

SEASONAL GREETING CARDS

1. The purchase and mailing of Christmas cards is a personal expense. Employees cannot use appropriated funds to purchase seasonal greeting cards. Nor can they use office mailing systems or postage to send them to recipients. Employees must use their personal funds to purchase and mail these items.

2. Cannot Purchase. The Comptroller General (Comp. Gen.) has confirmed that these items cannot be purchased in a Comp. Gen. Decision B-247563.8, dated 11 Dec 96. This decision states: "... We have long held that the cost of holiday greeting cards is a personal expense of the officer who authorizes their use, even where the agency's name rather than the officer's name appears on the card. See, e.g., 64 Comp.Gen. 382 (1985); 37 Comp. Gen. 360 (1957). Both cases specifically rejected the argument that objectives such as engendering goodwill or ensuring the recipients' cooperation justified using appropriated funds for this purpose.

3. Cannot Mail. The Army has established guidance in AR 25-51. Paragraph 2-22g specifically states "Do not use appropriated fund postage on: Personal mail, holiday and birthday greetings, retirement announcements, completed employment applications, resumes, and similar material. However, activities may use appropriated fund postage for holiday greetings when international diplomacy dictates."