



Homeland Security

Chapter 3: Financial Management and Accounting

Part 3.2.1 – Travel Card Manual

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Introduction

This manual prescribes official Department of Homeland Security (DHS) **travel card** policies and procedures covering the use of the travel card authorized by the General Services Administration (GSA) for payment of travel expenses under the DHS travel card program. The manual also prescribes policies and procedures for using the travel card in automated teller machines (ATMs) to obtain cash withdrawals.

The Travel Card Program saves taxpayers millions of dollars by reducing administrative costs and providing for rebates. Compliance with this manual will maximize the rebates and minimize the risk of fraud, waste and abuse.

The policies and procedures contained in this manual are based on the governing regulations and guidelines in Title 5, United States Code, Chapter 57 (5 U.S.C. Chapter 57), Travel, Transportation, and Subsistence. This manual covers the information presented primarily in the **Federal Travel Regulation (FTR)** ([41 CFR Part 300–301](#)) and in Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-123, Appendix B. This manual also contains guidelines regarding privacy which are found in Title 4, U.S. Code of Federal Regulation, Part 83 (4 CFR Part 83).

In compliance with the *Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998* (Pub. L. 105–264), this manual is intended to supplement the FTR and does not duplicate information contained in the FTR. This manual provides DHS employees with the travel card regulations and policies established by both GSA and DHS. Questions regarding unusual and/or specific circumstances not covered by this manual may be referred to the appropriate **organization program coordinator (OPC)**.

This policy applies to all DHS employees. This policy supersedes the *Travel Card Manual* dated October 20, 2009. (See the **summary of changes** incorporated in this revision.)

Responsibilities

- a. The DHS **Chief Financial Officer (CFO)** will—
 - 1) Establish **internal controls** to promote the use of the card and to

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protect against fraud, waste, and abuse.

- 2) Appoint an **agency program coordinator** (APC) to serve as the liaison to the bank and GSA on issues dealing with the program.
 - 3) Conduct reviews of the travel card program at least annually.
- b. The DHS **Human Capital Officer** will establish procedures and guidelines, outlining appropriate disciplinary action for misuse/abuse and non-timely payment of travel card **statements of account** by employees.
- c. The **agency program coordinator** will—
- 1) Monitor and oversee internal controls for the overall travel card program for the CFO.
 - 2) Perform oversight of OPCs.
 - 3) Oversee all **centrally billed accounts** (CBA).
 - 4) Serve as the liaison to the bank and GSA on issues dealing with the program.
 - 5) Establish new OPC setup at the bank and provide training for the Component OPCs.
 - 6) Chair quarterly OPC meetings.
 - 7) Coordinate quarterly OMB reports with assistance from the Components.
 - 8) Coordinate training for Component OPCs.
 - 9) Monitor monthly/cycle bank generated reports and forward to the OPC for response.
 - 10) Approve IBA travel card credit limits of \$20,000 and more.
 - 11) Implement and maintain DHS travel card policies.
 - 12) Submit annual first- and business-class travel reports to GSA.
 - 13) Reconcile and approve quarterly rebates for both the IBA and CBA for all Components.
- d. The **organization program coordinator** or his or her designee is

designated by the Component. The OPCs will—

- 1) Manage the travel card program, including the development of internal controls to prevent fraud, waste and abuse, monitoring Component travel cardholder transactions, and overseeing their CBA.
- 2) Maintain records of travel cardholder training certificates and the bank travel card applications and/or appropriate documentation meet the requirements of OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B (creditworthiness).
- 3) Establish and issue Component initial training and refresher training every two years, job aids, and guidance for effective implementation of the travel card program.
- 4) Retain certificates of training, cardholder's application, and supporting documentation for the life of the card or 6 years and 3 months in accordance with National Archives and Records Administration records retention requirements, whichever is the greater.
- 5) Establish credit and cash limits with the bank for their Component.
- 6) Establish merchant category code (MCC) templates with the bank specific to their Component.
- 7) Directly oversee no more than 800 active individually billed account (IBA) cardholders.
- 8) Notify cardholder of delinquencies and give the cardholder the opportunity to explain the delinquency.
 - a) At a minimum, the OPC will notify the cardholder in writing at 31, 60, 90, and 120 days delinquent.
 - b) The cardholder's direct supervisor and the Human Resources office will be notified of the delinquency.
 - c) Cardholders who are delinquent or who abuse the card may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 9) Suspend or cancel the card if there is a pattern of inappropriate use or insufficient explanation for repeated delinquency.
- 10) Promptly respond to APC inquiries for monthly/cycle reports, transaction data, documentation, and status updates on their programs.

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- 11) Implement and maintain Component-specific policies and procedures of the Travel Card Program.
 - 12) Manage and oversee the travel card program to promote efficient use and guard against fraud, waste, and abuse.
 - 13) Document justification to change cardholder credit limits for IBAs. Travel card credit limits of \$20,000 and over must be approved by the APC.
 - 14) Notify receiving Component OPC when an employee is transferring between Components within DHS.
 - 15) Retrieve the travel charge card from the cardholder or advise the cardholder to destroy card when the cardholder resigns, retires, or transfers to another Component or Government agency, and contact the bank to close the account.
 - 16) Successfully complete DHS travel card training as required by DHS.
 - 17) Monitor cardholders travel cards on a weekly basis during the periods of November 15 through January 15 to avoid misuse of the card during the holidays.
- e. The **travel cardholder** will—
- 1) Use the travel card for official authorized travel expenses incurred only while on official travel.
 - 2) File a voucher requesting reimbursement for travel expenses within 5 business days of completing travel or every 30 days if the traveler is on continuous travel.
 - 3) Pay the bank in full by the payment due date on the statement or **dispute** incorrect charges in accordance with the cardholder agreement.
 - 4) Comply with this directive, the terms and conditions of the cardholder agreement, and policies and procedures of the Component.
 - 5) Notify the bank in a timely manner when a change of name, address, or other significant change occurs. Notify the OPC of any department changes within the agency.
 - 6) Successfully complete DHS travel card training as required by DHS.

