



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 official travel expenses under the DHS Travel Card Program. This manual includes definitions, roles and responsibilities, and processes to address the operation of the Travel Card Program and describes the DHS relationship with the travel card bank, referred to throughout this policy as the “bank.”

The travel card is authorized for the purchase of certain goods and services while on approved, official government travel. The Travel Card Program saves taxpayers millions of dollars by reducing administrative costs and providing for refunds. Compliance with this manual will maximize the refunds 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 – Privacy Procedures for Personnel Records ([4 CFR Part 83](#)).

In compliance with the *Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998* ([Public Law 105–264](#)), this manual is intended to supplement the FTR and the [Joint Travel Regulations](#) (JTR) and does not duplicate information contained in the FTR or JTR. This manual provides DHS employees with the travel card regulations and policies established by both GSA and DHS. Questions regarding unusual or specific circumstances not covered by this manual should be referred to the appropriate **Component primary organizational program coordinator (CPOPC)**.

This policy applies to all DHS employees. This policy supersedes any previous versions. (See the [summary of changes](#) incorporated in this revision.)

Responsibilities

1. The **Under Secretary for Management (USM)** assigned responsibility for travel card policy development and program oversight to the DHS Chief Financial Officer (CFO) within DHS [Delegation 01000](#), *Delegation for Financial Activities*.
2. The **Chief Financial Officer (CFO)** to the extent allowed by law, to ensure functional integration of Department-wide financial activities, this supervision, oversight and direction extends to—
 - a. Internal controls to promote the use of the card and to protect against fraud, waste, and abuse. Internal controls will include a review of the travel card program at least annually.
 - b. The travel card program, including the authority to require reimbursements to issuers of contractor-issued travel charge cards, under Public Law 105-264, Section 2 (5 U.S.C. § 5701 note), and the authority to require reimbursements to issuers of contractor-issued travel charge cards under 14 U.S.C. § 517.
 - c. The Government Charge Card Program, pursuant to Federal Acquisition Regulation 13.301 and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-123, Appendix B.
 - d. Travel and transportation expenses and allowances authorized under 5 U.S.C. Chapter 57 and Public Law 111-83, Section 546, including—
 - 1) Official travel expenses and subsistence allowances authorized for individuals, including but not limited to employees and immediate family members, Senior Executive Service candidates, witnesses; and
 - 2) Transportation expenses for the remains of a covered employee or dependent pursuant to 5 U.S.C. §§ 5724d and 5742
3. The DHS **Chief 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.
4. The **agency program coordinator (APC)** will—
 - a. Successfully complete training on the roles and responsibilities of an APC prior to appointment, including proper management, control and oversight

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tools and techniques, and the FTR Part 301-70 - Internal Policy and Procedures Requirements, Subpart H - Policies and Procedures Relating to Mandatory Use of the Government Contractor-Issued Travel Charge Card for Official Travel Section 301-70.700 through 708. The APC must also receive the same training as the cardholders and CPOPC/OPCs.

- b. Monitor and oversee internal controls for the overall travel card program for the CFO as detailed in the DHS Travel OPC [Key Controls](#).
- c. Monitor and oversee internal control for the Department-wide Travel Card program.
- d. Monitor Component compliance with the policies, procedures, and internal controls outlined in this policy no less than each month.
- e. Perform oversight of CPOPCs as detailed in the DHS Travel OPC Key Controls.
- f. Oversee all [centrally billed accounts](#) (CBAs).
- g. Serve as the liaison to the bank and GSA on issues dealing with the program.
- h. Assign or remove CPOPCs with the bank.
- i. Chair quarterly CPOPC meetings.
- j. Coordinate quarterly OMB reports with report input from the Components.
- k. Coordinate training for CPOPCs, including GSA SmartPay and ad hoc training through coordination with the bank and card company.
- l. Monitor monthly/cycle bank generated reports and forward to the CPOPC for response as detailed in the DHS Travel OPC Key Controls.
- m. Review bank reports on overdue and delinquent accounts; provide management with a report on these accounts, and request action plans from applicable Components and file in a central location for the appropriate National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) General Records Schedules (GRS) designated period.
- n. Approve [individually billed account \(IBA\)](#) travel card credit limits of more than \$20,000 and file in a central location for the appropriate GRS designated period.

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- o. Implement and maintain DHS Travel Card Manual and initiate annual review and revision.
 - p. Submit annual premium-class reports to GSA by December 15.
 - q. Review quarterly Component reports and appropriate authorizing documentation as detailed in the section, to ensure business and first class travel activity is in accordance with this manual.
 - r. Reconcile and approve quarterly refunds for both the IBA and CBA for all Components.
 - s. Manage the list of prohibited merchant category codes (MCCs).
5. The **Component primary organizational program coordinator (CPOPC)** or the designee will—
- a. Successfully complete GSA and cardholder training on the roles and responsibilities of a CPOPC prior to appointment, including proper management, control and oversight tools and techniques, JTR and the FTR Part 301-70 - Internal Policy and Procedures Requirements, Subpart H - Policies and Procedures Relating to Mandatory Use of the Government Contractor-Issued Travel Charge Card for Official Travel Section 301-70.700 through 708. The CPOPC must also receive the same training as the cardholders. Provide status of completed GSA or DHS training to APC.
 - b. Manage the travel card program, including the development of internal controls to prevent fraud, waste and abuse, monitoring Component travel cardholder transactions, and overseeing CBAs.
 - c. Maintain records of travel cardholder training certificates and the bank travel card applications, and/or appropriate documentation to meet the requirements of OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B (creditworthiness) and GRS.
 - d. Establish and issue Component initial training, refresher training every two years, job aids, and guidance for effective implementation of the travel card program.
 - e. Establish credit and cash limits with the bank for their Component up to \$20,000.
 - f. Components must maintain records of approvals for all IBA credit limit increases over \$10,000 for the appropriate GRS designated period.

