

14-4. Restricted Transactions

The following list identifies supplies and services that are generally prohibited from purchase. Under the following conditions, the below items are allowable to purchase with the GPC.

a. **Advance Payments.** Advance payments are generally prohibited unless authorized by a specific appropriation or other law. See 31 USC 3324. Exceptions include but are not limited to subscriptions or training based on an SF 182, Authorization, Agreement, Certification of Training. Advance payments are authorized for Tuition Assistance in accordance with AR 621-5. Limitations on advance payments do not apply to advance payments authorized by law for subscriptions or publications. Advance payment is authorized in 31 USC 3324(d)(2) for “charges for a publication printed or recorded in any way for the auditory or visual use of the agency.” CHs must place subscription orders in the name of an organization or a position title (e.g., Building Manager or Director, XXX Division) rather than in the name of an individual employee. CHs must retain the renewal notice or a statement that reflects the beginning and ending date of the subscription service.

b. **Business Cards.** Commercial printing of business cards is prohibited. Cardholders may use the GPC to order business cards from AbilityOne and National Industries for the Blind.

c. **Bottled Water.** Bottled water is generally prohibited. Cardholders may use the GPC to buy water when potable drinking water is not available on the premises or when the drinking water currently provided or available on the premises is harmful if consumed. Cardholders must obtain approval from their legal advisor prior to purchase and include approval documentation in the purchase file. (B- 247871, B-324781, B-310502, and B-318588)

d. **Coins.** Cardholders may use the GPC to buy coins in accordance with the specified policy in HQDA memo, Policy for the Procurement and Presentation of Coins, dated 14 December 2016.

e. **Commercial Unmanned Aerial Systems.** Use of the GPC to purchase commercial unmanned aerial systems (e.g., “drones”) is prohibited in the DPCAP 15 August 2018 memorandum titled “Government-Wide Commercial Purchase Card Prohibited Purchases.” See DPCAP 1 March 2019 memo titled “Limited Exception to the General Government Wide Commercial Purchase Card Unmanned Aerial Systems Purchasing Prohibition.”

f. Conference Registration Fees.

1) **Local In-person Training Conference.** Cardholders should use the GPC to pay the registration fee. Attendance may require conference approval from chain of command and legal office.

2) **Conference that Requires Official Travel.** Cardholders may use a GPC for a standalone, advanced payment of the registration fee. Attendance may require conference approval from chain of command and legal office.

3) **Virtual Training Conference.** Cardholders should use a GPC to pay the registration fee. Conference approval is not required per AR 1-50, 1-8.

g. **Food, Meals, and Refreshments.** In general, CHs may not use appropriated funds to purchase items considered personal expenses, such as food, meals, and refreshments without specific authority. Provided you have specific authority, there may be limited exceptions that permit a CH to purchase food. Additional information regarding acceptable food purchases is available in the GAO publication, “Can Your Agency Use Appropriated Funds for Meals and Light Refreshments?” When

purchasing food, CHs may use the GPC to buy disposable serving materials (e.g., paper plates and napkins, plastic forks). **Written legal and A/OPC approval is required for all food purchases and must be included in the purchase file. The below list identifies exemptions under which food may be allowable if approved by the command and legal counsel. This list is not all-inclusive.**

1) Nongovernmental Meeting or Conference. Cardholders may use GPC to pay for food if the cost of food is a non-separable portion of a registration or attendance fee that covers attendance and meals. CH may also use the GPC if food is necessary to obtain full benefit of the meeting or conference (B-233807, Aug. 27, 1990). Criteria used in determining if an agency may pay for food for an employee attending a nongovernmental meeting or conference:

- i. Meals and refreshments are incidental to the meeting or conference,
- ii. Attendance at the meal or when refreshments are provided is important to ensure the employees' full participation in the meeting or conference, and
- iii. The meal and refreshments are part of a formal conference or meeting that includes not just the meal and refreshments and, discussions or speeches that may take place when the meal and refreshments are served, but also substantial functions separate from when the food is served.