- 7) Return the card to the OPC or, if instructed by the OPC, destroy the card upon retirement or termination of employment or transfer to another agency or DHS Component.
- f. **Supervisors** will—
- 1) Determine which employees in their organization should apply for a travel card.
 - 2) Approve and forward the employee's Government Travel Card application, the signed DHS Cardholder Agreement Form and the Training Certificate to the OPC.
 - 3) Review, approve and sign employees' travel vouchers within 72 hours.
 - 4) Notify the cardholder of any questionable or inappropriate charges and/or delinquencies within 7 days of the receipt of an incomplete voucher or one containing questionable or inappropriate charges.
 - 5) Recommend to the OPC suspension or cancellation of travel cards for inappropriate use or delinquency.
 - 6) Participate in any disciplinary action levied against the cardholder for travel card misuse/abuse.
- g. The **Office of Inspector General** (OIG) will—
- 1) Retain all audit and investigation authorities.
 - 2) Have access to the electronic system to monitor program operations on an ongoing basis.
 - 3) Require cardholders to provide additional information about any potential suspicious purchase to their management or the OIG.
 - 4) Recommend administrative sanctions and/or criminal investigation and prosecution, as appropriate.

Policy

All DHS employees who travel two or more times per fiscal year or on extended **temporary duty** (TDY) are to obtain and, to the maximum extent possible, use the travel card to pay for all travel and **transportation expenses**. This includes DHS interns. It is mandatory to use the contractor-issued Government travel card for all travel expenses other than those exempted by the FTR (§ 301-51.2). For

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new employees, infrequent travelers, and non-DHS employees including contractors traveling on behalf of DHS, DHS will provide reimbursement for travel expenses paid for in an alternative manner.

The Secretary and the CFO may authorize exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis.

DHS policy prohibits the following:

- a. Making charges not associated with official travel.
- b. Personal or family member use of the card.
- c. Incurring charges while not in official travel status.
- d. Use of the card in the vicinity (within 50 miles) of the official duty station or residence, unless used in connection with official travel.
- e. Shared use of the card with another employee for official travel purposes.
- f. Failure to pay the bank in a timely manner.
- g. Failure to pay accounts with sufficient funds (bounced checks).
- h. Failure to properly use Government voucher reimbursement to repay travel expenses or to submit timely requests for reimbursement.
- i. Cash withdrawals not commensurate with official travel.
- j. Purchase of **first-class travel** accommodations, unless authorized in writing by the Secretary of DHS. This authorization must be obtained in advance and forwarded to the OPC and to the APC upon request.
- k. Purchase of **business-class travel** accommodations, unless authorized in writing by the USM or certain Components listed in DHS [Delegation 01002](#), *Delegation for Financial Activities*. This authorization must be obtained in advance and forwarded to the OPC and to the APC upon request.
- l. First- or business-class travel accommodations for TDY or permanent change of station (PCS) travel (relocations) when the employee is not required to report to duty immediately. *Note: [See Section 5](#) for more complete explanation of exceptions related to TDY and PCS travel.*

1. Travel Card Issuance/Activation and Filing Procedures

- a. To obtain a travel card all cardholders must:
 - 1) Successfully complete the DHS online travel card training course on a bi-annual basis.
 - 2) Complete and submit the DHS Cardholder Agreement Form to their direct supervisor for approval.
 - 3) Fill out the IBA travel card application.
 - 4) Obtain a copy of the DHS online training course completion certificate.
 - 5) Submit copies of the above forms and documents to the Component OPC, who will submit the application to the Bank for processing.
 - 6) Follow any additional, Component-specific requirements.
- b. After receiving the original copy of the application, and meeting the Component requirements, the bank conducts a credit check, if applicable, and issues a travel card in the name of the authorized employee and DHS. In accordance with OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B, first-time travel card applicants must perform a credit worthiness evaluation.
- c. Applicants who do not meet the required credit score set by OMB A-123, Appendix B, will be issued a card with a restricted credit limit by their OPC. The restricted limit is set per Component based on the spend limit. The restricted account credit limit can only be increased temporarily to the amount required for travel and only for the dates of the travel.
- d. The bank will mail the travel card directly to the employee's billing address for receipt within 7 to 10 business days of submission of the application, or to an alternate address where the travel card can be signed upon receipt.
- e. The employee is required to sign and activate the travel card immediately upon receipt.
- f. Documents pertaining to the travel card—such as the application, DHS or the Component Cardholder Agreement form, the certificate of completion of the Online Travel Program Test, and cardholder travel voucher—must be retained for 6 years and 3 months after the final payment to the card account. Applications must be filed and retained in a locked and secured location.

