



GTCC NEWSLETTER

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References

- COMDTINST M4600.18
- JTR, 010204
- FTR, Ch. 300
- DHS Financial Management and Accounting Section 3.2.4 Travel Handbook
- PPC Travel Resources

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New Bank Announced



Citibank has been selected as the new bank card contractor for DHS under the new SmartPay 3 GSA contract. The card brand will remain VISA. This change will take place later this fall. As we move into this transition, we ask that with every contact you have with a cardholder that you verify the account profile information. By validating the cardholder address and updating all phone and email information, the cardholder and the program will make this a much smoother transition. Profile details cannot be updated online by the cardholder and are not automatically downloaded with DA information. You can also use your cardholder profile report during All Hands meetings to validate this information. Any account address update is a manual process. Your support and cooperation is appreciated.

Messages and details will be forthcoming as we get closer to this transition.

Tuition/Training Payment Methods

For your situational awareness and proper counseling for cardholders, tuition/registration/course fees for courses are not authorized/reimbursable travel expenses and the GTCC shall not be used for them. TQC has issued a number of orders for AFC-56 funded courses that included authorization for the course registration fee on the orders. TQC is working to fix these orders and correct the prior errors that were made. Moving forward, please ensure you do not include tuition/registration/course fees for courses as part of limit increases for the GTCC. Members need to be counseled that the course must be procured via the purchase card or PO process and not using the GTCC or personal funds. Use of the GTCC or personal funds will result in GTCC misuse or the member needing to complete the Ratification Process via their local Contract Officer....not a pleasant experience.

Please also note that the DHS Mandated Conference Approval Process is used for BOTH conferences and training courses. Do not assume that if the member has an approved conference approval form from CG-8 that the GTCC can be used. The GTCC can only be used for a conference and not for a training course. Your reference for this policy is CIM4600.17A, 2020.E.

When trying to figure out if it is a course or a conference, the following questions should be asked:

1. Who is hosting it (commercial vendor or professional society)?
2. Where is it being held (conference facility or a contractor's facility)?
3. How often is it held (annually or more than once a year)?
4. Does the attendee get a certification at completion?
5. What is the format (multiple sessions/panel discussions or instructor led)?

GTCC

Travel Charge Card

Web Page

<http://www.uscg.mil/psc/bops/govtrvl/>

JPMC Travel Manager

Help Line

866-725-1184

Credit Limits for Potential Travel

In case you might wonder, CIM 4600.18, DHS, and OMB policy do not have an anticipated travel or just in case credit limit provision for travel cards. CG and DHS travel card policy require travel card account limits to be reduced to \$1 unless cardholders are actually on orders or meet the frequent traveler definition (5 or more annual trips). We understand the concern with highly deployable teams, hurricane season and the concern with the air crews and breaking down/getting stranded and want to highlight the process and practice that is in place under the contract with JPMC.

Under the contract with JPMC we have the stranded traveler policy in place to cover just this type of situation. If the cardholder cannot reach their Travel Manager to have the credit limit increased, then they need to call the number on the back of the card, press 0, get a representative on the phone and say "I am on orders, cannot reach my local Travel Manager because it is after hours, and need my limit raised to \$XXXX to cover my expenses for this trip." JPMC will check for existing declines on the card and raise the limit. They will then send the primary TM for the hierarchy and us an e-mail indicating the action taken (this allows us to verify that the member was on orders, change the limit from a permanent to a temporary limit, etc.).

While you may think that the cardholder having to make a phone call to get the credit limit raised to accommodate an urgent situation is an administrative burden, so are travel orders, travel claims, procurement requests, and a wide range of other administrative actions that are in place across the CG. Our internal control requirements are driven by OMB A-123, appendix B and we are audited on this by DHS. To balance this burden we have worked to make this as easy as possible on cardholders through educational emails to new cardholders and by developing/deploying procedures like the stranded traveler policy with JPMC. We also help the travel managers by doing mass updates when large numbers of account changes are needed. As a Travel Manager, you can set temp limits on nine accounts in less than 10 minutes and JPMC covers the off hours with the stranded traveler process. Sharing this and educating your crew will help go a long way to reducing any administrative burden. Once the cardholder knows who to contact for credit limit increases and how to deal with it, the rest is pretty quick to resolve.