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- g. Directly oversee no more than 800 active IBA cardholders. Active accounts are defined as any account that has been used in the last year.
- h. Manage the accounts of active IBA cardholders in the bank's electronic access system (EAS). User profiles on EAS shall include the official email address of the employee. The primary email address for the cardholder account and employee record shall be the employee's official email address. Official email addresses are those which have .gov, .mil, .uscg, and cg-exchange.com extensions. The employee may only use a personal email address in the secondary email fields. Components may request a waiver from the DHS Assistant Director for Bankcard and Review Branch for this requirement.
- i. Manage all CBAs; to include—
 - 1) Establish a process, with strict internal controls, to ensure that all charges and payments are timely, accurate, and appropriate;
 - 2) Closely monitor delinquency reports from charge card vendor; and
 - 3) Contact appropriate personnel to ensure that delinquent payments are addressed and corrective actions are taken to prevent further occurrence
- j. Notify cardholder of delinquencies.
 - 1) At a minimum, the CPOPC will notify the cardholder in writing at 31, 60, 90, and 120 days delinquent.
 - 2) The cardholder's supervisor will be notified of the delinquency once the account reaches 61 days delinquent.
 - 3) Initiate salary offset collection procedures upon receipt of a written request from the bank for a delinquent account balance. CPOPCs may also contact the bank to initiate the salary offset process once an account has reached a delinquent status.
 - 4) Cardholders who are delinquent or who abuse or misuse the card must be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with their Component administrative process and DHS Chief Human Capital Officer.
- k. Ensure any business and first class travel is supported by appropriate documentation (as detailed in the [Policy Section](#)) and promptly report any

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non-approved business or first-class travel to the DHS APC at the end of each quarter.

- I. Suspend or cancel the card if there is misuse or abuse of the card.
 - m. Promptly respond and provide requested documentation to APC inquiries for monthly or cycle reports, transaction data, documentation, and status updates on their programs.
 - n. Process cases lacking approved travel authorizations through the bank's data mining system and alert the APC of any delay of cases taking over 30 days to resolve. Provide an additional update every 30 days as necessary until the case is closed. Components are encouraged to initiate their own review in the system.
 - o. Document justification to change cardholder credit limits for IBAs. Travel card credit limits over \$20,000 must be approved by the APC in advance of the travel.
 - p. Close cardholder accounts and 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 or close the account in the EAS.
 - q. For restricted card renewals, conduct the re-evaluation by reviewing the restricted cardholder's card usage during the previous period of card issuance. If the cardholder's account has not been delinquent and the card has not been misused, the CPOPC may choose to re-new the card as unrestricted.
 - r. Ensure **split pay** is used to the maximum extent possible unless otherwise exempt.
 - s. Assign or remove OPCs with the bank.
 - t. Perform oversight of the OPCs.
6. The **organizational program coordinator** (OPC) will—
- a. Successfully complete DHS travel card training as required and complete the bank's EAS training.
 - b. Assist with the management of the travel card program under the direction of the CPOPC.

7. **Supervisors or designated alternative** will—

- a. Determine which employees in their organization should apply for a travel card in accordance with the DHS Travel Card Manual.
- b. Approve and forward the employee's IBA application, the signed DHS Cardholder Agreement Form and the training certificate to the CPOPC or OPC.
- c. Review, approve and sign, or reject employees' travel vouchers within five business days after receiving the voucher.
- d. Notify the CPOPC of travel card misuse/abuse or delinquency. Recommend and/or initiate an investigation.
- e. Take prompt action when notified by the local OPC that an employee/cardholder has a delinquent account or of any suspicious account activity.
- f. Provide summary of any travel card disciplinary action taken to the CPOPC on a monthly basis for inclusion in the Component's OMB report submission using the template provided by the APC.

8. The **travel cardholder** will—

- a. Use the travel card for official authorized travel expenses incurred only while on official **temporary duty** (TDY) travel as supported by an approved travel authorization.
- b. File a voucher requesting reimbursement for travel expenses within five business days of completing travel or at least every 30 days if on continuous travel. Reimbursements should be submitted sooner if approaching the credit limit.
- c. Pay the bank in full by the payment due date on the statement or **dispute** incorrect charges directly with the bank in accordance with the cardholder agreement regardless of reimbursement status after voucher is received by the supervisor. Cardholders may dispute charges by calling the customer service number on the back of their travel card.
- d. Comply with this policy manual, the terms and conditions of the cardholder agreement, and policies and procedures of the Component as long as they do not conflict with the guidance provided in the DHS Travel Card Manual.