2. DHS Travel Policy and Procedures

DHS travelers must fully comply with all travel requirements set forth in the FTR, Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), where applicable, Component-specific travel directives, and DHS travel directives. Use of the travel card does not relieve the employee of responsibility for prudent travel practices and observing the rules and regulations governing official travel.

Note: USCG military travelers use the JFTR. TSA travelers use FAA as mandated by the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA), Section 101 (U.S.C. 114(n)).

3. Cash Withdrawals

Cash withdrawals for official DHS travel are to be obtained using the travel card and a personal identification number (PIN). Cash withdrawals should only be obtained when travel expenses cannot be paid for with the travel card and are limited to the meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) portion of per diem, plus miscellaneous costs such as taxi fares, tolls, and telephone calls.

Authorized funds obtained via an ATM are considered Government cash withdrawals, which have been issued on behalf of the Government by the bank. Employees are liable for these funds, as if they obtained the cash directly from DHS.

- a. *Limitations on ATM use.* The following limitations and controls are placed on ATM usage:
 - 1) Access to cash via ATM is solely for the purpose of obtaining funds for officially approved and authorized travel. Cardholders should withdraw funds only for authorized travel expenses that cannot be charged using the travel card.
 - 2) Cash withdrawals for any purpose other than for official travel are strictly prohibited.
- b. *When to obtain the ATM withdrawal.* ATM withdrawal is solely for authorized official travel. A traveler may make a withdrawal through a participating ATM anywhere, including the duty station, the TDY station, or en route, subject to the time requirements in paragraphs 3c(1)–(3), below. A withdrawal may be made:
 - 1) After the **travel authorization**, Component specific form or Travel Order has been approved, but

- 2) Generally no earlier than three days prior to trip departure and
 - 3) No later than the last day of travel.
- c. *ATM cash withdrawal amount.* The maximum amount of an ATM cash withdrawal available to travelers is determined as follows:
- 1) *TDY travel.* Full M&IE, plus miscellaneous costs (e.g., taxi fares, tolls, tips, parking). Mileage charges may also be added to the withdrawal when a privately owned vehicle (POV) is the authorized mode of transportation. (Per diem rates can be found at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>.)
Note: If travel is more than 12 hours but less than 24 hours, then the M&IE allowance is 75 percent of the applicable rate for each calendar day you are in travel status.
 - 2) *Open travel authorization.* Limit to M&IE plus miscellaneous costs not to exceed 45-day period. For such travel, employees should file travel vouchers at least every 30 days to ensure timely reimbursement.
 - 3) *ATM transaction limits.* Travelers may obtain ATM withdrawals up to the amount and frequency allowed by their Component. Cash withdrawals may be further limited by individual ATM machine limits.

Note: There may be instances (e.g., foreign travel) where these limitations may need to be raised. If so, notify the OPC as soon as possible prior to the need for an increase.
- d. *Fees.* A finance charge/cash advance fee will be charged by the bank for the cash withdrawal and is reimbursed as a miscellaneous travel expense. In some cases, an additional surcharge (terminal fee) may be imposed by the financial institution that owns the ATM.
- e. *Security of the PIN.*
- 1) The PIN should not be written on the travel card or on any material that is kept with the travel card. If the travel card is lost or stolen and the PIN is discovered by trial and error, employees are not liable for any money illegally withdrawn, provided the travel card is reported lost or stolen as soon as its loss is discovered.
 - 2) Employees should call the bank immediately and select another PIN if the PIN is forgotten or compromised.

- 3) Most ATM machines will allow only three invalid PIN entries, after which the ATM machine will refuse to accept the travel card. If the machine does not return the travel card, call the bank that owns the ATM machine and the contracted bank to report the incident.
- f. *Disallowed ATM fees.* Claims for ATM fees will be disallowed in cases where:
- 1) Cash withdrawals are not supported by a properly approved travel authorization;
 - 2) Cash withdrawals exceed the M&IE and applicable POV mileage charges approved on the travel order and the voucher does not indicate an emergency withdrawal was made while on travel;
 - 3) The fee exceeds the authorized percentage designated in the GSA Smart Pay Contract;
 - 4) Withdrawals are made after the last day of travel; or
 - 5) The Government travel card was not used to obtain the ATM withdrawal.

4. Exceptions to ATM Withdrawal Limitations

Travel circumstances may preclude the use of the travel card to purchase transportation, lodging, car rental, or other major expenses that normally would be chargeable. This may occur in remote locations within the continental United States (CONUS) or in foreign countries where establishments may not accept the travel card. In these cases, DHS may increase the amount of the cash withdrawal from an ATM. All exceptions must be approved by the employee's direct supervisor. For those exceptions where a travel withdrawal cannot be obtained using the Government-issued travel card, a written justification must be noted on the travel order.

5. Use of Travel Card for Expenses Incurred for Official Travel

- a. *Official travel expenses.* Travel cards issued under this program will be used solely for expenses incurred for authorized official Government travel.
- b. *Limit charges only to cardholder.* Employees may not charge any other traveler's expenses to their travel cards. Employees will only be reimbursed for their own official charges. Employees are responsible for

and must pay all charges they authorize to be placed on their Government travel card.