2) Agency Paying for Food for an Employee Attending a Government-Sponsored Conference. Cardholders may use the GPC if food is necessary to obtain full benefit of the conference and the conference involves matters of topical interest to multiple agencies and/or nongovernmental participants. Also, without statutory authority to charge a fee and retain the proceeds, the host agency may not charge a registration or other fee to defray the costs of providing food (B-198471, May 1, 1980, and B-288266, Jan. 27, 2003). Criteria used in determining if an agency may pay for food for an employee attending a government-sponsored meeting or conference:

- i. Meals and refreshments are incidental to the meeting or conference,
- ii. Attendance at the meal or when refreshments are provided is important to ensure the employees' full participation in the meeting or conference, and
- iii. The meal and refreshments are part of a formal conference or meeting that includes not just the meal and refreshments and discussions or speeches that may take place when the meal and refreshments are served, but also substantial functions separate from when the food is served.
- iv. In addition, the meeting or conference may not be a routine meeting that involves the day-to-day operations of the government.

3) Agency Hosting a Formal Conference. Cardholders may use the GPC if the conference includes registration, published substantive agenda, and scheduled speakers; the food is a legitimate conference expense; and the conference involves matters of topical interest to multiple agencies and/or nongovernmental participants. Also, without statutory authority to charge a fee and retain the proceeds, the host agency may not charge a registration or other fee to defray the costs of providing food (B-300826, March 3, 2005). Criteria used in determining when an agency, as host, may pay for food at a formal conference:

- i. Meals and refreshments are incidental to the formal conference,
- ii. Attendance at the meal or when refreshments are provided is important for the host agency to ensure attendees' full participation in essential discussions and speeches concerning the purpose of

the formal conference, and

iii. The meal and refreshments are part of a formal conference that includes not just the meal and refreshments and discussions or speeches that may take place when the meal and refreshments are served, but also substantial functions separate from when the food is served.

4) Light Refreshments at Government-sponsored Conferences. The agency sponsoring the conference may use the GPC to provide light refreshments on breaks at Government-sponsored conferences only for Government employees on travel orders (TDY status). Use of GPC to buy refreshments for non-Government employees or for Government employees not on travel orders is prohibited.

5) Agency Hosting a Focus Group. Cardholders may use the GPC if the focus group advances a specific statutory mission; the participants are federal employees; and the expenditure contributes materially to the achievement of the specific statutory function (B-304718, Nov. 9, 2005).

6) Routine Agency Meeting Held to Discuss the Internal Day-to-Day Operations of the Government. Cardholders may use GPC if the meeting is held at an outside facility, and the cost of food is included, at no extra charge, in the fee for the conference space (B-281063, Dec. 1, 1999).

7) Training. Cardholders may use GPC if participation in the meal is necessary to obtain the full benefit of the training (39 Comp. Gen. 119 (1959)). Sponsoring agency may serve refreshments/meals at training where the food is necessary to achieve the objectives of the training program. The food must be incidental to the training, and the event must meet the definition of training in 5 USC 4101(4). Attendees would fail to complete the training if they missed the meal.

8) Award Ceremony. Cardholders may use GPC if the recipients will be publicly recognized, and the authorized agency official has determined that food advances the recognition of the awardee. Sponsoring agency may serve light refreshments at award ceremonies honoring individuals recognized under a Civilian Employee Incentive Award Program. Use of GPC to pay for refreshments at the following types of ceremonies is prohibited: retirement, promotion, graduation, recurring quarterly recognition, commanders' call, PCS, and longevity (65 Comp. Gen. 738 (1986)).

9) Cultural Awareness Ceremony. Cardholders may use GPC if the food is part of a formal program intended to advance EEO objectives and make the audience aware of the cultural or ethnic history being celebrated. The food must be a sample of the food of the culture and be offered as part of the larger program to serve an educational function (B-301184, Jan. 15, 2004).

10) Official Representational Funds (ORF). Cardholders may use the GPC to extend official courtesies, including meals and refreshments, to authorized guests in accordance with AR 37-47 or appropriate agency regulations. The GPC must be dedicated solely for use of ORF expenditures. For example, ORF may be used to purchase food in support of Employer Support of Guard and Reserve (ESGR) for official reception, representation, and advertising activities authorized in DoDI 7250.13, 10 USC 2241(c), and ESGROI 7000.1.

11) Chaplain-led Programs. Cardholders may use the GPC to buy food in support of chaplain-led programs to assist members of the Armed Forces and their immediate family members in building and maintaining strong family structures. Allowable expenses include the cost of transportation, food, lodging, supplies, fees, childcare, and training materials for members of the Armed Forces and their immediate family members, including participation at retreats and training conferences (10 USC 1789(b) and AR 165-1).