- e. Notify the bank in a timely manner when a change of name, address, or other personal profile change occurs. Notify the CPOPC or OPC of any transfer between offices within your Component.
- f. Successfully complete the DHS mandatory Travel Card Training at time of application and as a refresher a minimum of every 2 years. Provide copy of training certificates to the local OPC or CPOPC upon request.
- g. Destroy the card upon retirement or termination of employment or transfer to another agency or DHS Component and notify local OPC that the card was destroyed.

Policy

All DHS employees who travel two or more times per fiscal year or on extended TDY shall obtain and, to the maximum extent possible, use the travel card to pay for all authorized and reimbursable 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 JTR and FTR (§ 301-51.2). Foreign nationals are not eligible to hold IBA travel cards issued by federal agencies, as they are not federal employees. However, CBAs may be used to pay for their travel expenses when required by and approved by the agency.

The account of a travel card inactive for one year from the beginning of each fiscal year will be suspended by the CPOPC; the account of a travel card inactive for two or more years will be closed and cancelled by the CPOPC. There are four exceptions to this policy—

- i. Surge personnel (as defined by the Component).
- ii. COOP-ERG personnel (as designated by the Component).
- iii. FEMA and USCG reservists.
- iv. Mission-critical personnel (as defined by the Component).

Exceptions other than those listed above must be approved in writing by the director of the DHS Office of Financial Management. The DHS Travel APC will provide a report to each CPOPC listing the cardholders approaching suspension or cancellation by September 1 of each year. CPOPCs must either process the card suspension or cancellation OR provide a written waiver request for approval by the DHS CFO by September 15 of each year. Accounts identified on the suspension or cancellation report will be processed by the APC on October 1 of each year if not completed by the CPOPC.

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Travel cardholders are required to complete travel card training every two years in order to maintain their accounts. If an employee has not completed this mandatory training, the CPOPC will issue three warnings. If the training remains incomplete 15 work days after the first warning, the account will be suspended until training is complete. Cardholders must maintain a copy of their training certificate and must also provide a copy to their local OPC or CPOPC.

All common carrier expenses costing \$100 or more must be charged to the employee's IBA travel card or a Component CBA card, excluding upgrades to first or business class and payment for additional personal bags. The traveler must use personal funds for upgrades and additional personal baggage.

For 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 or the CFO may authorize a waiver for the requirements of the Travel Card Manual on a case-by-case basis. Request for a waiver must be in the form of an action memo addressed to the CFO.

DHS policy prohibits the following—

- 1) Making charges that are not authorized and reimbursable on approved official travel.
- 2) Personal, family member or any other individual's use of the card.
- 3) Use of the card in the vicinity (within 50 miles) of the PDS unless used in connection with official travel as documented by an approved travel authorization (e.g., transportation to or parking at an airport).
- 4) Failure to pay the bank in full on or before the statement due date.
- 5) Returned payments due to insufficient funds (bounced checks).
- 6) Failure to submit timely requests for reimbursement and properly use government voucher reimbursement to repay travel expenses.
- 7) Use of cash withdrawals in lieu of direct use of the card and/or withdrawals not commensurate with official travel except in instances where the authorized merchant or vendor does not or cannot accept travel card as form of payment.
- 8) Purchase of **first-class travel** accommodations, unless authorized in advance and in writing by the Secretary of DHS or certain Components

listed in DHS [Delegation 11000](#), Delegation of Authority to the Director of the Secret Service. This authorization must be obtained in advance and forwarded to the CPOPC and to the APC upon request.

- 9) Purchase of business-class travel accommodations, unless authorized in writing by the USM or certain Components listed in DHS [Delegation 11000](#), Delegation of Authority to the Director of the Secret Service. Such accommodations can only be authorized when absolutely necessary to achieve mission-critical, time-sensitive operations, or for other reasons allowed by the FTR or the JTR. This authorization must be obtained in advance by the respective Component head and forwarded to the CPOPC and to the APC on a quarterly basis. Exceptions will be subject to oversight and policies of the DHS CFO.
- 10) 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 upon arrival.

Note: [See Section 4](#) for more complete explanation of exceptions related to TDY and PCS travel.

1. Travel Card Application and Activation

- a. To obtain a travel card all prospective cardholders must—
 - 1) Successfully complete the DHS online travel card training course and obtain the DHS online training course completion certificate or transcript. The training course must be completed every two years.
 - 2) Complete and submit the DHS Cardholder Agreement Form to their supervisor for approval.
 - 3) Complete the IBA travel card application.
 - 4) Submit copies of the above forms and documents to the Component CPOPC or local OPC for processing.
- b. In accordance with OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B, travel card applicants must consent to a credit worthiness evaluation. After receiving the original copy of the application, and meeting the DHS and Component requirements, the bank conducts a credit check. Applicants that do not meet the minimum required credit score will be issued a restricted card.

