

Management Instruction

Government-Issued, Individually Billed Travel Charge Cards

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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 obtain travel advances via automated teller machines (ATMs).

General Policy

Who May Be Issued a Card

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

How to Request a Card

- Locate the travel charge card coordinator in your functional organization.
- Request an application from the coordinator.
- Complete the application and return it to the coordinator.
- Your travel charge card will be sent to you in approximately two weeks. It will come in an unmarked envelope.
- Your personal identification number (PIN) giving you ATM access will be mailed separately.

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Responsibilities of the Cardholder

- 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 it 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 *Gov't Travel Card* for any reimbursable expenses paid for with the card. When the expense report is paid, the amount designated as *Gov't Travel Card* will be paid directly to the bank.
- c. If you have used the card to get a cash advance at an ATM or to pay for non-reimbursable expenses while on travel, pay those amounts yourself directly to the bank. The cash advance fee is a reimbursable expense but the cash advance itself is not.
Note: Do not enter the cash advance into your expense report.
- d. In eTravel, reimbursable expenses brought down from the company card page do not require receipts, with the exception of hotel and rent or lease expense.
- e. 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 (see below).
- f. 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.
- g. Promptly report any change of address to the charge card provider.
- h. Contact your charge card coordinator if you change jobs and your new job is in a different functional area. You will need to tell the coordinator where your new job is located so your account can be transferred to your new coordinator's portfolio.
- i. 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.
- j. If your account number changes, you must call the help desk to have your eTravel account updated with the new account number. Call the help desk at 800-USPS-HELP (800-877-7435), and ask for eTravel.
- k. Upon leaving the Postal Service, turn in your charge card to your 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 Credit Card or Cash

- a. Employees with suspended or cancelled government travel charge cards must pay their official expenses with their personal credit cards or with their own cash.
- b. Bargaining unit employees and nonbargaining 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 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, 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, bus tickets) with your personal card. If they cannot, 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 Travel Management Company 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 should do so with the travel management company. The travel management company 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. Employees with valid government travel charge cards who use their card to pay the expenses of an employee with a suspended or cancelled card, or who allow the employee to use their card, are liable for all expenses charged to the card for or by the employee, even if that employee does not reimburse them. The Postal Service will not reimburse those employees for these 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.
- d. Managers who allow their employees to use valid government travel charge cards for unauthorized purposes are also subject to disciplinary action.
- e. Employees with valid government travel charge cards who use or permit the use of their cards for unauthorized purposes are subject to have their cards suspended or cancelled.

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.

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 to use for airlines, hotels, and car rentals only. The 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, who will submit the request to manager of National Accounting. The following are required:

1. A written statement from the cardholder explaining why the account went delinquent.
2. A written statement from the cardholder's supervisor, addressing at least some of the following:
 - a. They know the cardholder statement of the facts to be true.
 - b. They will supervise the cardholder's account.
 - c. They will vouch for the cardholder's character.
 - d. The cardholder needs the card based on anticipated increased travel.
 - e. Cardholder reimbursement will be sent directly to Citibank for charges on the card (approver must verify that type of payment is company card).
3. A statement from the travel coordinator that the account balance is zero and how many NSF checks (if any) have been submitted for payment, that employee has been counseled regarding Postal policy, and that the cardholder will comply with that policy.
4. A statement from the area vice president indicating concurrence with the request for reinstatement.

The required statements will be forwarded to the charge card provider on a weekly basis. The decision for reinstatement may take up to 4 weeks and is solely up to the card provider. Once the decision has been made we have no recourse.