- c. *Reimbursement for excess-baggage fees.* DHS will cover all charges pertaining to the first checked bag. Any charges associated with subsequent bags may be reimbursed if DHS determines those expenses are necessary and are in the interest of DHS.
- d. *Exemptions from mandatory use of the travel card.* GSA has approved the following exemptions from mandatory use of the travel card:
 - 1) Expenses incurred at a vendor that does not accept the travel card.
 - 2) Laundry and dry cleaning.
 - 3) Parking.
 - 4) Local transportation system.
 - 5) Taxi.
 - 6) Tips.
 - 7) Meals when use of the card is impractical (e.g., group meals or the travel card is not accepted).
 - 8) Phone calls (when a Government-issued calling card or cell phone are not available for use in accordance with DHS policy).
 - 9) An employee who has an application pending for the travel card.
 - 10) Individuals traveling on invitational travel.
 - 11) New appointees who must travel before they can get a travel card.
 - 12) Infrequent travelers, because it is impractical to issue cards to employees who rarely travel.
 - 13) Employees who travel to overseas locations where the travel card cannot be used and cash is required.
 - 14) Employees who have had their travel cards canceled because of improper use or nonpayment. These employees use the CBA to pay for authorized common carrier expenses and are reimbursed for M&IE and miscellaneous travel expenses.

- 15) Relocation allowances prescribed in the FTR, except en route travel and house-hunting trip expenses.
- e. *Conference fees.* If the cardholder is in TDY status, the travel card may be used to pay for training or conference/registration fees, though the preferred method of payment for training or conference/registration fees is the purchase card.
 - f. *Exceptions for first-class travel.* The FTR recognizes certain cases where first-class travel may be used. In these cases, travelers must still obtain the Secretary's written approval. This authorization must be obtained in advance and forwarded to the OPC and to the APC upon request. The only exception is the authority granted to the Director of the U.S. Secret Service in DHS Delegation No. 11000. See FMPM Section 7.3 for more information on travel allowances.
 - g. *Exceptions for business-class travel.* The FTR recognizes certain cases (listed below) where business-class travel may be used. In these cases, exceptions must be granted by the USM or certain Components listed in DHS [Delegation 01002](#), *Delegation to Approve Business-Class Accommodations*. This authorization must be obtained in advance and forwarded to the OPC and to the APC upon request. See FMPM Section 7.3 for more information on travel allowances.

6. Obtaining Passenger Transportation Services

Employees must arrange official transportation and obtain tickets through the FedTraveler.com, the Government's online tool for planning, booking, approving, tracking, and requesting reimbursement for official travel. Questions regarding special travel circumstances (e.g., international or emergency travel) may still be referred to the Component [Travel Management Center](#) (TMC).

6-1. Making Travel Reservations

For official transportation, cardholders will obtain tickets through [FedTraveler](#) or, in special cases, through the Component TMC. When making reservations, the traveler places the charges for all transportation costs (e.g., airline, boat, bus, ferry, rail tickets) on their travel card, just as they would place other travel expenses, such as hotel or car rental on the travel card. If personal travel arrangements are made in conjunction with official travel, the personal travel costs cannot be charged on the travel card; only official travel costs can be charged.

- a. Cardholders must obtain transportation with the travel card only through FedTraveler.com or the TMC. In emergencies or in foreign locations, the

cardholder may use the travel card to purchase transportation directly from a carrier when the use of FedTraveler or TMC is not available.

- b. Use of the travel card does not alter established travel reservation and ticket procedures and sources for particular locations. For emergencies when the travel card is presented directly to carriers, the circumstances must be documented on the travel voucher. However, most emergencies, including changes or cancellations en route, should be handled by calling the TMC that issued the ticket at their 24-hour, toll-free, emergency number.
- c. Use of the travel card does not exempt employees from the requirement to use Government city-pair contract carriers and U.S. flag carriers. *Note: When tickets are purchased through a Government-contracted TMC, the TMC assumes liability for issuing a Government contract fare. However, when tickets are purchased directly from carriers, the employee assumes responsibility for having obtained a non-contract fare and will be reimbursed the lesser amount of the contract fare or the actual purchase price of the flight.*
- d. In accordance with the FTR, the use of cash to purchase transportation tickets is prohibited in any situation where the total cost of the tickets involved is more than \$100, except in emergencies that make the use of all other methods impossible. Travelers must provide documentation for tickets purchased with cash over the \$100 limit explaining the circumstances surrounding the need to use cash. The documentation must be approved by the direct supervisor. Failure to do so will result in the denial of reimbursement for the specified charge(s).
- e. Travel card account numbers for DHS travelers should be provided by the employee to the designated Component TMC when completing his/her traveler's profile.

6-2. Centrally Billed Accounts

Centrally billed accounts (CBAs) have been established by the Components, primarily to purchase transportation tickets for individuals who do not have their own individual Government-issued travel card. However, the CBAs may be used for the common carrier portion of a travel cardholder's travel expenses. In some cases, it can be set up to pay for hotel expenses, including hotel taxes.

- a. The CBA may be used by invitational travelers, infrequent travelers, travelers who have not been authorized to use a travel card, and in special circumstances such as tickets that must be purchased well in advance of the travel or high-cost tickets.

- b. In order to issue tickets on a CBA, the TMC must have supporting documentation. When booking the tickets, the traveler will provide the TMC with a travel authorization number or a copy of the approved travel authorization.
- c. TMCs will obtain and confirm prior approval from a Component point of contact prior to processing first-class or business-class travel.
- d. Each CBA will be subject to monthly documented review and reconciliation.
- e. Family members may be permitted to use the CBA for invitational travel on a case-by-case basis.
- f. CBAs will not be used for any expenses related to local travel.

