Lesson Introduction

Now that you've learned about the Certifying Officer Legislation (COL), let's take a closer look at the role of the Certifying Officer in the payment certification process.

This lesson identifies the qualifications of a Certifying Officer, describes the Certifying Officer appointment process, and describes the manual and electronic certification process.

Lesson Objectives

Terminal Learning Objective: Recognize the role of the Certifying Officer in the payment certification process. At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Identify the qualifications of a Certifying Officer.
- Recognize Certifying Officer appointment and termination process.
- Recognize the manual and electronic payment certification process.

Lesson Objective 1

Hey Hector. What are the qualifications required of the Certifying Officer?

Glad you asked, Chris. The Certifying Officer is expected to be knowledgeable in the area in which he or she performs certifications as well as having a background in preparing vouchers for payment. Here are some of the other aspects of being a Certifying Officer that you should become familiar with.

Try this warm up activity first to see how familiar you are with the roles of Certifying Officers. Some of what you learned in Lesson 1 should help you answer the question.

Warm Up Activity

Which of the following personnel is not normally eligible for appointment as a Certifying Officer?

- [x] Disbursing Officers
- [ ] Travel Authorizing Officials
- [ ] Resource Managers/Fund Holders
- [ ] Commanders

Check Answer

Disbursing Officers are not normally eligible for appointment as a Certifying Officer.

Required Knowledge

A Certifying Officer should:

- Be knowledgeable of the area in which he or she performs certifications.
- Have background or experience in preparing vouchers for payment.
- Have knowledge of their servicing bank dispute process (contact the Agency/Organization Program Coordinator-A/OPC to obtain process for their bank).
- Have knowledge of the payment process (e.g. availability of funds and location of designated paying and accounting offices).
- Have knowledge of appropriations and other funds and accounting classifications.

Certifying Officers and DAOs must be U.S. citizens if their duty stations are within the United States. If outside the U.S., Certifying Officers must be U.S. citizens or direct hire foreign nationals (subject to certain exceptions).

Eligibility

Personnel eligible for Certifying Officer appointment include:

- Commanders
- Deputy commanders
- Resource managers/fund holders
- Travel authorizing officials
- Purchase card approving officials
- Other personnel in equivalent positions

Disbursing Officers are not eligible for Certifying Officer appointment. Also, individuals under a Disbursing Officer's supervision may not be appointed as Certifying Officers except under unusual circumstances. Exceptions as noted in DoD FMR Volume 5, Chapter 33 (330201.A) are authorized. This separation of duties provides independence and strength to the internal control process.

Knowledge Review 1

Which of the following would NOT be an expectation for a Certifying Officer?

- [ ] Background preparing vouchers for payment
- [x] Knowledge of military processes and procedures
- [ ] Knowledge of the payment process
- [ ] Knowledge of appropriations funds and accounting classifications

Check Answer

Knowledge of military processes and procedures is not an expectation for a Certifying Officer for Purchase Card.