The stranded cardholder policy can be found at: http://www.uscg.mil/psc/bops/govtrvl/job_aides/Stranded-Cardholder-Policy.pdf. If your command were to ask 'Is there policy or provision in place for 'just in case' or anticipated travel?', now you know. Don't hesitate to ask if you have questions regarding this process.



Good To Know

Account Name Changes: Travel managers are asked NOT to attempt to update GTCC account names. We certainly appreciate your efforts to help the cardholder. However, there is much more to the process than a simple account name change. The GTCC program manager addresses these account updates on a monthly basis and communicates this change with the cardholder.

New Messages: ALCGPSC 067/18-Required Use of the TMC for Lodging; ALCGPSC 069/18-GTCC Program Updates and PCS Season Reminders. Check it out on the [Manuals and Messages](#) page.

CG Portal Templates: Are you noticing outdated or invalid application request memos or forms? Outdated and incorrect memos and documents will cause delays in the travel card application process. Check CG Portal for locally retained documents. These may not be current or correct so verify your units are using the most up to date forms and documents by referring to the [GTCC website](#). We ensure this website is current and relevant with forms, information and references for travel and travel cards.



Failure to Use the TMC for Lodging

Is it travel card misuse IAW CIM4600.18 to use the GTCC for third party travel sites when the official travel is authorized and reimbursed?

The GTCC program receives more than a dozen DHS travel card audits each month where a cardholder has used a third party travel site to secure a reservation. Travel policy requires the official traveler to use the travel management contractor (TMC) to make these reservations. In our audit process, we review the travel card transactions with the official travel order and claim reimbursement.

DHS has advised us that travel reservations made outside the TMC will be considered misuse. The GTCC program interprets this notice as misuse when the GTCC is used and the transaction fee from the third party travel site is not considered a reimbursable expense. When the transaction has been reimbursed, even though the traveler failed to follow travel policy, the travel card was used for official travel and no dollar value can be placed on the misuse. The GTCC is not closed since the transaction had been reimbursed for the official travel.

In instances where the cardholder failed to follow travel policy, the command should counsel the traveler on the required use the TMC as required for travel reservations. A cardholder's failure to follow the requirements of the Joint Travel Regulations (military travelers) or Federal Travel Regulations (civilian travelers) is not a GTCC issue but should be handled by the command as any other policy violation issue.

Please educate and remind your travelers to use the TMC for all official travel reservations unless specifically exempt. Even when exempt, the traveler should not use the third party travel sites, but go directly to the merchant for the reservation.



Travel Policy/Lodging Exceptions

An OCONUS assignment does not justify an exemption from using ADTRAV. If valid, the travel order will provide the written direction to place the traveler into a specific lodging establishment that is issued from the US Embassy or COCOM/JTR Commander or the Secretarial process. If the US Embassy recommends a list of approved accommodations, then the traveler shall use the TMC/ADTRAV for the reservation for the recommended facilities. The Embassy providing a list does not meet the JTR/FTR criteria for the TMC exception. If travelers were to use HOTELS.com or EXPEDIA to find accommodations, they are able to use ADTRAV for the same facilities. ADTRAV services are available 24/7. ADTRAV will respond to the traveler via email if they are not able to accommodate the reservation. The ADTRAV response then needs to be included in the travel claim. This supporting documentation will be necessary should the account be selected for audit.

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*REMEMBER * ALWAYS PROTECT PII*

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In the Spotlight

Way to go
Travel Managers!

Ms. Karen Bruno: explaining the difference between last year and this year lodging messages

CWO Michael Martin: how to view/open embedded documents in application instructions

YNC Carlos Molina: questioned anticipated travel and credit limits

YNC Mary Endicott: use of GTCC memo for correct command/CG Portal documents

YNC Jennifer Fischer: identified an issue with ETQC issued orders and training fees

Great questions and comments!

Thanks for asking.

Keep up the great work!

Required GTCC for SELRES

Reserve members may be called upon at a moment's notice and quickly ordered to duty in support of an emergency or natural disaster. Travel charge card policy requires all SELRES member to retain a GTCC and keep the account in good standing in order to facilitate mobilization requirements. Refer your reserve members to CIM4600.18, chapter 1.B.2. for this policy. Unless otherwise prohibited, all reserve members are required to hold an active CG travel charge card. CG reservists who are also CG civilian personnel will have only one GTCC. Other reserve members who are DOD or other DHS component civilian employees will have a travel card for each component. You can refer to past GTCC newsletters for additional information on this topic.