7. Improper Use of the Travel Card

- a. The Government contractor-issued authorized travel card may be used only for official authorized DHS travel expenses. In accordance with the terms of the GSA agreement, the card is primarily used when the cardholder is on official authorized travel and is in TDY status. The card may not be used for non-travel expenses, even if the expenses are business-related. Examples of business-related expenses that are not considered travel-related expenses include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - 1) Publications (includes books, newspapers, journals, periodicals and subscriptions).
 - 2) Membership fees.
 - 3) Higher education expenses.
 - 4) Management consulting services.
 - 5) Automobile purchases (car repairs and services).
 - 6) Computers, televisions or digital equipment.
 - 7) Non-travel car rental.
 - 8) Fuel or maintenance service expenses for any DHS- or GSA-owned fleet vehicles.

- b. The DHS APC and the Component OPCs monitor employees' use of the card monthly for fraudulent, abusive, or negligent charges and/or usage. Unauthorized cash withdrawals, use of the travel card for personal items, and/or repeated payment delinquencies will result in disciplinary action. In accordance with OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B, appropriate agency personnel may impose, but are not limited to, the following administrative and/or disciplinary actions for negligence, misuse, abuse, or fraud:
 - 1) Verbally counsel and issue a letter of counseling/reprimand to the employee.
 - 2) Deactivate, suspend, or cancel employee accounts.
 - 3) Impose additional disciplinary actions deemed appropriate by the agency.
- c. The Government travel card may not be used for local travel expenses. DHS defines local travel as travel conducted within a 50-mile radius of the employee's permanent duty station (PDS).

8. Travel Voucher Claims

- a. Employees must submit travel vouchers in accordance with their Component-specific travel procedures to obtain reimbursement for authorized travel expenses. Each Component must institute **split-disbursement** to the maximum extent possible to reduce travel delinquency within their Components.
 - 1) *Travel voucher.* Employees are reimbursed for authorized and allowable travel and transportation expenses in accordance with the provisions of the FTR, JFTR and DHS travel policies and procedures. In emergencies or situations where staff has obtained a travel withdrawal from DHS, they must use the appropriate documentation to claim reimbursement.
 - 2) *Transportation charges.* The passenger's copy of the transportation ticket, e-ticket, e-ticket receipt, or invoice must be submitted with the travel voucher or [SF 1012](#), *Travel Voucher* or Expense Report using FedTraveler.com or TMC. The original passenger coupon is easily identifiable because the box marked "Form of payment" contains the last four digits of the Government travel card number. Copies of lost coupons can be obtained from the TMC or airline representative.
- b. The following voucher submission and processing schedule ensures that employees receive reimbursement for allowable expenses before payment

is due to the bank:

- 1) Travelers must submit vouchers within five business days of the end of a trip or sooner if required by Component policy.
- 2) Employees traveling under open authorizations must submit vouchers at least every 30 days, if not more frequently, to release funds availability on the travel card.
- 3) In cases where vouchers are submitted to **approving officials** for signature, the approving officials will submit approved vouchers to their respective payment center within 5 business days of receipt.
- 4) Payment centers process properly submitted vouchers within 10 calendar days of receipt.

Note: If DHS fails to pay a voucher within 30 days from the date the voucher was submitted to the approving official, the agency will pay the employee interest for the period exceeding 30 days. Refer to 41 CFR 301-52.19 to 52.24 for further information.

9. Monthly Travel Card Billing and Payment

- a. Employees will receive a monthly billing statement from the bank at their billing address for each cycle where there is activity on the account. If an employee has used the travel card and does not receive a monthly statement, the employee should contact the bank immediately.
- b. No late fees will be assessed by the bank on bills paid promptly. However, if payment becomes 120 days delinquent, the bank may charge a late payment fee.
- c. Payment in full for the amount billed, including cash withdrawals and reimbursable transaction fees, are due and payable by the employee directly to the bank within 25 days of the billing date shown on the cardholder's statement unless a dispute has been filed with the bank.
Extended or partial payments are not permitted.
 - 1) At 15 days past due, a delinquency notice will appear on the bank reporting system. Any discrepancies found in the statement should be brought to the attention of the bank by the employee, in writing, immediately.
 - 2) At 15 days past due, the employee will receive notification from the Component OPC and the bank advising the cardholder that the travel

card account is past due and to contact the bank for payment. Employees should contact their OPCs if they need additional assistance.

- 3) In accordance with the GSA contract, travel card privileges are automatically suspended if an employee's travel card balance is 61 days past due and cancelled at 120 days past due.
- d. If the cardholder's statement contains a disputed charge, the employee is responsible for contacting the bank to resolve the dispute.
- e. Deferred payments are not allowed. As part of the Government contract and cardholder membership rules, full payment is due monthly. If the employee is delinquent in paying the bill, travel card privileges may be suspended or cancelled.
- f. A payment issued when there are insufficient funds in the account will be recorded in the bank's payment history records as delinquent. The occurrence of an insufficient check payment twice in one 12-month period will justify cancellation of the account by the bank. Employees will be responsible for any fees assessed due to insufficient funds.