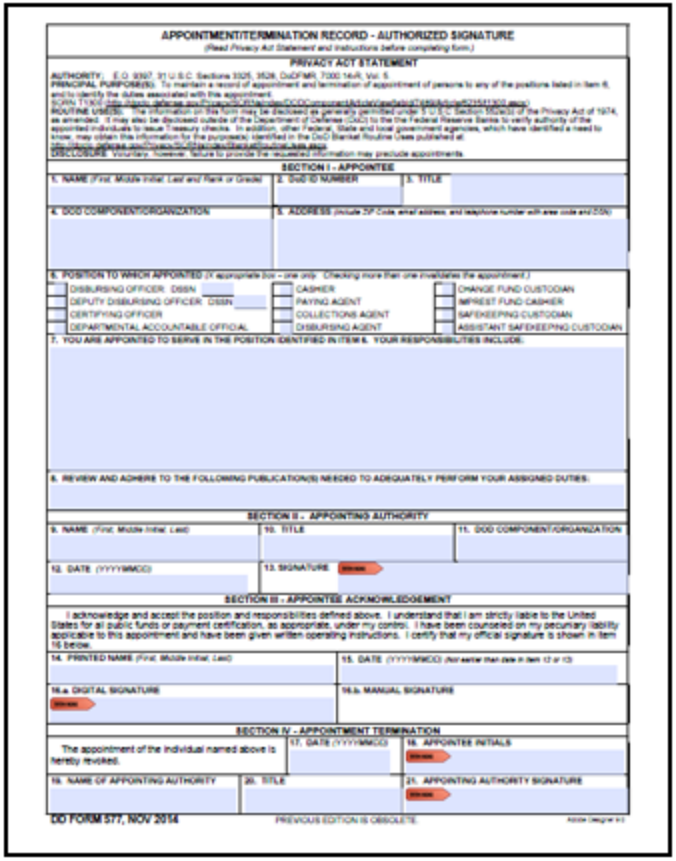
Lesson Objective 2

Good information on the qualifications of the Certifying Officer. What's next?

Let's look at the Certifying Officer appointment and termination process.

Form 577

Appoint and terminate the appointments of Certifying Officers and DAOs on DD Form 577 (Appointment/Termination Record/Authorized Signature). Identify the specific types of payments, e.g., vendor pay, purchase card, CBAs, travel, transportation, military, and civilian pay involved.



APPOINTMENT/TERMINATION RECORD - AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE
(Read Privacy Act Statement and instructions before completing form.)

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

AUTHORITY: E.O. 9397, 31 U.S.C. Sections 3325, 3528, DoDFMR, 7000.14-R, Vol. 5.
PRINCIPAL PURPOSE(S): To maintain a record of appointment and termination of appointment of persons to any of the positions listed in Item 6, and to identify the duties associated with this appointment.
SORN T1300 (http://dpcl.dtic.mil/privacy/sorns/defense/dod/t1300/t1300.html)
ROUTINE USE(S): The information on this form may be disclosed as generally permitted under 5 U.S.C. Section 552a(b) of the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended. It may also be disclosed outside of the Department of Defense (DoD) to the the Federal Reserve Banks to verify authority of the appointed individuals to issue Treasury checks. In addition, other Federal, State and local government agencies, which have identified a need to know, may obtain this information for the purposes identified in the DoD Blanket Routine Uses published at: http://www.defenselink.mil/privacy/notices/blanket-uses.html
DISCLOSURE: Voluntary, however, failure to provide the requested information may preclude appointments.

SECTION I - APPOINTEE

1. NAME (First, Middle Initial, Last and Rank or Grade) | 2. DoD ID NUMBER | 3. TITLE
4. DOD COMPONENT/ORGANIZATION | 5. ADDRESS (Include ZIP Code, email address, and telephone number with area code and DSN)

6. POSITION TO WHICH APPOINTED (X appropriate box – one only. Checking more than one invalidates the appointment.)

☐ DISBURSING OFFICER DSSN	☐ CASHIER	☐ CHANGE FUND CUSTODIAN
☐ DEPUTY DISBURSING OFFICER DSSN	☐ PAYING AGENT	☐ IMPREST FUND CASHIER
☐ CERTIFYING OFFICER	☐ COLLECTIONS AGENT	☐ SAFEKEEPING CUSTODIAN
☐ DEPARTMENTAL ACCOUNTABLE OFFICIAL	☐ DISBURSING AGENT	☐ ASSISTANT SAFEKEEPING CUSTODIAN

7. YOU ARE APPOINTED TO SERVE IN THE POSITION IDENTIFIED IN ITEM 6. YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

8. REVIEW AND ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATION(S) NEEDED TO ADEQUATELY PERFORM YOUR ASSIGNED DUTIES:

SECTION II - APPOINTING AUTHORITY

9. NAME (First, Middle Initial, Last) | 10. TITLE | 11. DOD COMPONENT/ORGANIZATION
12. DATE (YYYYMMDD) | 13. SIGNATURE

SECTION III - APPOINTEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge and accept the position and responsibilities defined above. I understand that I am strictly liable to the United States for all public funds or payment certification, as appropriate, under my control. I have been counseled on my pecuniary liability applicable to this appointment and have been given written operating instructions. I certify that my official signature is shown in Item 16 below.

