

Management Instruction

Government-Issued, Individually Billed Travel Charge Cards

Background

The Postal Service™ participates in the federal government's travel charge card program. The travel charge card is a tool that enables Postal Service employees on travel to get government-rate airfares and hotels, and alleviates the need to travel with large amounts of cash.

General Policy

Who May Be Issued a Card

- a. All nonbargaining unit employees who travel on official business must have an individually billed travel charge card.
- b. Bargaining unit employees who travel two or more times a year may request an individually billed travel charge card.

How to Request a Card

- a. Locate the travel charge card coordinator in your functional organization.
- b. Request an application from the coordinator.
- c. Complete the application and return it to the coordinator.
- d. Your travel charge card will be sent to you in approximately 2 weeks. The card will come in an unmarked envelope.

Cash Advances

Nonbargaining Unit Employees

If you are a nonbargaining unit employee, then you are prohibited from using your individually billed government travel-charge card to obtain a cash advance.

Bargaining Unit Employees

If you are a bargaining unit employee, then you are prohibited from using your individually billed government travel-charge card to obtain a cash advance.

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Acceptable Travel Card Expenses Included in Per Diem

Use individually billed travel cards for all travel-related expenses incurred while on official travel. These expenses include meals, and incidentals such as laundry, dry cleaning, and tips. Employees are reimbursed for these expenses as part of the per diem amount paid. You indicate these types of expenses when you timely complete and file your travel voucher when you return from official travel. Employees must select the box that designates the expenses as “Personal Expense (do not reimburse me)” when entering these charges on their travel vouchers. This is selected because the expenses are covered by the per diem payment, and the employee will not be paid more than the per diem allotment for these expenses. Employees are responsible for any amounts that exceed those covered by the allotted per diem amount, and are responsible for making timely payments to the charge card vendor.

Responsibilities of the Cardholder

As a cardholder, you have the following responsibilities:

- a. Use the government-issued travel charge card to pay for your official travel expenses only. You may not use the card for personal expenses. You may not use the card to pay for the travel expenses of another employee.
- b. File an expense report as soon as possible after travel is complete. Designate payment type “New Govt Travel Card” for any reimbursable expenses, except per diem expenses, paid for with the card. When the expense report is paid, the amount designated as “New Govt Travel Card” will be paid directly to the bank.
- c. If you have used the card to pay for non-reimbursable expenses while on travel, pay those amounts yourself directly to the bank.
- d. Non-bargaining employees with a travel card must use the card to pay for their hotel expenses.
- e. In eTravel, reimbursable expenses brought down from the company card page do not require receipts under \$50.
- f. Pay the bill in full each month, whether through payments sent directly from eTravel or personal payments. Partial payments are allowed only if charges have been disputed with the charge card provider through the official dispute process.
- g. Promptly dispute any charges on your bill that are incorrect. Contact your travel charge card coordinator to obtain and complete a dispute form. Your coordinator will forward the completed form to the charge card provider for processing.
- h. Promptly report any change of address to the charge card provider.
- i. Contact your travel charge card coordinator if you change jobs and your new job is in a different functional area. Tell the coordinator where your new job is located so your account can be transferred to your new coordinator’s portfolio.

- j. If your card is lost or stolen, immediately contact the charge card provider. Your account will be closed, a new account will be opened, and a new card will be issued. You will not be responsible for any charges on your account not made by you after you notify the provider.
- k. Upon leaving the Postal Service, turn in your charge card to your travel charge card coordinator. You remain responsible for any account balance even though you are no longer a Postal Service employee.

When Your Card Is Suspended or Cancelled

The government travel charge card provider may suspend or cancel the cards of employees who become delinquent in paying their accounts or who issue nonsufficient funds (NSF) checks. The following policies apply when the provider cancels or suspends employees' government travel charge cards:

Employees Must Pay Official Travel Expenses With Their Personal Funds

- a. Employees with suspended or cancelled government travel charge cards must pay their official travel expenses with their own funds.
- b. Bargaining unit employees and non-bargaining unit employees with suspended or cancelled government travel charge cards may not use their organization's centrally billed corporate accounts to pay for official travel expenses.

