

September 2010

Attachments include:

AOPC Designation Form

Sample Designation Form

.....
Email cover for following Word doc attachment

Greeting GTCC Coordinators

I have attached GTCC Coordinator notes for the month of September. I am going to try this format when passing on program information- request you print it, read it and file away for future reference - a lot of information to pass. I have also attached the forms related to Designation of GTCC Coordinators. If you've missed previous Program Update, please ask and we can forward those to you for your files.

Once we get our website set up, I will post these notes on the website for future reference.

General Note: I am sending the note below to all even though the majority of you are not at fault - I want to send this message to all so there is no reason for you to be unaware of the issue.

I have had several occasions recently where members are being directed to me by GTCC Coordinator for simple item like hierarchy change or raising credit limits from \$1 to \$2,500. As a single request it does not take long, cumulatively it does take up a lot of time in addition to the many voice mails I get from members who either do not know who their GTCC Coordinators are or GTCC Coordinator is saying they do not have time to help them out and were referred to me.

This practice needs to end - your role is to support our members regardless of rank, Reservist, Civilian or Active Duty. Plus, members are not to be referred to us directly - if you cannot handle an issue, you are the persons to contact Carlene and I via phone or email. If you are on leave, you need to have an out of office and voice message information the tells the member who to contact next. Unless we specifically approve it, Carlene and I are not your primary back-up.

If you are not able or willing to provide the needed customer service, please let your command know and have them relieve you of the GTCC Coordinator duties.

Forgive the directness of the note, but the level of this type of call has increased significantly. Carlene and I are working through late evenings and weekends on GTCC emails and phone calls - we don't need to add to our workload items that should and can be resolved at the Coordinator level during work hours.

That is all for now. Thank you to those coordinators who have been very active including their strong communications with Carlene and I - it has been very helpful and educational. In addition, we have uncovered many instances of card misuse as a result.

Keep the questions coming.

RCN

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1. MCC Code override requests: Please be careful when JPMC or a member requests a bank override (request) for MCC code that is rejected - there are reasons behind the blocks. So when requested of you please walk through your decision so when asked you can explain the policy you used to confirm appropriate use of the card for a specific purchase. Couple examples:

A vendor recently requested a Merchant Code override in order to assess a training course fee. Per DHS and CG instructions, this is a violation of GTCC usage. "Under the terms of the GSA agreement, the card is not to be used for business charges that are non travel-related.....: b. Training Courses".

Just because a training course is conducted at a hotel, it does not make it a conference. GSA, JFTR, FTR and DHS are very clear on this.

Conference fees [Attendance fee] are authorized use of IBA cards - CG has a DHS exception clause that enables us to use GTCC for this purpose.

There was a recent incident where members were told they could pay for Exhibit Booths at a conference with their IBA – that is also not authorized. This falls under business charges that are non travel related.

We have even seen notes in the members' travel orders authorizing items like the above two examples - a note on Travel Orders does not serve as a waiver to government policy. If you are unsure of a charge, research JFTR, FTR, DHS travel and COMDTINST 4600.14B.

Exhibit Booth fees; training course fees or similar items need to go through the acquisition process.

We will not override JPMC \ MCC blocks on the above. You are directed not to do this also.

The next version of COMDTINST 4600.14B will include more detail specifics on unauthorized use of the IBA so we can minimize misinterpretations.

2. Credit Card Limits: Prior to processing an increase, please make sure you ask\know at minimum the answers to the following questions:

- Reason for credit increase
- Does the requested increase level match travel plans \ orders or responsibility? Or will a Temp increase for the single trip take care of the need? A permanent increase for job related increase needs to be demonstrated.
- What is the past travel history?
- Rank has no privileges in the decision.
- Long term TDY is not a reason to process a high limit request unless the amount requested is equal to a 4 week period worth of expenses.

Reminder on credit limit request process - all credit increase requests need to be made through you - if the request is over \$10K, the request still needs to come from you - ensure you have the needed justification paragraph; amount you are looking for along with EMPID and member's full name. Do not forward an email chain with remarks; "See below."

Credit limit increase is not a way to avoid the responsibility of paying a statement. Credit limit increases are tied to TDY in a 4 week period - it is not a tool to over-ride the requirement to fill out final\interim travel claims; awaiting ticket refunds etc. Please refer to COMDTINST 4600.14B for details. If you have a senior person pressuring you to do something against policy, please bring this to my attention immediately and I will take care of it. GTCC policy, regulation and public law are applied equally regardless of rank.