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- c. If obtaining a credit score is not possible (e.g., the applicant does not have a credit history), an agency may still issue a restricted travel card to a first time applicant. A restricted card is defined as a card set to a \$2 credit limit at all times when not on official travel.
- d. The restricted account credit limit can only be increased temporarily to the amount required for travel and only for the dates of the travel.
- e. Travel Card Activation
 - 1) 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.
 - 2) The employee is required to sign and activate the travel card using the enclosed instructions immediately upon receipt. Newly issued unrestricted travel cards will have an initial credit limit of \$1 until activation.
 - 3) 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 secured location.

2. DHS Travel Card Policy and Procedures

DHS travelers must fully comply with all travel requirements set forth in the FTR, JTR, and Component-specific travel policies 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.

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

Within six months from the date of publication or revision of the DHS Travel Card Manual, the CPOPC must certify, through the APC that their Component—

- a. Has incorporated the DHS Travel Card Policy into the existing Component policy and provided a copy to the APC or
- b. Does not have a separate travel card policy and refers all travel card related inquiries to the DHS travel card policy

Components that are unable to complete this process within six months shall provide

monthly updates to the APC on the status of the Component manual.

Note: USCG military travelers use the JTR. TSA travelers use the Federal Aviation Administration Travel Policy (FAATP) as mandated by the [Aviation and Transportation Security Act \(ATSA\), Section 101 \(49 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) set by the cardholder. 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 the DHS. Access to cash via an 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.

- a. 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 3b(1)–(3), below. A withdrawal may be made—
 - 1) After the [travel authorization](#), Component specific form or travel order has been approved, but
 - 2) No earlier than three days prior to trip departure and
 - 3) No later than the last day of travel.
- b. *ATM/Teller cash withdrawal amount.* The maximum amount of an ATM or teller cash withdrawal available to travelers will be the lesser of the amounts as determined below —
 - 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 [here](#))

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, or in accordance with Component-specific policy, to ensure timely reimbursement.
- 3) *ATM/teller transaction limits.* The maximum ATM/teller withdraw amount for domestic travel is limited to \$400.00 per seven-day period.

Note: There may be instances (e.g., foreign travel) where these limitations may need to be raised. If so, notify the CPOPC as soon as possible prior to the need for an increase.

- 4) *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. This fee may also be claimed and reimbursed as a miscellaneous travel expense on the travel voucher. Under the JTR, ATM fees are considered part of the M&IE flat rate and not reimbursable as unique charges.

5) *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 ATMs 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 and the card provider bank to report the incident.

6) *Disallowed ATM fee—* Claims for ATM fees will be disallowed in cases where—

- 1) Cash withdrawals are not supported by an approved travel authorization.
- 2) Cash withdrawals exceed the M&IE 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 [SmartPay®2 Contract](#).
- 4) Withdrawals are made after the last day of travel.
- 5) The government travel card was not used to obtain the ATM withdrawal.

4. Use of Travel Card for Reimbursable Travel Expenses Incurred for Official Travel

- a. *Official travel expenses.* Travel cards issued under this program will be used solely for expenses incurred during authorized official government travel.
- b. *Limit charges only to cardholder.* Employees may not charge any other traveler's expenses to their travel card. Employees will only be reimbursed for their own authorized official charges. Employees are responsible for and must pay all charges they authorize to be placed on their government travel card.
- c. *Reimbursement for airline 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 in the interest of DHS as approved by the Component. Excess accompanied baggage including equipment is limited to that individual traveler's sole use. Miscellaneous travel expense reimbursement to a traveler for team gear or group baggage expenses is not authorized.
- d. *Use of third-party payment providers.* Cardholders may use third-party payment providers (e.g., PayPal and Square). Components should monitor these types of transactions carefully.
- e. *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.

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- 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 an IBA travel card.
 - 10) Individuals traveling on invitational travel.
 - 11) New appointees who must travel before they can be issued an IBA travel card.
 - 12) Infrequent travelers, because it is impractical to issue cards to employees who rarely travel.
 - 13) 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.
 - 14) Relocation allowances prescribed in the FTR, FAATP and JTR, except en route travel and house-hunting trip expenses.
- f. *Conference fees.* Conference/registration fees should be paid for using the purchase card. However, if the cardholder is in TDY status in the authorized period of travel, the travel card may be used to pay for conference/registration fees when authorized by the Component.
- g. *Exceptions for first-class travel.* The FTR, FAATP and JTR recognize 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 CPOPC and to the APC at the end of each quarter. 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.

- h. *Exceptions for business-class travel.* The FTR recognizes certain cases where business-class travel may be used. In these cases, exceptions must be granted by the USM or certain Components listed in the DHS [Delegation 01000](#), *Delegation for Financial Activities*. This authorization must be obtained in advance and forwarded to the CPOPC and to the APC at the end of each quarter. See FMPM Section 7.3 for more information on travel allowances.
- i. *Local Travel.* DHS defines local travel as travel within the local commuting area. For DHS, the local commuting area is within 50 miles of the employee's permanent duty station (PDS), his or her primary worksite. Normal circumstances that would entail local travel include attendance at an approved training class, meeting, seminar, or conference that is incident to the employee's official duties. Local travel must be authorized by the employee's supervisor/approving official. However, employees who travel more than 50 miles from their PDS for official business are not automatically entitled to TDY status. Refer to [FMPM section 7.5](#) for additional requirements for local travel. Refer to [paragraph 6. b.](#), for information on improper use of the travel card for local travel.