Employees Remain Responsible for Past-Due Amounts

Employees with suspended or cancelled government travel charge cards retain the responsibility to pay off, in full, amounts that were past due at the time of suspension or cancellation.

Employees Are Liable for Official Travel Expenses That Exceed Government Rates

- a. Employees with suspended or cancelled government travel charge cards are liable for the amounts by which their official travel expenses exceed government rates. The Postal Service will reimburse those employees up to the government rates but not for the excess amount.
- b. The travel agencies with which the Postal Service contracts can normally get government rates (if available) for official travel expenses other than airline tickets (e.g., lodging, rental vehicles, train tickets, and bus tickets) with your personal card. If the travel agencies cannot get government rates, employees with suspended or cancelled government travel charge cards may purchase tickets or lodging and rent vehicles directly from the companies that provide those services. This policy allows employees to seek and procure the lowest available rates.

Employees Are Liable for Late Charges Incurred on Personal Credit Cards

Employees with suspended or cancelled government travel charge cards are liable for any late payment or interest charges incurred on their personal credit cards from official travel expenses. The Postal Service will not reimburse employees for late fees or interest.

Employees Must Use Postal Travel Agency to Lease Rental Cars

- a. The U.S. government car rental agreement provides repair and replacement coverage on leased vehicles used in conjunction with official travel.
- b. Employees with suspended or cancelled government travel charge cards who need to lease a vehicle in conjunction with official business must do so with the Postal travel agency. The Postal travel agency can procure a government rate using your personal card. Leasing at a government rate at a participating leasing company ensures that you will be covered under the U.S. government car rental agreement.

Valid Government Travel Charge Cards May Not Be Used to Pay for Official Travel Expenses of Employees with Suspended or Cancelled Cards

- a. Employees with valid government travel charge cards may not use them to pay the official travel expenses of employees with suspended or cancelled cards, nor may they lend their card to employees with suspended or cancelled cards.
- b. If employee A, who has a valid government travel charge card, either uses his or her card to pay the expenses of employee B who has a suspended or cancelled card or allows employee B to use his or her card, then employee A is liable for all expenses charged to the card for or by employee B, even if employee B does not reimburse employee A. The Postal Service will not reimburse employee A for employee B's expenses.
- c. Employees with valid government travel charge cards, as well as employees with suspended or cancelled cards, who use or permit the use of the valid travel charge cards for unauthorized purposes are subject to disciplinary action. Managers who allow their employees to use valid government travel charge cards for unauthorized purposes are also subject to disciplinary action.

How to Request Reinstatement of a Cancelled Government-Issued Travel Charge Card

If your government travel charge card has been cancelled, you may request that your account be reinstated. If issued, reinstated accounts have a minimal credit limit and are restricted for use for airlines, hotels, and car rentals only. The charge card provider has the sole discretion of deciding who may or may not be reissued a card.

All requests for reinstatement must go through your area or district travel coordinator. If deemed appropriate, the area coordinator submits the request to the National Travel Card Program Coordinator. The following are required:

- a. A written statement from the cardholder explaining why the account went delinquent.
- b. A written statement from the cardholder's supervisor, addressing the following items:
 - (1) The supervisor knows the cardholder's statement of the facts to be accurate.
 - (2) The supervisor will supervise the cardholder's account.
 - (3) The cardholder needs the card based on anticipated increased travel.
 - (4) The cardholder's reimbursement will be sent directly to Citibank for charges on the card (approver must verify that the type of payment is for New Govt Travel Card company card).
- c. A statement from the travel coordinator stating that the account balance is zero and the number of NSF checks (if any) have been submitted for payment, that the employee has been counseled about Postal Service policy, and that the cardholder will comply with Postal Service policy.
- d. A statement from the PCES manager of the unit indicating concurrence with the request for reinstatement.

The required statements will be forwarded to the charge card provider on a weekly basis. The decision on reinstatement may take up to 4 weeks and is solely up to the charge card provider. The decision on reinstatement by the charge card provider is final.

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