14. PRINTED NAME (First, Middle Initial, Last) | 15. DATE (YYYYMMDD) (Not earlier than date in Item 12 or 13)
16.a. DIGITAL SIGNATURE | 16.b. MANUAL SIGNATURE

SECTION IV - APPOINTMENT TERMINATION

The appointment of the individual named above is hereby revoked. | 17. DATE (YYYYMMDD) | 18. APPOINTEE INITIALS
19. NAME OF APPOINTING AUTHORITY | 20. TITLE | 21. APPOINTING AUTHORITY SIGNATURE

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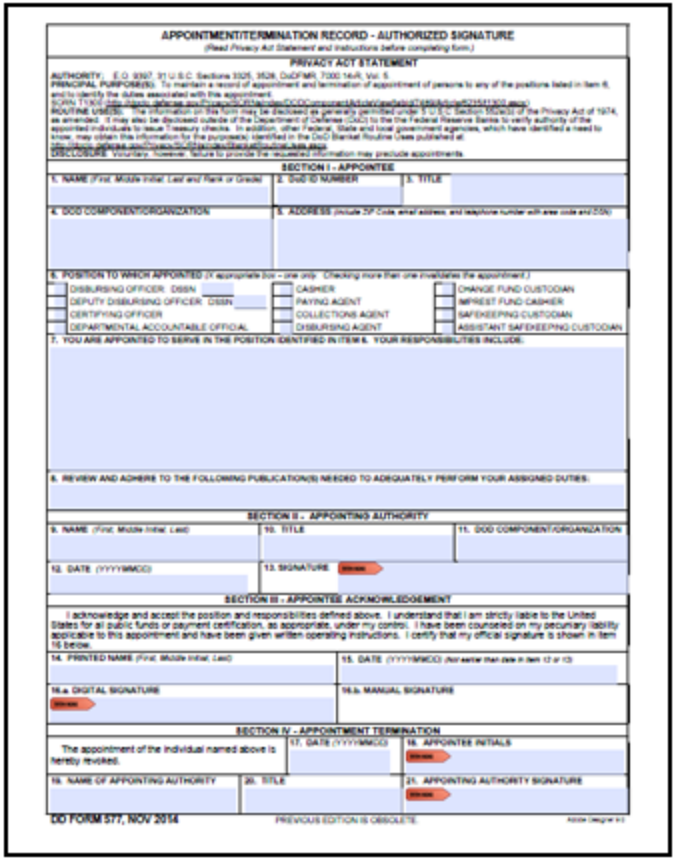
Form 577, Cont.

Training must occur prior to appointment per Department of Defense Charge Card Guidebook.

For direct-hire non-U.S. citizens to whom, by agreement, a local law applies that does not subject the local national to the same pecuniary liability as other Department of Defense employees, make an appropriate comment in item 7 of the DD Form 577.



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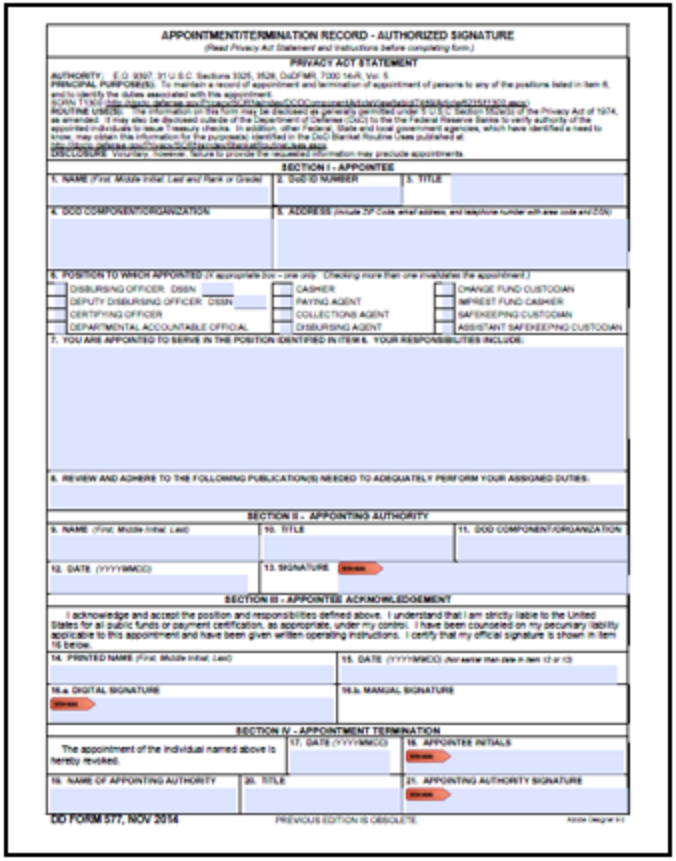
Form 577, Cont.