3. High Limit Increases: We have been receiving requests from GTCC Coordinators for limits over \$10K that do not have the proper justification behind it. Aside from the basic information [EMPID, Last 4 and the amount requested], the justification is "See email below" or "See attached". That does not give me the confidence that their request has been reviewed or vetted as well as a review of their account activity over the past 9-12 months. Several requests for \$20-25K have been reduced after Carlene or I reviewed the account and the need - in most cases the member settled for temporary increase of \$13K-\$15K after some basic questions were asked.

Some questions that need to be asked or you need to be confident the question is answered to your satisfaction:

- Increasing a credit limit is not a matter of a member completing a travel claim but more a matter of expenses incurred in a 4 week period. A travel advance can be made or a proxy to file an interim claim can be assigned by the member.
- What is it you want approved as a GTCC Coordinator? A permanent increase to \$xxK or a temporary one?
- Were you provided the basis for recommending the \$xxK amount? Would \$xxK or something less work?
- What did you base your assessment on? Travel Orders; Job requirements? Other?
- If you recall, we need DHS approval for anything over \$20K along with justification. We would then need more detailed information before we will submit the request to DHS. It is therefore important your request email to us has the needed information and vetting in order for us to process the request to DHS. Plan on a 3-5 business day process for review and approval by DHS.
- What was your logic for not using a lower amount?
- If you are looking for a permanent \ long term increase, then we need some indication that the member is going to expend on average the credit limit for the majority of the upcoming year each 4 week cycle - not cumulative.

The above is our way to check your recommendation and thought process when you send in your request.

There are several standard reminders we communicate when increasing credit limits of members - this includes recently to a Flag Officer:

- Travel claims must be processed within 3 working days after completed travel or at 21day increments with blanket travel orders;
- Payment of travel card statement is due in full regardless of claim payment or processing;
- Split disbursement is required when processing travel claims when GTCC is used;
- Ensure personal information is updated on your GTCC account in a timely manner.

4. Hurricane \ Evacuation: Recently we had two units evacuate to another location as a result of Hurricane approaching. The GTCC Coordinator requested all cards under their hierarchy be raised [temporary] for a 2 week period. The coordinators did a great job getting the information to me. As a result, we were able to do a blanket request to JPMC to immediately process a batch increase. If you are faced with a similar situation, good comms and justification helps move the request expeditiously.

5. Travel Management Center [SATO] Usage: As a GTCC Coordinator, you may run into this issue and I wanted you to be armed with the facts and policy.

Couple points and references to cover on the topic- bottom line TMC [SATO] must be used - not an option for Commercial Transportation. By circumventing this process, members are exposed to personal liability of costs incurred. We have also had several cases where members were complaining that they did not have a "clean invoice" that covered their final cost of a trip - after spending time to investigate, we found that the members had not used SATO to make their travel changes - they worked directly with the airline. Not sure how the members thought that information would be sent to SATO.

TMC use is not policy or request - its mandatory requirement per JFTR and FTR. Members before complaining about "SATO" need to first understand the rules and logic behind TMC - you don't have to agree with it, but it is what we have to work under.

There are several references that direct the member to utilize the TMC.

- ALCOAST 362/07 does state that a non-contract carrier may be available. However, this message was cancelled with ALCOAST 390/07. Contract carrier should not be confused with air fare.
- Mandatory use of TMC is found in the JFTR, U3002, U3120, 'users must remember that it is MANDATORY DoD policy to use CTO/TMCs for all official transportation requirements.'
- Title 41, Sec 301-50.8(a)(1) 'If your agency is a mandatory user of the General Services Administration's city-pair contracts for air passenger transportation services, you must use the contract carrier, unless you have an approved exception'...)
- ALCOAST 390/07: 3. All official travel is to be arranged through the TMC.
- ALCOAST 405/08: 4. Members are reminded that all official travel must be arranged through a government contract travel management center (TMC), even if a non-contract fare is being purchased.
- DHS Travel Handbook, Chap 1.F.2: DHS employees and invitational travelers must use the TMC for all common carrier and automobile reservations.

Yes from a very myopic view it does not make sense to pay \$800 for a fare that you can find a lot cheaper using the Internet. From the government's perspective using the TMC does save money in the long run. From a macro level the taxpayer does save money. Many travelers [CG are the facts I am resting on] change or cancel plans without cost to the taxpayer - I am a money type and I abhor waste of money - I looked into this many years ago and saw the light from a strategic level. That all said, DHS and JFTR do not permit us to circumvent using a TMC.

