLE APPOINTMENT LETTER

(For Certifying Officers)

(Use Appropriate Letterhead)

MEMORANDUM FOR (Insert Certifying Officer's Unit/Name)

FROM: Appointing Official

SUBJECT: Appointment as Certifying Official

You presently occupy a position where your duties include the functions of payment Certifying Officer for (select type of payments from attachment 1). This memorandum is formal notification that you are hereby appointed a Certifying Officer to (Note: Insert location and address of the deputy disbursing officer within the financial services office to whom certification will be made).

As a Certifying Officer, you will be responsible for certifying vouchers and documents for payment. Certifying Officers have pecuniary liability for any illegal, improper, or incorrect payment processed by the Department as a result of any inaccurate or misleading certification. This means that you may have to repay the total amount of any payment that is found to be illegal, improper, or incorrect. You must become thoroughly familiar with your responsibilities and accountability. By your signature below, you acknowledge this appointment and affirm that you have read and understand your responsibilities as described in the following references:

- Title 31, United States Code, section 3325 <http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/31/3325.html>
- Title 31, United States Code, section 3528 <http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/31/3528.html>
- DoD Directive 7000.15 <http://web7.whs.osd.mil/pdf/d700015p.pdf>
- DoDFMR Vol 5, Chapter 33 [http://www.dtic.mil/comptroller/fmr/05/05\\_33.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/comptroller/fmr/05/05_33.pdf)
- Certifying Officer Accountable Official Tutorial <http://www.saffm.hq.af.mil/>

In addition, if you are certifying documents other than travel vouchers paid through the Defense Travel System or the travel reengineering test sites, you must complete a DD Form 577 Signature Card for the deputy disbursing officer described above. After completion, retain a copy and return the signed original of this appointment and the completed DD Form 577 to me for approval. For all documents that you certify under this appointment, your signature must be in the form indicated by you in block 5 of the DD Form 577.

(Appointing Official's Signature)

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

By signature hereon, I acknowledge my appointment as a Certifying Officer. I have read and understand my responsibilities and accountability. I understand my right to request relief of liability for any payment I certify that is determined to be illegal, improper, or incorrect. I further understand that this appointment will remain in effect until revoked in writing by you or your successor.

Attached is the completed DD Form 577 (Signature Card).

(Certifying Officer's Signature)