5. Obtaining Lodging, Rental Vehicles, and Passenger Transportation Services

Employees must arrange official lodging, rental vehicles, and transportation and obtain tickets through the official DHS travel management system (TMS) or the Component's contracted TMS if the Component has not transitioned to the official DHS TMS. Use of the TMS is required. Booking fees charged from a non-TMS vendor shall not be applied to any government card and constitute misuse of the card. Any fees charged by a non-TMS vendor will not be paid by DHS. Questions regarding special travel circumstances (e.g., international or emergency travel) may still be referred to the Component [Travel Management Center](#) (TMC).

- a. For official transportation, cardholders will obtain tickets through the TMS 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.
 - 1) In emergencies or in foreign locations, the cardholder may use the

travel card to purchase transportation directly from a carrier when the use of the TMS is not available.

- 2) Use of the travel card does not alter established travel reservation and ticket procedures. 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.
- 3) Use of the travel card does not exempt employees from the requirement to use city-pair, or government-contract fare carriers and U.S. flag carriers. Contract carriers provide discounted airfares between specific cities to federal employees on authorized travel.

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.

- 4) In accordance with the FTR, FAATP and JTR, the use of cash to purchase transportation tickets is prohibited in any situation where the total cost of the tickets involved is \$100 or more, except in emergencies that make the use of all other methods impossible. Travelers must provide documentation to the local OPC or CPOPC 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).
 - 5) 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.
- b. *It is the responsibility of each Component to develop internal policies and procedures documenting the justification of making **offline reservations** and a system of monitoring the use of offline reservations. Please refer to memorandum [DHS Offline Travel Reservation Costs](#), dated April 1, 2015 for more information.*
 - c. **CBA**s 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.

- 1) The CBA may be used by but not limited to 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 tickets costing more than \$1,000. Family members may be permitted to use the CBA for invitational travel on a case-by-case basis.
- 2) 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.
- 3) TMCs will obtain and confirm prior approval from a Component point of contact prior to processing first-class or business-class travel.
- 4) Each CBA will be subject to regular, periodic, documented review and reconciliation.
- 5) CBAs will not be used for any expenses related to local travel; however, the use of the CBA is authorized to pay for TMS fees for local travel when the employee is not a travel cardholder.
- 6) The CBA may be used for rental cars while on a protective assignment if authorized by Component.

6. Improper Use of the Travel Card

- a. The government contractor issued authorized travel card may be used only for authorized DHS travel expenses. In accordance with the terms of the GSA agreement, the card is only used when the cardholder is on official travel. 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—
 - 1) Publications (includes books, newspapers, journals, periodicals and subscriptions).
 - 2) Membership fees.
 - 3) Reproducing materials for meetings at a print shop including postage

and other administrative business expenses.

- 4) Higher education expenses.
 - 5) Management consulting services.
 - 6) Automobile purchases (car repairs, towing and services with the exception of fuel and oil).
 - 7) Computers, televisions or digital equipment.
 - 8) Non-travel car rental.
 - 9) Fuel or maintenance service expenses for any DHS- or GSA-owned fleet vehicles.
 - 10) Rental of vehicles to move office equipment or household goods.
- b. The government travel card may not be used for local travel expenses unless supported by an approved travel authorization. DHS defines local travel as travel conducted within a 50-mile radius of the employee's permanent duty station (PDS).
- c. Maintaining a government-issued travel card is a responsibility and not a right. At any time, a Component may initiate administrative and/or disciplinary actions up to, and including removal from federal service in accordance with a Component's Table of Penalties, policy and/or practice to mitigate the risk of, and address, improper travel card use.

The DHS APC, CPOPC, OPC and the Component monitor employees' use of the card monthly for fraudulent, abusive, or negligent charges and usage through the use of the bank's system and through data mining efforts. [Appendix B](#) provides examples of potential travel card misuse. Unauthorized cash withdrawals, use of the travel card for personal items, and/or repeated payment delinquencies will result in disciplinary action.

At the Department or Component's discretion, the authorized spending limit for a travel card may be lowered, or the travel card may be suspended or canceled. If a government-issued travel card is misused, Components, through their supervisors and managers, must report that misuse to their respective Personnel Security Division and consult with their servicing employee relations office, or office designated to oversee disciplinary and adverse actions.

The severity of travel card misuse and any prior incidents of misuse will

be taken into consideration when taking administrative and/or disciplinary or adverse actions. 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) Suspend, or cancel employee travel card accounts.
- 3) Impose additional disciplinary actions deemed appropriate by the agency.

