

GAO Prohibition on Purchase of Bottled Water using appropriated funds

Bottled Water. Bottled water generally does not materially contribute to an agency's mission accomplishment. It is therefore generally a personal expense.

a. GAO-Sanctioned Exception Where Water is Unpotable. Agencies may use appropriated funds to buy bottled water where a building's water supply is unwholesome or unpotable. See United States Agency for Int'l Dev.-Purchase of Bottled Drinking Water, B-247871, 1992 U.S. Comp. Gen. LEXIS 1170 (Apr. 10, 1992) (problems with water supply system caused lead content to exceed "maximum contaminant level" and justified purchase of bottled water until problems with system could be resolved). Based upon the discussion by the GAO, this exception appears unavailable if the water is merely unpalatable.

b. Relevant Regulations. See also DoD FMR, vol. 10, ch. 12, para. 120203 (permitting the purchase of water where the public water is unsafe or unavailable); AFI 65-601, vol. 1, para. 4.45 (discussing the same); AR 30-22, para. 5-19 (discussing bottled water in the context of a deployment / contingency)."

http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/defense_ethics/resource_library/2003Deskbook/fiscal_basics.doc