10. Unused and Partially Used Transportation Tickets

- a. Employees will contact the TMC immediately upon return from travel or upon cancellation of their trip to inform the TMC if a ticket was not used or only partially used. The traveler should ask how much the TMC will credit him or her for the unused or partially used ticket. The traveler must deduct the credit amount from the statement and pay the remaining balance to the bank.
- b. If the employee had a paper ticket, the unused or partially used transportation ticket must be returned to the issuing TMC to obtain a credit. The TMC will prepare and return a credit card refund notice (CCRN) to the traveler. A copy of the CCRN should be attached to the travel voucher. The employee must retain a copy until the appropriate credit is issued on a subsequent travel card statement.
- c. If the employee had an electronic ticket, the employee should note the name of the travel agent that agreed to cancel the ticket. The employee must also retain the electronic ticket until the appropriate credit is issued on a subsequent travel card statement.
- d. When submitting a travel voucher for reimbursement, travelers must attach both the passenger copy of the transportation coupon and a

photocopy of the CCRN to the voucher. The photocopy of the CCRN indicates that a portion of the transportation ticket was unused. The only cost that can be claimed on the travel voucher is the portion of the trip actually taken. (Employees subtract the CCRN portion from the original ticket cost.) If charges appear on a statement for unused or partially used tickets but the credit does not, contact the TMC to find out why a credit was not given.

11. Lost Transportation Tickets

- a. Travelers are responsible for safeguarding common carrier (air, bus, and rail) transportation tickets and are responsible for the cost of lost tickets.
- b. If paper tickets are lost—
 - 1) Immediately call the TMC.
 - 2) The TMC will issue a credit for lost tickets. A lost ticket application is required before canceling the ticket and issuing a credit. Obtain a lost ticket application from the TMC.
 - 3) The airlines will normally deduct a lost ticket fee from the amount of the credit to your account. This fee is deducted from the credit due. The lost ticket application fee is not an allowable reimbursable expense and must be borne by the employee. Travelers charging tickets to the travel card should attach a copy of the lost ticket application to the travel voucher.

12. Security of the Travel Card

- a. Employees are personally responsible for the security of the travel card and PIN.
- b. The travel card is not to be stored or kept by an OPC, supervisor, secretary, or anyone else except for the cardholder.
- c. Employees should exercise caution in giving their travel card number to another employee to make travel arrangements on their behalf. Employees will not be reimbursed for another employee's charges that are placed on their travel card. In the event fraudulent charges are made, the employee may dispute charge(s) (see [Section 19](#)).

13. Lost or Stolen Travel Cards

- a. If a travel card is lost or stolen, the employee should immediately call the bank and their Component OPC.
- b. Employees are not liable for any fraudulent charges if the travel card is lost or stolen and they notify the bank within 24 to 48 hours upon discovering the travel card is missing. Employees should review any charges considered fraudulent, notify the bank and their OPC, and complete and return the contractor-supplied form stating they did not make the charges.
- c. A replacement travel card will be mailed to the employee within 48 hours of notification if the travel card has been lost or stolen in the U.S. or Canada, and within 72 hours of notification in all other countries. Travelers must notify the TMC when they receive the replacement card.

14. Travel Card Renewals

Travel cards are valid for 3 years. Renewal of the travel card is automatic unless the account is delinquent.

15. Travel Card Suspension

The travel card bank will suspend an account once an undisputed transaction remains unpaid for 61 days or more from the billing/cycle date on the statement in which the unpaid charges first appeared. The bank will not suspend any account for which the entire outstanding balance is in dispute.

16. Travel Card Cancellation and Changes

- a. The bank will cancel an account once undisputed transactions remain unpaid 120 days or more from the closing date statement in which the unpaid charges first appeared. The bank may ask DHS to collect undisputed delinquent amounts from an employee's pay. An account may also be cancelled if it has been suspended twice during the preceding 12 months, and becomes past due again.
- b. Employees who have lost their travel card privileges because of delinquency or use of the card for non-official purposes and need to perform official travel must charge their common carrier transportation to their Component CBA. In some cases, it can be set up to pay for hotel

expenses. All other travel-related costs must be paid by the employee using a personal charge card or with other personal funds.

- c. Travel cards may be cancelled by the employee, the employee's OPC, or the bank. The bank cancels the travel card after the account is 120 days past due. If the bank cancels the travel card due to delinquency, this can reflect unfavorably on the cardholders' personal credit rating.
- d. When an employee resigns, retires, or transfers to another Government agency, the OPC must:
 - 1) Obtain and properly destroy the employees' travel card or advise the cardholder to destroy the card.
 - 2) Immediately contact the bank or update the bank's database and cancel the account.
- e. When an employee transfers within DHS to another Component, to ensure an efficient and effective transfer from one Component to another:
 - 1) The former OPC notifies the bank and cancels the employee's current travel card account.
 - 2) The employee notifies the gaining OPC of their transfer.
 - 3) The gaining OPC has the employee complete a travel card application.
 - 4) The OPC inputs the employee's information to the bank's system or faxes the application to the bank for processing.
 - 5) The employee should receive a travel card within 7 to 10 days.
- f. When an entire Component transfers within DHS, the gaining and former OPCs will ensure an efficient and effective transfer.
 - 1) The gaining OPC will notify the DHS APC to set-up a new hierarchy (if applicable); coordinate with the former OPC to transition successfully; and provide the bank an electronic file containing the following:
 - a) Names of all employees.
 - b) Monthly credit limit for each employee.
 - c) ATM credit limit for each employee.