7. Travel Voucher Claims

- a. Employees must submit travel vouchers in accordance with the DHS and Component-specific travel procedures to obtain reimbursement for authorized travel expenses. Each Component must institute split-pay for all travel cardholders in accordance with OMB A-123, Appendix B to the maximum extent possible to reduce travel delinquency within their Component. Components not using split pay must request a waiver from the DHS Secretary. Waiver requests will be submitted to the APC and routed through the Office of Financial Management and Chief Financial Officer for review and approval. Once approved by the CFO, the waiver request will be submitted to the Secretary for final approval and submission to OMB.
 - 1) *Travel voucher.* Employees are reimbursed for authorized and allowable travel and transportation expenses in accordance with the provisions of the FTR, JTR, FAATP and DHS travel policies and procedures. In emergencies or situations where traveler has obtained a cash 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 Component voucher or SF [1012](#), *Travel Voucher* or Expense Report using the TMS. 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 TMS 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, or in accordance with Component-specific policy, to release funds availability on the travel card using the split pay feature.
- 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 five business days of receipt.
- 4) Properly submitted vouchers will be paid within 10 calendar days of receipt per FTR.

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.

8. Monthly Travel Card Billing and Payment

Employees will receive a monthly billing statement from the bank at their designated billing address (or electronically if selected in the EAS), 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.

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. **Deferred, extended or partial payments are not permitted.**

- a) 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. Automatic alerts using the bank's EAS will be set to cardholders at 5, 15 and 30 days past due.
- b) In accordance with the GSA contract, travel card privileges are

automatically suspended if an individual's travel card balance remains unpaid at 61 days past statement date (31 days past payment due date); the account will be cancelled if a balance remains unpaid at 126 days past statement date (96 days past payment due date).

If the cardholder's statement contains a disputed charge, the employee is responsible for contacting the bank to resolve the dispute.

A payment submitted to the bank when there are insufficient funds in the payment account will be recorded in the bank's payment history records as delinquent. The occurrence of an insufficient check payment twice in a 12-month period will justify cancellation of the account by the bank. Employees will be responsible for any fees assessed due to insufficient funds.

9. 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.
- b. If a paper ticket was issued, 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 was issued 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 should 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. Charges should be disputed or paid on the travel card. Once credit is made to the account, the cardholder may request a credit balance refund check be issued by the bank.

10. Lost Transportation Tickets

- a. Travelers are responsible for safeguarding common carrier (air, bus, ship, 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. Cardholders may 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.

11. 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 a CPOPC, supervisor, assistant, 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; this will constitute misuse. In the event fraudulent charges are made, the employee must dispute charge(s) (see Section 19).

12. Lost or Stolen Travel Cards

- a. If a travel card is lost or stolen, the employee should immediately call the bank and local CPOPC or local OPC.
- b. Employees should review charges. If any are considered fraudulent,

employee should notify the bank and their CPOPC. Cardholders are not liable for any fraudulent charges if the travel card is lost or stolen.

- 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 United States or Canada, and within 72 hours of notification in all other countries. Travelers must notify the TMC when they receive the replacement card. Cardholders should also update their profile in the TMS.

13. Travel Card Renewals

Travel cards are valid for three years. Renewal of the travel card is automatic unless the account is delinquent or restricted. Per OMB A-123, Appendix B, Section 6.7 a credit worthiness assessment must be conducted for restricted cardholders before the cardholder is issued a renewed card. The re-evaluation of credit worthiness may be conducted by obtaining a credit score as described in OMB A-123, Appendix B, Section 6.3 or at the agency's discretion. CPOPCs may conduct the re-evaluation by reviewing the restricted cardholder's card usage during the initial period of card issuance. If the cardholder's account has not been delinquent and the card has not been misused, the CPOPC may choose to re-new the card as unrestricted.

14. Travel Card Suspension

The issuing 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 there is an active dispute.

15. Travel Card Reinstatements

Travel card accounts that were cancelled may be reviewed for reinstatement once full payment of the undisputed amount, and any penalties or late fees, are made. A travel card account that was cancelled due to non-sufficient funds (NSF), multiple suspensions, accounts that reached 181+ days of delinquency and were charged off, and previously reinstated accounts will not be considered for reinstatement.

If the CPOPC determines the employee's reinstatement request should be pursued, the CPOPC must submit the following to the APC for a reinstatement account review—

- a. The bank's Account Reinstatement Request Form.
- b. A signed and completed copy of the APC Reinstatement Request Form.
- c. Card application signed by applicant which includes applicant's approval to obtain his/her credit bureau score.
- d. Statement from CPOPC supporting reinstatement request.

The APC will review and respond in writing to each request for reinstatement within five business days. If the request for reinstatement is approved by the APC, the bank's reinstatement risk review response will be completed within 10 business days after the receipt of all completed reinstatement documents. If approved, the account will be re-established.

If the bank determines the account should be re-established, but restricted, the account credit limit will be set at \$2. It is recommended that the CPOPC use the temporary credit limit increase/decrease function within the bank's EAS to maintain control over the limits while the cardholder is not traveling.

16. Travel Card Cancellation and Changes

- a. The bank will cancel an account once undisputed transactions remain delinquent for 96 days or more from the closing date statement in which the unpaid charges first appeared. An account will be closed when an undisputed account balance remains unpaid following the first cycle date after the account reaches 96 days past the due date. If the normal cycle-date of the 12th falls on a Sunday or holiday, the account will not be closed until the following business day. 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 unauthorized use 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, with other personal funds or obtain a travel advance.
- c. Travel cards may be cancelled by the employee, the employee's CPOPC/OPC, or the bank. If the bank cancels the travel card due to delinquency, this can reflect unfavorably on the cardholders' personal credit rating following the last business day of the month after the account

reaches 181 days past the due date.

