

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 1-208

OCTOBER 18, 2022

Administration and Management

Delegation of Authority, NWSPD 1-2

***DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY FOR FOOD, WATER, & LODGING EXPENDITURES
IN ADVANCE OF OR DURING MAJOR WEATHER EMERGENCIES OR DISASTERS***

NOTICE: This publication is available at: <https://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/>

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This directive supersedes directive NWSI 1-208 “Delegation of Authority for Food, Water, & Lodging Expenditures in Advance of or during Major Weather Emergencies or Disasters” dated March 13, 2017. Content changes include:

- The addition of “water” everywhere that “food” appears.
- Supplies such as disposable cups, plates, napkins/towels, and cutlery are not authorized expenditures in advance of or during major weather emergencies or disasters.
- Personal care items updated to include hand sanitizer and hand soap.

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**Delegation of Authority for Food, Water, and Lodging Expenditures
in Advance of or During Major Weather Emergencies or Disasters**

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1. Introduction

Food, water, and lodging expenditures may be authorized for U.S. Government employees working at their official duty stations if the agency determines the expenditures are necessary to allow the employees to fulfill their statutory responsibilities during emergency situations that pose danger to human life or Federal property. Therefore, the National Weather Service (NWS) has authority, under limited circumstances, to use appropriated funds to purchase food, water, and/or lodging for employees who must remain at their official duty stations during major weather emergency or disaster situations. This policy provides for a limited exception to the general prohibition against such expenditures for employees at their duty stations.

(See Department Administrative Order 203-10, “Official Entertainment and Representation Authorizations.”) Link:

https://www.osec.doc.gov/opog/dmp/daos/dao203_10.html

2. NWS Delegation of Authority

NWS Financial Management Centers (FMC) Directors may authorize an exception to the general rule against purchasing food, water, and/or lodging for employees under the limited circumstances outlined in this guidance. This authority may be re-delegated to facility heads (e.g., Meteorologists-In-Charge, Hydrologists-In-Charge) within each organization.

3. NWS Policy Guidance for the Expenditure of Food, Water, Lodging, and Purchase of Emergency Supplies in Advance of or During Weather Emergencies or Disasters

3.1 Major Weather Emergencies or Disasters

The provision of food, water and/or lodging may be authorized by an FMC Director upon making all of the following determinations:

- a. To carry out the NWS's critical responsibilities to forecast weather and issue storm warnings, it is necessary to staff an office throughout an emergency;
- b. The emergency involves danger to human life or the possibility of destruction of Federal property; and
- c. To staff an office, it is necessary to provide meals and lodging to employees who must work during the emergency.

For example, where weather conditions are of such an extreme and unusual nature as to prevent employees from leaving an office, or from returning to the office for their next work period, and the office must be staffed on a 24-hour basis during an emergency involving danger to human life and federal property, NWS appropriated funds may be used to provide food and lodging to the affected employees. The duration of time for which appropriated funds can be used in these situations will be determined by the FMC Director.

3.2 Advance Purchases for Emergency Preparedness

Food, water, and supplies may be purchased in advance and stored on-site when an FMC Director or delegated facility head determines the expenditure is a necessary expense to ensure continuity of operations during an impending emergency. The advance purchase of supplies is consistent with the requirements of Executive Order 12656, "Assignment of Emergency Preparedness Authority" (Nov. 18, 1988), which requires planning for the continuity of essential functions in any national security emergency. NWS activities are essential to many services necessary in an emergency, in particular, section 401(10) of Executive Order 12656 requires the provision of, "meteorological, hydrologic, marine weather, geodetic, hydrographic, climatic, seismic, and oceanographic data and services to Federal, State, and local agencies." To meet its responsibilities, the NWS may need to make provisions to staff an office throughout an emergency in order to provide required hydrometeorological and environmental information. The advance purchase and storage of food, water, and other supplies (including cots and blankets) may be necessary to ensure employees who must work throughout the emergency will be able to remain at their duty stations. The decision to expend funds to purchase food, water and supplies in advance should be made for each NWS office based upon the particular circumstances of the office, such as its size and location in a remote area. During a prolonged emergency event, such as a land-falling hurricane, food, water and supplies will be purchased within a time period reasonable to obtain the supplies based on supply chain availability in advance of predicted landfall and employees will make every effort to secure their own food and lodging once conditions permit after the emergency.

3.3 Permissible Purchases of Emergency Supplies

Based on opinions issued by the Comptroller General that permit the expenditure of funds for lodging by securing hotel accommodations during emergency situations, the purchase of beds, mattresses, bed linens, pillows, washcloths, and towels is acceptable. Kitchen supplies such as cooking utensils and dish detergent are permissible. The tangible items become government property. Purchases of office supplies (chairs, cell phone protective cases, and stamps) and cleaning products (antibacterial wipes/sprays and bleach) are allowable. Since any items purchased

under these conditions become government property, any food or consumable supplies remaining after the emergency will be surplus as soon as feasible after the emergency and will not be issued to employees for personal use.

3.4 Expenditures that Remain Employees' Responsibility

The purchase of laundry products (e.g., detergent, dryer sheets) and personal care items (e.g., hand soap, hand sanitizer, shampoo, deodorant, shaving cream) are the employees' responsibility; appropriated funds may not be used for such expenditures. Supplies such as disposable cups, plates, napkins/towels, and cutlery are not authorized expenditures in advance of or during major weather emergencies or disasters.

4. Accountability and Reporting of Expenditures

Each FMC is accountable for its usage of these expenditures and reports annually (by October 31 for previous fiscal year) to the Budget Execution and Formulation Division (CFO1) on Food, Water, Lodging, and Advance Purchase Expenses.

APPENDIX A

References:

- Department Administrative Order 203-10, “Official Entertainment and Representation Authorizations.” Link: https://www.osec.doc.gov/opog/dmp/daos/dao203_10.html