- d) MCC template.
 - e) Hierarchy for the gaining employees.
 - f) Account number for each employee.
- 2) The former OPC will:
- a) Notify the DHS APC to cancel his/her rights as an OPC.
 - b) Notify the bank that he/she is no longer the OPC and to close the hierarchy.
 - c) Coordinate with the gaining OPC to facilitate a smooth transition.

17. Travel Card Delinquency/Collection

In accordance with the cardholder agreement, employees are obligated to pay the undisputed balance 25 days after the billing cycle end date. Employees must settle all delinquent debt amounts with the bank.

Individual card account balances that are delinquent and that are not disputed amounts will be eligible for the DHS travel card salary offset program. Before amounts are offset from an employee's pay, the agency must provide the employee with written notice of the amount and the intention to collect from disposable pay, the opportunity to inspect records regarding the claim, the opportunity to make a written agreement with the contractor to repay the delinquent amount, and the opportunity for review with the agency of its decision to collect the amount, 41 CFR 301-54.100. The travel card contractor may request collection assistance on account 61 or more days past due from the closing date. Upon written request from the travel charge card contractor, the Government will collect from an employee's disposable pay any undisputed amounts owed to the travel charge card contractor.

18. Financial Obligations/Liability

- a. *Employee.* Employees are liable for all billed charges. Government employees are required to pay their financial obligations on time and in full and to use the travel card only for official DHS travel-related expenses.
- b. *Government.* The Government assumes no liability for charges incurred on employee travel cards, nor is the Government liable for employees' lost or stolen travel cards. However, the bank may ask DHS to collect undisputed delinquent amounts from an employee's pay. In such an event,

the due process provisions of the *Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996* ([Pub. L. 104–134](#)) will apply.

19. Dispute Charges

- a. A disputable charge is a charge on a statement that is unauthorized, or is a questionable. It is the responsibility of the cardholder to contact the bank within 90 days of the date of the statement and dispute the charge.
- b. A merchant refund is a charge for which there is a pending credit.
- c. The cardholder must complete and return the bank dispute form to the bank. If the dispute resolution is not in the cardholder's favor, the cardholder is responsible for the payment of the charge and must seek resolution with the merchant. After the 60 days, the cardholder loses the right to dispute the charge.
- d. Examples of disputed charges include—
 - 1) Incorrect billing by a hotel, airline, etc.
 - 2) Unauthorized charges.
 - 3) Excess charges by a merchant.
- e. Examples of merchant refunds include—
 - 1) Unused portion of a transportation ticket.
 - 2) Anticipated credit.
- f. The cardholder should keep in contact with the bank while the dispute is active to ensure that the bank has all needed information and to check the status of the dispute.

20. Refund (Rebate) Management

Proper management of refunds is critical to ensuring that cost-effective charge card programs have internal controls in place to identify and collect refunds. Refunds will be managed in accordance with the Treasury Financial Manual (TFM 4500).

The GSA Master Contract requires the bank to pay quarterly refunds based on the travel card charge volume and frequency of payment.

- a. Finance managers must return refunds to the account from which the charge was made in accordance with OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B, Chapter 7, unless express statutory authority authorizes a Component to credit a different appropriation.
- b. The quarterly refund may be used in support of the program (e.g., training, contract support, and program reviews).

21. Privacy Act Notice

The following is provided to comply with the spirit of the *Privacy Act of 1974* (5 U.S.C. § 552a) and DHS's privacy procedures for personnel records (4 CFR Part 83). The information requested on the travel card application form is required under the provisions of 5 U.S.C. Chapter 57 (as amended) for recording travel expenses incurred by the employee and for claiming other entitlements and allowances as prescribed in the DHS travel regulations.

In addition, the application is required to provide Government agencies with necessary information on the commercial travel and transportation payment and expense control system. This system provides travel cards for official travel and related expenses, attendant operational and expense control support, and management information reports for expense control purposes.

The information contained under this system is used by federal agency officers and employees who have a need for such information in the performance of their duties. Information is transferred to appropriate federal, state, or local agencies, when relevant to civil, criminal, or regulatory investigations or prosecutions, or pursuant to a requirement by GSA or other such investigations of the performance of official duty in Government service.

The information requested is not mandatory. However, failure to provide the information invalidates the application and prevents the issuance of the travel card.

Procedures

Components must develop and implement procedures and internal controls to comply with this policy.

Authorities and References

Authority

[Federal Acquisition Regulation \(FAR\) Parts 2, 3, 8, 13 and 32](#)

References

[4 CFR Part 83, Privacy Procedures for Personnel Records](#)

[41 CFR Part 300–301, Federal Travel Regulation](#)

[5 U.S.C. Chapter 57, Travel, Transportation, and Subsistence](#)

[5 U.S.C. § 552a, Privacy Act of 1974](#)

DHS [Delegation 01002](#), *Delegation to Approve Business-Class Accommodations*

[DHS Delegation 0160.1](#), *Delegation to Department of Homeland Security Organizational Elements*

[Joint Federal Travel Regulations \(JFTR\)](#)

[OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B](#), *Improving the Management of Government Charge Card Programs*

NARA [Records Schedule](#)

[Pub. L. 104–134, Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996](#)

[Pub. L. 105-264](#), *Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998*

Standard Form 1012, [Travel Voucher](#)

Appendix A. Organizational Elements

The term “Organizational Element,” for the purposes of this policy only, will refer to the following DHS Components:

- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
- U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
- U.S. Secret Service (USSS)
- Office of the General Counsel (OGC)
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
- Transportation Security Administration (TSA)
- Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Glossary

The following tables contain definitions of the acronyms and terms used in this policy.