- d. When an employee resigns, retires, or transfers to another government agency, the CPOPC or local OPC will—
 - 1) Advise the cardholder to destroy the card.
 - 2) Immediately contact the bank or update the bank's EAS and cancel the account.

When an employee transfers within DHS to another Component they will follow the routine card application processing for the new Component.

17. Travel Card Delinquency/Collection

In accordance with the cardholder agreement, employees are obligated to pay the undisputed portion of the new balance in full each month. Failure to honor just financial obligations in a prompt and timely manner also violates the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch ([5 CFR Part 2635](#)).

Individual card account balances that are delinquent and that are not disputed amounts will be eligible for the DHS travel card salary offset program ([6 CFR 11.15 Applying the Debt Against DHS Payments](#)). 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 travel card bank to repay the delinquent amount, and the opportunity for review with the agency of its decision to collect the amount. The travel card contractor may request collection assistance on accounts 96 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 bank.

Due process must be granted that is substantially equivalent to that under appropriate federal code. The due process requirements that must be implemented prior to salary offset are—

- a. Provide the employee with written notice of the type and amount of the claim, the intention to collect the claim by deduction from the employee's disposable pay, and an explanation of the employee's rights as a debtor;
- b. Provide the employee the opportunity to inspect and copy the records related to the claim;
- c. Provide the employee an opportunity to review the agency decision

- related to the claim; and
- d. Provide the employee an opportunity to make a written agreement with the bank to repay the delinquent amount.

Cardholders with delinquent accounts may also be subject to disciplinary action within the parameters of the [GSA Master Contract](#) and the Component's disciplinary guidelines.

18. Financial Obligations and Liability

- a. *Employee.* Government employees are required to pay their financial obligations on time and in full and to use the travel card only for official travel-related expenses.
- b. *Government.* The government assumes no liability for charges incurred on employee travel cards, nor is the government liable for employee's 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 disputable charge is a charge on a statement that was not authorized by the cardholder, or is a questionable expense. It is the responsibility of the cardholder to contact the card company within 90 days of the date of the statement and dispute the charge. Disputes may be initiated online or directly with the bank.

- a. A merchant refund is a charge for which there is a pending credit.
- b. 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. After the 90 days, the cardholder loses the right to dispute the charge.
- c. Examples of disputed charges include—
 - 1) Incorrect billing by a hotel, airline, etc.
 - 2) Unauthorized charges.
 - 3) Excess charges by a merchant.

- d. Examples of merchant refunds include—
- 1) Unused portion of a transportation ticket.
 - 2) Anticipated credit.

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. Fraud Detection

The card company in conjunction with the bank provides a data mining system to manage the records of travel cardholders. The system detects anomalous transactions and the DHS APC assigns these cases to the CPOPC. The case progresses through the review, respond, and approve process, concluding with submission to the DHS APC within 30 days.

21. Refund 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).

22. State Tax Exemptions

The exemption status and form requirements vary from state-to-state. Specific requirements can be found on the [GSA SmartPay website](#).

23. 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 policies.

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 official 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

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

[5 CFR Part 2635, Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch](#)

[6 CFR 11.15 Applying the Debt Against DHS Payments](#)

[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](#)

[Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998 \(Public Law 105–264\)](#)

References

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

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

[DHS Management Directive 1520.1](#), *Government Travel Charge Card and Travel Advances*

[DHS Travel Policy: Section 7.8 – Individually Billed Travel Card](#)

Federal Aviation Administration Travel Policy

[Federal Travel Regulation \(FTR\)](#)

[GSA Master Contract](#)

[GSA SmartPay: SmartTax for Travel Card](#)

[Joint Travel Regulations \(JTR\)](#)

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

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[NARA General 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](#) (not USCG)

Appendix A. Organizational Elements

The term “Organizational Element,” for the purposes of this policy only, will refer to the following DHS HQ Offices and 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 Centers (FLETC)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Under Secretary for Management (USM)
- Office of Operations Coordination (OPS)
- Office of Information and Analysis (I&A)
- Office of Health Affairs (OHA)
- National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD)
- Science and Technology Directorate (S&T)
- Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO)

Appendix B. Examples of Potential Travel Card Misuse

A. For personal use:

While Ms. Smith was on official travel, she wanted to buy some souvenirs for her children. When she went to pay the cashier for the souvenirs, she realized that she had left her personal credit cards at home, and only had her official travel card with her. Ms. Smith did not want to return home without bringing souvenirs for her children, so she decided that she would buy the items and send in a payment to pay for the souvenirs before receiving the next month's travel card statement. Ms. Smith used her official travel card to purchase the souvenirs. Official travel card policy does not permit use of the travel card for personal use.

B. For other than cardholder use:

Mr. Anderson was on official travel as a key note speaker at a Department approved conference. Mr. Anderson was accompanied by a junior member of his team. The evening prior to returning to his duty station, Mr. Anderson and his junior team member decided to eat dinner at the local steak house. When the check arrived, Mr. Anderson offered to place the entire amount of the bill on his official travel card, as opposed to splitting the bill in two and the junior team member paying for his own meal. Departmental policy requires that the use of the official travel card is for the cardholder only.