6. Credit limit Redux: On August 5, 2010, we issued a task to the GTCC Coordinators to reduce credit limits of cards that have not been used for a long period of time down to a dollar. I clearly requested that you contact the affected cardholders when you do this. "Prior to reducing the limit, contact the cardholder to see if there is any travel expected in the near future."

Recently we have been getting a lot of calls from cardholders whose accounts were reduced to \$1 and did not know about it. Please make sure you did contact everyone you processed a reduction for. The members deserve this communication from you. You may want to consider sending a hierarchy email regarding credit limits and travel.

7. COMTINST 4600.14B update: I have started phase 2 of preparing an updated draft instruction. As mentioned at the conference and an earlier email, please provide any topics that would need to be addressed \ eliminated or updated in the current version. Generic updates like PSC as lead program office and JPMC as the current vendor are being made. I am looking more towards process sections that can be enhanced from clarity or effectiveness point of view. CBA section will be updated to reflect current policy as well as Traveler's Check enclosure will be replaced with Debit Card Instruction.

8. Hierarchy Update: We are currently looking at the latest version of GTCC related options in Direct Access 9.0 [New version that is rolling out] and once this is done, we will focus on implementing a new and improved hierarchy to better match current CG structure and spread out the work\accounts more evenly. The new DA version will prove better reporting options for the field. The proposed hierarchy update solution will not satisfy all - it is being looked at from a strategic viewpoint. We will look to run a draft proposal by the coordinators for comment.

9. Reminder about coordinator relief requirements: We have sent several emails on this subject, but we are having difficulties with this still. Below are the steps to relieve GTCC Coordinator and stand up a new one. IAW COMDINST 4600.14B. This is a DHS audit item that we are scored as "Partially Meet" I want to get this item in the Green.

Coordinator relief process \ New Coordinator designation process:

- a) We need a command letter [To: PSC-BOPS-r] to remove current AOPC from our roster. Please include the member EMLID and hierarchy number. Just because the designation memo indicates the duty is assigned until transfer, it does not create a reminder that notifies us of a members official departure or relief as GTCC Coordinator.
- b) We need a command letter [To: PSC-BOPS-r] to designate any new coordinators. We have provided you with a sample. It is imperative that this letter be signed by the designated GTCC Coordinator's unit CO\XO only - no delegation any lower - another AOPC, SPO, and supervisor is not acceptable. Please include the member EMLID and hierarchy number.
- c) New coordinator needs to complete and pass training for coordinators before we can do anything. - this is found in the following link on the GSA website:
<http://apps.fss.gsa.gov/webtraining/trainingdocs/travel%20AOPCquiz/index.cfm>
- d) Ensure that your new coordinator has filled out the AOPC form (see attached), if you have a Coordinator that needs to be removed put that info under contact number 2 [Remember to place the Hierarchy info on the form and mark delete box]. Scan and email to Carlene Curry and I for review and we can fax to JPMC for processing. Once we receive the form we will make the update in PaymentNet to allow for OPC Travel role. Then we complete the OPC designation form and forward to JPMC. JPMC will forward the PIN to your new coordinator.
Couple items on AOPC form:
 - o Complete only the highlighted portion of the form - do not make any other changes to the form
 - o Under contact information fill out: Name, Address, City, State, Zip, Phone, Fax and email
 - o Under hierarchy, only input level 3 & 4 of the hierarchy number.
 - o Under "request type", indicate "Add", "Change" or "Delete" by checking the appropriate box.

Additional travel information can be found at the PPC/Travel website at <http://www.uscg.mil/ppc/tvl.asp>

Once the above information is forwarded via email to Carlene for processing, she will send out an introduction email with the basic information to get the GTCC Coordinator up and running.

10. Changes to member's account: When making any changes to a members account, please please take the 2 minutes needed to validate their billing address; email and business phone information. We are finding a significant amount of the accounts we open up for any action have invalid info even very old CG email addresses that have name@unit.uscg.mil format.

11. 'Stranded traveler' policy: At times when a cardholder is in a travel status and may be stranded due to a travel card issue, JPMC has been instructed to resolve the immediate situation for the member when the GTCC coordinator cannot be reached. Some situations where this may occur could be the member's card is declining due to insufficient credit limit and cannot check out of a hotel, or make travel arrangements with SATO.

Pay close attention to the content of the email from JPMC as the credit limit increase may be temporary or permanent. You need to review the member's record to ensure the limit is appropriate, the charges are valid, should it be temporary or permanent, and member's account is not in a delinquent status. You should be able to discern the reason JPMC had to make this adjustment. Was this due to credit limit set too low or has the statement not been paid?