



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SERVICE
P.O. BOX 12599-0599
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI 64116-0599

June 19, 2009

To: All Federal Agencies Serviced by the Kansas City Financial Center

Subject: Federal Agency Certifying Officer Responsibilities

The timely and accurate disbursement of Federal payments is a critical function and primary goal of the Financial Management Service (FMS). The new Payment Automation Manager (PAM) and changes to the Secure Payment System (SPS) processes will change and streamline the issuance of Federal payments for Federal agencies and the Financial Management Service (FMS). However, Federal Agency Certifying Officers will remain responsible for certifying to FMS the correctness, propriety and legality of their agency's payments. The agency's certification is the legal authorization from the agency to FMS to issue the payment on behalf of the agency. Therefore, it is essential that the FMS disbursing office receive timely accurate payment voucher certifications that match corresponding payment file data in order to disburse the payments to the recipients.

The rules governing the roles and responsibilities of certifying officers are outlined in Title 31, Chapter 35, Subchapter III, U.S.C. 3528 and Title 31, Chapter 33, Subchapter II section 3328, which state:

“(A) A certifying official certifying a voucher is responsible for –

- (1) information stated in the certificate, voucher, and supporting records;*
- (2) the computation of a certified voucher under this section and 3325 of this title;*
- (3) the legality of a proposed payment under the appropriation or fund involved;*
- (4) repaying a payment –*
 - (A) illegal, improper, or incorrect because of an inaccurate or misleading certificate;*
 - (B) prohibited by law; or*
 - (C) That does not represent a legal obligation under the appropriation or fund involved; and...”*

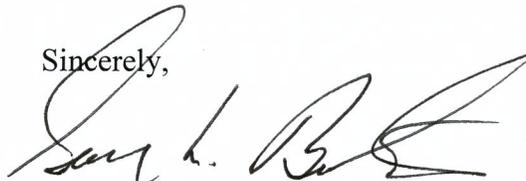
FMS is prohibited from processing a payment file if the **item count, dollar amount, schedule number, and payment date** on the file disagrees with the same data on the corresponding certification. Furthermore, regardless of the situation, FMS will never change the **item count or payment amount** in the certification. At the written request of the agency, the RFC Director may change the **payment date or processing date** and/or as needed the **schedule number**.

In situations where FMS cannot successfully process an agency payment file because it disagrees with the certification, the RFC will contact the agency and describe the problem. If the agency decides to send a new file or new certification, or both, and the certification and the file match, FMS will complete the processing of the payments.

Furthermore, given the increased efficiency of PAM and changes to the SPS, the window of opportunity for agencies that want to stop the issuance of payments with accepted certifications will diminish. Therefore it is critical for agency certifying officers to review and verify their agency payment vouchers to ensure that the vouchers are legal, proper and correct prior to certifying those payments to FMS.

Additional information on the role and responsibilities of the Federal Agency Certifying Officer may be found in the FMS publication "Now that you are a Certifying Officer" which is available at: <http://fms.treas.gov/tfm/voll/CertifyingOfficer 29nov07.pdf>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary M. Beets". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "B".

Gary M. Beets
Regional Director