Acronym	Definition
APC	agency program coordinator
ATM	automated teller machine
CBA	centrally billed account
CCRN	credit card refund notice
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CONUS	continental United States
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FTR	Federal Travel Regulation
GSA	General Services Administration
IBA	individually billed account
JFTR	Joint Federal Travel Regulations
M&IE	meals and incidental expenses
MCC	merchant category code
OCONUS	outside the continental United States
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OMB	Office of Management and Budget

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Acronym	Definition
OPC	organization program coordinator
PCS	permanent change of station
PDS	Permanent Duty Station
PIN	personal identification code
POV	privately owned vehicle
SF	Standard Form
TDY	temporary duty
TMC	Travel Management Center
U.S.C.	United States Code

Term	Definition
agency program coordinator	DHS employee designated by the CFO to have overall responsibility for a bank card program.
approving official	An DHS Government employee who has a number of cardholders under his/her purview and who determines if the cardholder's purchases were made in accordance with applicable regulations, policies and procedures.
business-class travel	A premium class of accommodation offered by the airlines that is higher than coach and lower than first class, in both cost and amenities. This class of accommodation is generally referred to as "business, business elite, business first, world business, connoisseur, or envoy" depending on the airline. Not all city-pair fares are available in business class, and even when use of business class is authorized, the use of business class city-pair fares is optional.

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Term	Definition
centrally billed account (CBA)	A centrally billed charge account, established by the travel card contractor, on which the common carrier fares for employees who do not have a travel card are charged. Also, a CBA is referred to as a Government Travel System account or a Government Travel Request. A CBA account is usually maintained by the TMC.
common carrier	An organization that transports persons according to defined routes and schedules, and offers its services to the general public. Airlines, trains, bus lines, and ships may be common carriers.
continental United States (CONUS)	The contiguous 48 States and the District of Columbia.
delinquent	When payment is not made by the due date or the end of the grace period as established in a loan or repayment agreement.
dispute	A disagreement between the cardholder and vendor regarding a transaction on the cardholder's statement of account.
Federal Travel Regulation	The regulation which implements statutory requirements and Executive branch policies for travel by Federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel at Government expense on official business.
first-class travel	Generally, the highest class of accommodation offered by commercial airlines in terms of both cost and amenities. This class of accommodation may only be authorized by the Secretary in accordance with the provisions of § 301–10.123 of the FTR. There are no contract city-pair fares for this class of accommodation.
individually billed account (IBA)	A government contractor-issued individually billed charge card.

Term	Definition
infrequent traveler	Travelers who are authorized for official travel less than 2 times a year.
internal controls	The tools—organization, policies, and procedures—to help program and financial managers achieve results and safeguard the integrity of the program. The three objectives of internal controls are: (1) effectiveness and efficiency of operations, (2) reliability of financial reporting, and (3) compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
merchant category code	A categorization of the type of business the merchant is engaged in and the kinds of goods and services provided.
organization program coordinator	DHS employee designated at the organizational element or Component level to oversee a card program within that organization.
outside the continental United States (OCONUS)	Areas outside the contiguous 48 States and the District of Columbia.
rest stop	This term applies when a flight arrives at its destination (either on the outbound or return) after duty hours, allowing the traveler a reasonable opportunity to get a night of rest before reporting to duty.
split disbursement	The process of dividing a travel voucher reimbursement between the contractor (bank) and the traveler. The balance designated to go to each is sent directly to the appropriate party. (<i>OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B in Chapter 4.4 requires all executive branch agencies to implement split disbursement.</i>)
statement of account	Documentation sent to the cardholder from the bank on a monthly basis showing purchases, payments, and/or credits for a specific cycle.

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temporary duty (TDY)	Performance of official business up to twelve months (or one year) in duration at a location (or locations) away from an employee's official duty station.
transportation expenses	Includes commercial bus, air, rail, or vessel/steamship fares and are reimbursable in addition to per diem allowances. Also includes local transit system and taxi fares, cost of commercial rental cars and other special conveyances, and mileage and other allowances to cover operating expenses for use of privately owned conveyances, including fees for parking, ferries, etc.
travel authorization	Written permission (recorded electronically or on paper) for an employee to travel on official business, and for the employee to incur certain travel related expenses, travel accommodations, and/or travel services.
travel card	The bank-issued charge card used by DHS employees to pay for official travel expenses.
travel cardholder	Approved DHS employee who has been issued a travel card for official Government travel.
Travel Management Center	The official providers of travel services, including information and reservations, for DHS employees. The travel service providers may differ between Components.

Summary of Changes

- Updated the processes for obtaining permission for [business-class travel](#).
- Added the [requirement](#) to book official travel through FedTraveler.com.
- Clarified the rules and requirements for using [centrally billed accounts](#).
- Added a [glossary](#) of acronyms and terms.
- Updated links and references and made formatting changes throughout.