12) **Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP).** Use of the GPC may be authorized for purchases in support of YRRP events (e.g., meals/refreshments, childcare) for eligible individuals when the purchase is considered a “necessary expense” in carrying out the statutory requirement of the program established under Public Law 110-181 Section 582. See DoDI 1342.28; JTR 031902; 37 USC § 481l and 37 USC § 452(b)(15); OUSD Memo “Use of Appropriated Funds for the YRRP” dated 7 Jul 2010; and Chief National Guard Bureau Manual 1801.01.

13) **Recruiting Activities.** Cardholders may use the GPC for purchases in compliance with Army Regulation (AR) 601-2, Army Recruiting Support Programs Chapter 5-2. See National Guard Regulation 601-1 para. 9-10., Army National Guard Strength Maintenance Program. Per 10 USC § 520c: Recruiting functions: provisions of meals and refreshments, funds appropriated to the Department of Defense for recruitment of military personnel may be expended for small meals and refreshments during recruiting functions for the following persons:

- i. Persons who have enlisted under the Delayed Entry Program authorized by section 513 of this title.
- ii. Persons who are objects of armed forces recruiting efforts.
- iii. Persons whose assistance in recruiting efforts of the military departments is determined to be influential by the Secretary concerned.
- iv. Members of the armed forces and Federal employees when attending recruiting functions in accordance with a requirement to do so.
- v. Other persons whose presence at recruiting functions will contribute to recruiting efforts.

14) **Field Studies Program (FSP).** Cardholders may use the GPC for the Field Studies Program to pay for administrative program costs and actual event execution costs below the micro-purchase threshold. DoD training activities may pay for expenditures in support of the Field Studies Program IAW DoDI 5410.17, AR 12-15, SECNAVINST 4950.4B, and AFI 16-105, including but not limited to, food and meals, supplies for International Military Student lounges such as coffee, tea, and condiment kits, admission to authorized venues, rental of event space, hiring of tour guides as well as other authorized support services during FSP field trips. See AR 12-15, Chapter 11-30a(2).

15) **Emergency Requirements.** CHs may use the GPC to purchase food in emergency circumstances where the provision of food is incidental to the protection of human life or Federal property (B-189003, July 5, 1977). This exception applies in authorized emergency conditions that clearly present an imminent danger to human life and/or destruction to federal property and it was necessary to have employees assist in the emergency response and/or maintain the essential functions of the office for an extended period (53 Comp. Gen. 71 (1973) and B189003). Emergency circumstances do not include situations where employees are merely required to remain on duty beyond their regular working hours, even if required to remain on duty for a 24-hour period (B-185159, Dec. 10, 1975). Further, emergency circumstances do not include situations merely involving inclement weather (68 Comp. Gen. 46 (1988)). Food is unauthorized in an event where personnel were not engaged in activities to prevent imminent danger to human life or Federal property but were only investigating a dangerous situation which had already occurred. Food purchases for this exception will depend on the facts and circumstances present in each case. Occupations such as those of policeman, firemen, security guards, are often required to be performed under emergent and dangerous conditions and this fact alone does not warrant departure from general rule against payment for employees' meals from appropriated funds (B-185159, December 10, 1975).

h. Fuel.

- 1) **Fuel for Special Purpose Vehicles.** Cardholders may use GPC for fuel for special purpose vehicles such as a forklift, tractor, lawn mower.
- 2) **Fuel for Rental Vehicles.** Cardholders may use GPC for fuel for vehicles rented 30 days or less for official purposes, when not in a TDY status. If in TDY status and need to purchase fuel for the rental vehicle, requester must use a Travel card.
- 3) **Fuel for Army NAF-owned Vehicles.** Cardholders may use GPC for NAF vehicle refueling in accordance with NAF vehicle refueling policy requirements in the JTR and DFAS 4200.2-1.
- 4) **Fuel for Personally owned Vehicles.** GPC is prohibited. Requester must use travel card.
- 5) **Fuel for GSA Fleet vehicles.** GPC is prohibited. Requester must use the GSA Fleet card.
- 6) **Fuel for Vehicles owned or leased by DoD.** Requester should use the DoD Fleet card.
- 7) **Bulk Fuel.** Requester should use the Logistics Fuel Card (LOGFUEL). The fuel may also be purchased via contract.

i. **Gift Funds** in support of Army donor program where nonappropriated funds are permitted. Gift Fund purchases must each have a supporting legal review uploaded in the bank's EAS. Gift Fund programs must operate in accordance with AR 1-100 and donor intent while following their local Gift Fund standard operating procedure. The A/OPC will check uploaded purchase documents to ensure the supporting legal review is attached while monitoring program compliance.

j. Lodging in Kind (LIK) and Subsistence in Kind (SIK).

