

INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: Government Travel Charge Card

1. Purpose. To set forth the legal requirement to use, restrictions on use and penalties for misuse or delinquency of a contractor-issued, travel card [hereinafter travel card].
2. Reference. Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation, Volume 9, Chapter 3, August 2003.
3. Discussion. The travel card must be used by all U.S. Army soldiers and Department of Defense (DoD) civilian employees [hereinafter travelers] to pay for costs incident to official business travel. As outlined below, certain personnel and expenses are exempt from mandatory use of the travel card. Failure to use the travel card when required may lead to administrative and disciplinary action.

a. Exempted Personnel. The most common classes of personnel exempted from mandatory use of the travel card include:

(1) Travelers who are denied travel cards or whose travel cards have been canceled or suspended for financial irresponsibility or for other specific reasons (unless the reason for denial is because the traveler did not accept the terms and conditions of the cardholder agreement and, therefore, refused to sign the account application form);

(2) Travelers who are determined to be infrequent travelers (**an individual who travels two or less times per year**);

(3) Travelers, as approved by the Head of a DoD Component, during: (a) a period of war, (b) a national emergency declared by the President or Congress, or (c) mobilization, deployment;

(4) Travelers traveling to or in a foreign country where the political, financial, or communications infrastructure does not support the use of a travel charge card;

(5) Travelers whose use of the travel card, due to operational, security, or other requirements of a mission, would pose a threat to national security, endanger the life or physical safety of themselves or others, or would compromise a law enforcement activity;

b. Restrictions on Exempted Personnel. To prevent reimbursement issues or additional problems, any traveler claiming exempt status from mandatory use must have that status clearly stated on their travel orders to authorize alternative payment methods. If a situation arises where a traveler is in an exempted class but a travel cardholder, their travel orders must state whether the traveler is exempt from mandatory use of the travel card. Every traveler, regardless of

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exempt status, should review their travel orders for limitations or restrictions. Even if a traveler is in an exempt class, the use of a personal credit card, check, or cash is not authorized for purchase of an airline ticket. All Fort Carson travelers should coordinate with Carlson Wagonlit at 576-5188 to purchase airline tickets.

c. Exempted Expenses. The most common expenses exempted from mandatory use of the travel card include:

- (1) Those incurred at a business that does not accept the travel card;
 - (2) Laundry/dry cleaning, parking, local transportation system fares, taxi fares, tips, all local and long distance telephone calls; and
 - (3) Expenses for meals up to the local per diem rate plus \$3 for incidental expenses.
4. Penalties, fees and delinquency. In addition to administrative or disciplinary action taken by commanders, there are various penalties, fees and consequences for non-payment or delinquency in a travel charge card account.

(A) Monthly Statements. Cardholders are responsible for payment in full of the amount stated on the monthly billing statement. Cardholders are strongly encouraged to use the “split disbursement payment process” for travel reimbursement.

(B) Disputed Charges. In the event that the billed amount contains charges that are disputed by the traveler, he or she shall obtain a dispute form from their supervisor or use the dispute form included with monthly account statements.

(C) Fees Chargeable by the Contractor. The card contractor may charge a fee when a check is dishonored. Late fees may be assessed for accounts that are 75 days past due. These fees will not be reimbursed by the government. If the card contractor refers an account for collection, it may charge collection costs, court costs, and attorneys fees, not to exceed 25 percent of the account balance. The card contractor may initiate garnishment proceedings through the civilian judicial system against travel cardholders for accounts over 120 days delinquent and also may notify credit bureaus of those delinquencies.

(D) The Government may, on behalf of the card contractor, directly deduct amounts due from the cardholder’s pay and allowances.

5. Questions regarding the use of the travel card may be directed to the travel orders issuing authority or the Administrative and Civil Law Division, Office of the Staff Judge Advocate (OSJA) at 526-0618.