C. For use while not on official travel:

Ms. Jones is a new employee with a DHS Component. Ms. Jones' job requires her to travel multiple times a year. When Ms. Jones reported to her office, she was instructed to obtain an official travel card. After completing the required training and obtaining the proper supervisor approvals, Ms. Jones was granted a travel card. When Ms. Jones received her travel card and activated it using her touch-tone phone, she immediately went to her neighborhood ATM to make sure her travel card was activated; Ms. Jones received a cash advance of \$100. Travel card policy permits use of the official travel card only for official travel.

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
CPOPC	Component primary organizational program coordinator
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
EAS	electronic access system
FTR	Federal Travel Regulation
GSA	General Services Administration
IBA	individually billed account
JTR	Joint Travel Regulations
M&IE	meals and incidental expenses
MCC	merchant category code
OCONUS	outside the continental United States

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OIG	Office of Inspector General
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OPC	organizational 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
TMS	Travel Management System
U.S.C.	United States Code

Term	Definition
agency program coordinator	DHS employee designated by the CFO to have overall responsibility for a bankcard program.
approving official	A 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.
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.
Component primary organizational program coordinator (CPOPC)	Individual designated by each Component to have responsibility for the specified Component's bankcard program.
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.

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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.
infrequent traveler	Travelers who are authorized for official travel at least once per 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.
lodging	Includes expenses for overnight sleeping facilities, baths, personal use of the room during the daytime, telephone access fee, and service charges for fans, air conditioners, and heating units furnished in the room when such charges are not included in the room rate. Lodging does not include accommodations on airplanes, trains, buses, or ships, which are considered transportation costs.
merchant category code	A categorization of the type of business the merchant is engaged in and the kinds of goods and services provided.
meals and incidental expenses (M&IE)	Allowable travel expense for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) while on temporary duty (TDY) travel. These expenses are a fixed daily amount based on the maximum per diem rate for the location. M&IE covers the costs of meals and such incidental expenses as lodging taxes and laundry/dry cleaning on international travel (see Miscellaneous Travel Expenses).

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miscellaneous costs	Reimbursable travel expenses are limited to expenses that are necessary and in the interest of the government. Miscellaneous expenses include, but are not limited to, the following— lodging taxes on domestic travel reimbursable lodging costs (continental United States [CONUS] and non-foreign outside the continental United States [OCONUS] only); laundry/dry cleaning for four or more consecutive nights on travel within CONUS; fees for travel management services, travelers checks, ATMs, etc.; foreign travel expenses such as passport/visa fees, costs of passport photos, costs of birth, health, and identity certificates, etc.; baggage charges (storage, transfer, authorized excess, checking); and use of fax machines, copying services, and official telephone calls (when government-provided services are not available).
offline reservation	A reservation made for travel (e.g., lodging, transportation, and rental vehicle) using a system or service other than the Component’s official Web-based travel system. A reservation made through a Travel Management Center is an offline reservation.
organizational program coordinator	DHS employee designated at the organizational element or Component level to oversee a local travel card program within that organization.
outside the continental United States (OCONUS)	Areas outside the contiguous 48 States and the District of Columbia.
per diem	An established allowance for daily payment of lodging and meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) while on temporary duty (TDY) assignment.
split pay	The process of dividing a travel voucher reimbursement between the charge card vendor and traveler. The balance owed to each is sent directly to the applicable party.
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)	Authorized travel for an employee conducting official business outside of his/her Permanent Duty Station (PDS).
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 advance	Prepayment of estimated travel expenses paid to an employee.
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, or federal employee attached to DHS, 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.
travel management system	Electronic booking system for government travel.
travel voucher	A written request (electronic or paper) supported by appropriate documentation and receipts, for reimbursement of expenses incurred while on official travel.

Summary of Changes

- [Added USM and updated responsibilities of the CFO](#) to show CFO authorities, updated [APC responsibilities](#) to include training and monitoring of Component compliance, and updated [CPOPC responsibilities](#) to include training, managing of cardholder accounts including use of official email address, use of split pay and initiation of salary offset collection.
- Changed [CPOPC spending limit approval from \\$19,999 to \\$20,000](#). APC approves any limit above \$20,000.
- [Added consequence](#), exceptions and waiver process for card inactivity.
- Made [cardholder training](#) mandatory every two years.
- All newly issued unrestricted travel cards will be assigned a credit limit of [\\$1 until activation](#) for security.
- Updated the policy on purchase of [business-class travel](#) accommodations.
- Added requirement to [incorporate revised policy](#) within six months.
- Added statement making [third-party payment providers](#) (e.g., PayPal, Square) acceptable.
- [Added a restriction](#) on booking fees from non-TMS vendors.
- Added sections on [fraud detection](#), and [state tax exemptions](#).
- [Added guidance](#) for reporting misuse of the travel card and possible consequences for misuse including delinquency.
- Added [restricted card renewal](#) procedure.
- Added [reinstatement procedure](#).
- [Added a consequence](#) for multiple account suspensions.
- Added a definition for [offline reservation](#).