

## Dept. of Health and Human Services

## § 34.4

be submitted on a HHS-481 form, Employee Claim for Loss or Damage to Personal Property. All claims must be signed by the claimant or his authorized agent or representative. The HHS-Form can be obtained from the Claims Officer or downloaded from the Program Support Center's webpage at *www.psc.gov*. All claims must include the following:

- (1) Name and address of the claimant;
- (2) The office in which the claimant was employed at the time of loss, current office, if different, and telephone number;
- (3) Date of loss or damage;
- (4) Amount of claim;
- (5) Description of the property, including but not limited to type, design, model number, date acquired, value when acquired, value when lost, and estimation of repair or replacement cost;
- (6) Description of incident; and
- (7) If property was insured when loss or damage occurred, a statement indicating whether a claim was filed with an insurance carrier.

(c) *Where to file your claim.* (1) Claimants employed with the Regional Offices should submit claims to the Chief Regional Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, within the claimant's Region.

(2) All other claimants must submit claims to the Office of the General Counsel, General Law Division, Claims and Employment Law Branch, 330 Independence Ave., SW., Room 4760, Cohen Building, Washington, DC 20201.

(d) *Evidence required.* You must submit the following:

- (1) Not less than two itemized signed estimates for the cost of repairs, or an itemized bill of repair for the damaged property;
- (2) In the event the property is not economically repairable or is totally lost or destroyed, proof of this fact, its market value before or after loss, purchase price, and date of acquisition of the property;
- (3) Proof of ownership or right to recover for the damage such as a receipt;
- (4) Police/incident report;
- (5) If property is insured, insurance information, such as insurance carrier, type of coverage, deductible, and whether claim has been filed and/or paid;
- (6) Travel orders, if applicable;

(7) Any citations or traffic tickets, if applicable; and

(8) Any other evidence required by the claims officer not specified above.

(e) *Time limit.* (1) A claim filed under this section must be filed in writing with the Department within two years from the date of the incident.

(2) If the claim accrues in the time of war or in the time of armed conflict in which any armed forces of the United States are engaged or if such a war or armed conflict occurs within two years after the claim accrues, and if good cause is shown, the claim shall be presented no more than two years after that cause ceases to exist, or two years after the war or armed conflict is terminated, whichever is earlier.

(3) All required evidence in support of a claim submitted under this section must be forwarded to the claims officer within sixty days after request. Failure to do so will be deemed as an abandonment of the claim and the claim will be disallowed.

### § 34.4 Allowable claims.

(a) *What you can claim.* (1) Claims for damage or loss may be allowed where possession of the property was lawful and reasonable under circumstances.

(2) Claims for property damage or loss by fire, flood, hurricane, theft, or other serious occurrence may be allowed when the property is located inside:

(i) Quarters that have been assigned or provided by the government; or

(ii) Quarters outside the United States whether assigned by the government or not, except when a civilian employee outside the U.S. is a local inhabitant.

(3) Claims for damage to, or loss of, property may be allowed when caused by:

(i) Marine, air disaster, enemy action or threat thereof, or other extraordinary risks incurred incident to the performance of official duties by the claimant; and

(ii) Efforts by the claimant to save human life or government property.

(4) Property used for the benefit of the government. Claims may be allowed for damage to, or loss of, property used for the benefit of the government at the request, or with the

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knowledge and consent of, superior authority.

(5) Claims for clothing and accessories may be allowed when loss or damage was caused by faulty or defective equipment or furnishings owned or managed by the Department.

(6) Claims for stolen property, only if it is determined that the claimant exercised due care in protecting his property and there is clear evidence that a burglary or theft occurred.

(7) Claims for automobiles, only when required to perform official business or parked on a government-owned or operated parking lot or garage incident to employment. This subsection does not include claims for damage or loss when traveling between place of residence and duty station, or when the loss or damage was caused by the negligence of a third party. If the automobile is a total loss, the maximum amount allowed is the value of the vehicle at the time of loss as determined by the National Automobile Dealer Association Appraisal Guide or similar publications.

(8) Claims for any other meritorious claims in exceptional cases may be allowed by the Claims Officer.

(9) Transportation or travel losses. Damage or loss of personal property, including baggage and household items, while being transported by a carrier, agent or agency of the government, or private conveyance, may be allowed only if the property is shipped under orders or in connection with travel orders.

(b) [Reserved]

### § 34.5 Unallowable claims.

(a) *What you cannot claim.* (1) Claims for money or currency, such as intangible property (*i.e.* bankbooks, check, money orders, promissory notes, stock certificates, etc.).

(2) Worn-out or unserviceable property.

(3) Easily pilferable articles, such as jewelry, cameras, watches, and binoculars when they are shipped with household goods by a moving company or unaccompanied baggage. This does not apply to checked property or property in personal custody of the claimant or his agent provided proper security measures have been taken.

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(4) Government property.

(5) Appraisal or estimate fees.

(6) Automobiles, except when required to perform official business or parked on a government-owned or operated parking lot or garage incident to employment.

(7) Loss or damage caused in whole or in part by the negligent or wrongful act of the claimant or his agent or employee.

(8) Claims under \$30.00.

(9) Stolen property when it's determined that claimant failed to exercise due care in protecting his or her property.

(10) Sales Tax. Reimbursements for the payment of sales tax incurred in connection with repairs or replacing an item will not be allowed.

(b) [Reserved]

### § 34.6 Reconsideration or appeal.

(a) Requests for reconsideration or appeal shall be forwarded to the Associate General Counsel, General Law Division, Office of the General Counsel, within sixty days from the date of the Claims Officer's decision along with any new evidence supporting the claim.

(b) A voucher or a supplemental voucher will be prepared by the Claims Officer if it is determined that the claimant's request for reconsideration should be allowed.

### § 34.7 Payment procedures.

(a) For all claims that are approved in whole or part, the claims officer shall prepare and mail a payment voucher to the claimant.

(b) This voucher shall be mailed to the claimant with appropriate instructions.

(c) Upon receipt of the signed payment voucher, the claims officer shall sign and forward the signed voucher to the office where the claimant is or was employed for processing.

(d) Upon receipt of the signed payment voucher, the office in which the claimant is or was employed will submit the voucher for transmission to the Treasury Department for issuance of a check in the sum allowed.

(e) Funds paid for settlement of allowed claims shall be made from appropriations of the office in which the claimant is or was employed.