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201.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to fix responsibility for erroneous payments and lost discounts and to recover them from the employee(s) at fault.

201.1 POLICY

Certifying officers are personally liable for improper expenditures made on schedules certified by them, even though they may not be able to verify the information contained in the schedule. Certifying officers rely upon the statements and reports of other employees as a basis for their certifications. Therefore, the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) holds all concerned employees responsible for the prompt handling and correct certification of facts on payment documents, such as travel vouchers, time reports, invoices, and receiving reports. If a certifying officer makes an erroneous or improper payment because another employee was at fault, recovery is made from the employee in the amount charged against the certifying officer.

201.2 ERRONEOUS PAYMENTS

A. Ongoing Internal Review: The disbursement organization and P-card manager research potential instances of erroneous payment on an ongoing basis. Wherever possible, these offices attempt recovery from the vendor (for example, if the contract charge was in excess of contract or if a duplicate payment was made.) If the payment was improper or illegal (for example, purchase of a personal use item or spending in excess of policy approves amounts on recognition gifts or events.), these offices will request recovery from the manager, P-card approving official or P-card holder.

B. Inspector General or other External Review: Periodically DOE IG or Comptroller General audit BPA for compliance with laws and rules for disbursements. If there is a finding and the Certifying Officer is requested to return fund to the agency:

1. **The Manager, Disbursements**, will review the circumstances and, if appropriate attempt recovery from the vendor;
2. **The Manager, Treasury**, reviews each case involving an erroneous payment, and notifies the head of the responsible organization. The organization head determines the employee(s) who caused the erroneous payment, and notifies the Manager, Treasury, of the finding, with a copy to the employee(s).
3. **The Manager, Treasury**, then notifies the employee(s) of the amount that has been charged against the certifying officer, and requests prompt repayment of the amount to the certifying officer. Direct payment by the employee(s) or offset to payroll checks and/or outstanding travel vouchers are appropriate means of satisfying the obligation. If appropriate, interest may also be charged to the employee(s).

201.3 INTEREST PENALTY PAYMENTS AND LOST DISCOUNTS

The Prompt Payment Act of 1982 places responsibility on Federal agencies for timely payment of vendor bills. In certain circumstances, interest must be paid for late payment. Discounts should be taken when cost beneficial to the agency.

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A. The Manager, Disbursements, reviews late payments and lost discounts on a regular basis. In instances in which BPA has regular recurring late payments, lost discounts, or a significant number (more than 5) late payments or lost discounts, the Disbursements group researches the cause. For cases that appear to be avoidable administrative delay, the case is referred to the Manager, Treasury, for determination.

B. The Manager, Treasury, reviews each case involving late payments or lost discounts and may follow up with the responsible organization in order to ensure any necessary corrective and/or disciplinary action is taken.

201.4 APPEALS

An employee who has been charged with financial liability will be given due process in accordance with BPA's debt collection procedures.