Appointees acknowledge their appointment in Section III of the form. Appointing authorities review appointments annually as a minimum for validity and currency. Appointments remain in force until terminated by reassignment or for cause.

Certifying Officers terminate appointments as appropriate using Section IV of the form, and advise the agencies that received the original appointments.



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Computation Functions

When a computation function is performed at an activity that is independent from the disbursing function, a Certifying Officer may be appointed to the first-line supervisor level, or higher within the computation function area.

Where computations for payment are performed under the direction of the Disbursing Officer during tactical operations (including afloat units, military training exercises, noncombatant evacuations, and contingency operations), Certifying Officers may be appointed from among personnel within the disbursing office.

These appointments must be accomplished either by direct written notification from the respective Head of the DoD Component to the designated appointee or by delegation through command channels excluding the Disbursing Officer. This special appointment would typically be for the duration of the deployment.

Knowledge Review 2

Which Section of DD Form 577 is used to terminate appointments?

- [ ] Section I
- [ ] Section II
- [ ] Section III
- [x] Section IV

Check Answer

Section IV is the correct answer.

Lesson Objective 3

Great information on how the appointment and termination process works for the Certifying Officer.

We'll wrap up this lesson by describing the manual and electronic payment certification process.

Payment Certification Process

The certification process is more than just the approval of a voucher for payment. It is a statement to the Disbursing Officer that the proposed payment is correct, legal, and proper in the use of appropriations or other funds designated on either the voucher or the supporting documents.

Certifying officers certify to, not "for" or "on behalf of," DOs or their agents that vouchers are correct and proper for payment from the appropriation(s) or other funds cited on them or on supporting vouchers, and that the proposed payments are legal, proper, and correct.

Purchase Card purchases must meet these criteria:

1. Meets a bonafide need.
2. Acceptance has occurred (except where pay and confirm is in place in which case the activity has a systemic process in place validated by independent audit to ensure performance occurs within the dispute process authorized by the GSA contract/task order).
3. Appropriation to be charged is current and available.
4. Cardholder has provided assurance that property records have been updated if required.

Certification Process Steps

The certification process has three steps:

1. Review the supporting payment documents:
   - Review certified transactions by Cardholder against Purchase Log to ensure that they are in agreement. Reallocate to correct appropriation or dispute with GSA contract terms.
   - Dispute within GSA contract terms as required by Title 10 Section 2784.
2. Compute the entitlement.
3. Certify the voucher.

Pecuniary Liability

Certifying Officers are automatically pecuniarily liable for the amount of illegal, improper or incorrect payments resulting from their certifications. Therefore, it is essential for their defense that they can show evidence of following established certification procedures.

The certification process creates an audit trail. When performed correctly, the certification process provides protection for the Certifying Officer. In fact, following the correct procedures may provide a basis on which to grant relief of liability.

Knowledge Review 3

The Purchase Card purchase must meet:

- [x] Bonafide need
- [ ] Audit trail criteria
- [ ] DoD expectations
- [ ] Your supervisor's personal needs

Check Answer

The Purchase Card purchase must meet Bonafide need.

Lesson Summary

In Lesson 2, we learned that Certifying Officers must have a background in, and knowledge of, the payment process but cannot be Disbursing Officers. Appointment to this position is accomplished on DD Form 577.

Certification is the process that indicates to the Disbursing Officer that the proposed payment is legal, proper, and correct.

Lesson Completion

You have completed the content for this lesson.

To continue, select another lesson from the Table of Contents on the left.

If you have closed or hidden the Table of Contents, click the Show TOC button at the top in the Atlas navigation bar.