- 1) The GPC is the preferred method to purchase and pay for LIK/SIK requirements below the MPT on dedicated LIK/SIK cards.
- 2) The requiring activity must coordinate LIK/SIK requirements with their respective contracting activities early in the acquisition planning process to decide if a contract or the GPC is the appropriate method of procurement. The requiring activity's contracting office will determine the proper procurement method. If the GPC is deemed the appropriate procurement method, the contracting office will forward the requirement to the appropriate CH to make the purchase. If the appropriate procurement method is determined to be a contract or BPA, the contracting office should establish or utilize a contract/BPA. The contracting office will determine if the GPC will be used as a method of payment.
- 3) The Army will identify recurring GPC LIK/SIK requirements on an annual basis and, where appropriate, put these acquisitions into contract vehicles or BPAs.
- 4) See the [Army LIK/SIK Standard Operating Procedures \(SOP\)](#) for detailed guidance.

k. Long-term Lease of Land and Buildings.

- 1) Lease of real property (i.e., land and/or buildings) for a term longer than 30 days is prohibited.
- 2) Lease of real property for a term shorter than 30 days is permitted.

l. **Professional Credentials.** Per 5 USC 5757, an agency may use appropriated funds or funds otherwise available to the agency to pay for expenses for employees to obtain professional

credentials, including expenses for professional accreditation, state-imposed and professional licenses, and professional certification; and examinations to obtain such credentials. The authority under subsection

(a) may not be exercised on behalf of any employee occupying or seeking to qualify for appointment to any position that is excepted from the competitive service because of the confidential, policy-determining, policymaking, or policy-advocating character of the position.

m. Recreational Events. Cardholders using appropriated funds cannot pay for recreational events with the GPC. NAF CHs using non-appropriated funds may pay for recreational events with the GPC.

n. Subscriptions. Advance payment is authorized in 31 USC 3324(d)(2) for “charges for a publication printed or recorded in any way for the auditory or visual use of the agency.” CHs must retain the renewal notice or a statement that reflects the beginning and ending date of the subscription service. CHs must purchase mission-related subscriptions to magazines, journals, and technical data in the name of the agency only rather than in the name of an individual employee. Advance payments are authorized for subscriptions to prevent disruptions in service. Subscriptions must not have an automatic renewal at the end of the subscription period. Before leaving their role, CHs should notify their BO and A/OPC so that the subscription may be cancelled or transferred to another account as appropriate.

o. Tires. Cardholders may use [FedMall’s Global Tires Program](#) contract.

p. Travel Advances, Claims, or Expenses. Only the Government Travel Charge Card is to be used for individual official travel-related expenses. All travel-related expenses (e.g., metro fares, taxi, bus fares, automated toll tools, and parking fees) are processed in accordance with the JTR. For travel-related expenses, the GPC may be used only to place orders and/or make payments against contracts awarded by warranted Contracting Officers.

q. Vehicle-related expenses. These expenses are generally paid with the travel or fleet cards. CHs may use GPC when the travel or fleet card is inappropriate, e.g., NAF and Air Force vehicles. Use of the GPC to purchase repairs on GSA fleet-operated vehicles is prohibited.

r. Vehicle Rental. Cardholders may use the GPC for short term vehicle rental (less than 90 days) from a commercial vendor 1) if vehicles are not available from the installation’s motor pool and 2) use of GSA Short Term Rental program is not feasible. The total rental cost must be below the MPT. See AR 58-1 for guidance on maintenance and lease of vehicles.

s. Weapons, Ammunition, and Explosives. Use of the GPC for purchases of these items is generally prohibited. As controlled DoD commodities, weapons, ammunition, and explosives are assigned to the Army (see DFARS 208.70), which has contracting responsibility to supply all DoD Components with weapons, ammunition, explosives, and other commodities listed in DFARS PGI 208.7006. DoD Components are to submit their commodity requirements via MIPR to the assigned Component in accordance with DFARS 208.7002 and DFARS PGI 208.7002-1. See Chapter 16 for exceptions to policy. CHs may purchase ceremonial knives and swords provided they meet all the following conditions:

- 1) Do not have a sharpened blade – must not be sharpened for use as a weapon.
- 2) Used for change of command, military retirements, drills, Honor Guard, ceremonies, displays, cake cutting, etc.
- 3) Not for personal use.

4) Kept on hand for use in appropriate ceremonies.

Parent topic: CHAPTER 14 - PROHIBITED AND RESTRICTED PURCHASES