

**EASTERN OPERATIONS BRANCH
WELCOME PACKET**

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC
ADMINISTRATION

ACCOUNTING OPERATIONS DIVISION
EASTERN OPERATIONS BRANCH
2020 CENTURY BLVD
GERMANTOWN, MD 20874



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Introduction

Welcome to the Eastern Operations Branch. The Eastern Operations Branch is located in Germantown, MD. To see a list of our customers, please reference the Finance Office Consolidation Website which contains the To-Be Customer Model <http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/FO%20Consolidation.html>.

Mission

Our mission is to actively support and provide reliable financial management services to our customers.

Responsibilities

Our branch processes payments for services, supplies, and materials commonly required to support the Department's programs (i.e. lab equipment, non-personal services, travel expenses, utilities, and vessel charters). In providing these services, our staff examines vouchers and invoices, issues bills for receivables, receives and deposits receipts, pays various types of accounts payable documents, and enters other types of accounting transactions. The staff also responds to clients about finance-related concerns and problems.

The Accounting Operations Division is responsible for:

- Making payments for travel and transportation, services, supplies and materials to support NOAA Line Office programs and the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)
- Complying with the Prompt Payment Act, partial payments, interest payments, obligations, accruals, voucher examination, voucher auditing, accounting functions, and maintaining adequate financial internal controls
- Providing cash and debt management service including preparing bills for collection for miscellaneous receivables
- Following up on outstanding receivables and records deposits into the Commercial Business System
- Providing guidance and training for the travel and bankcard modules of the Commercial Business System
- Providing employees with permanent change of station relocation guidance and coordinates with the employee and contractors on the transfer of employee's household goods, temporary storage, temporary quarters, home sale/purchase and tax reporting



NOAA

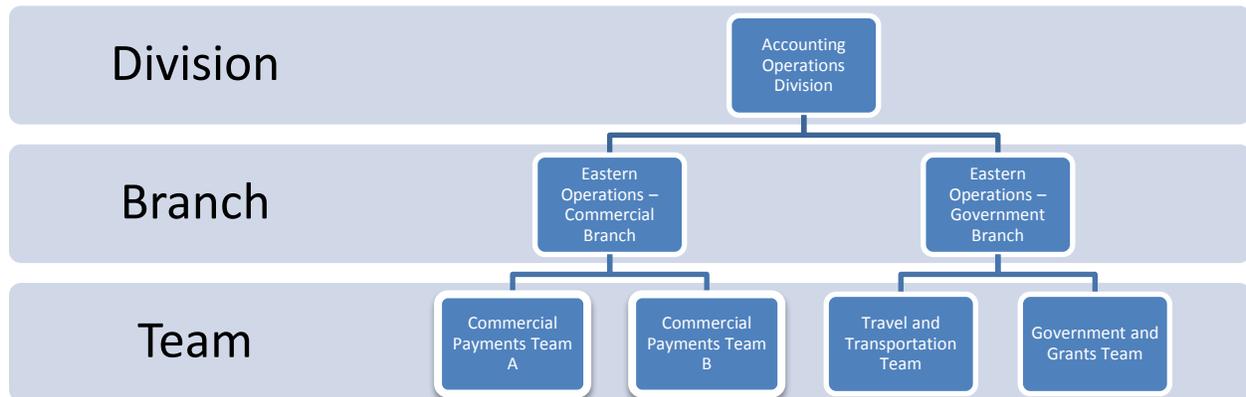
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- Providing advice to NOAA program managers on fiscal matters and generating financial information and analyses on matters of concern to NOAA managers and administrative staff
- Participating on NOAA Finance in new financial program initiatives, requirements studies and special projects relating to financial payments, travel systems and payment program issues
- Utilizing the appropriate modules of the Commercial Business System in the processing of the financial documents



Eastern Operations Organizational Structure

The diagram below depicts the current Eastern Operations Branch Organizational Structure:





General Office Information

Mail

Mail is received in our central mail office on site. It is delivered to our mail room two times daily. The mail is then opened, sorted and distributed. A mail slot has been made for each team in the Eastern Operations Branch. Staff retrieves mail at least two times daily for processing. Mail should be sent by document type and labeled on the address label the attention of the document type. For example, if a Travel Voucher is being sent to EOB, please make it to the attention of Travel Vouchers on the address label.

Please direct all mail to the following address:

Accounting Operations Division
Eastern Operations Branch
20020 Century Blvd
Germantown, MD 20874

Travel Vouchers

The services offered by the Travel and Transportation Team include Travel Manager support, answers to travel related questions, processing travel vouchers, payments for the corporate airfare account, and general support as needed. Beginning in February 2010, the Travel Manager Group Administration, performed by the Field Finance Branches (FFB), was transitioned to the Financial Systems Division (FSD)/Client Services Branch (CSB). Travel Manager Organization codes were updated to reflect the new servicing Finance Branch.

For each ITM maintenance request, the Traveler Information Form must be completed. This form is located at the following link:

<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~cbs/itmtraveler.htm> and must be submitted to the Help Desk at Clientservices@noaa.gov. Please note that each field needs to be completed. Because the form can be several pages long, Client Services requires that the Group Administrator include the actual changes in the body of the email accompanying the form.

IPACS

The IPAC System provides a standardized interagency fund transfer mechanism for Federal Agencies. IPAC facilitates the intra-governmental transfer of funds, with descriptive data from one agency to another. In FY 2008, The Department of Treasury mandated that all federal agencies must stop using suspense accounts to temporarily hold payments and collections until they could be researched and identified. In order to comply with the Treasury mandate, the Finance Office asked each Line/Staff Office



(LO/SO) to provide default accounting to speed the processing of Intra-governmental Payments and Collections (IPAC) and avoid the use of suspense accounts.

For documents without obligations, Line Offices must provide default accounting for no match IPACs. The Eastern Operations Branch will ask the Line Office to provide accounting information within five business days (except at month end). IPACs will be charged to default accounting when a response is not received by the Line Office within five days or at month end, whichever is sooner. The default accounting will only be used when accounting information is not provided within five days of a request or month end, whichever is sooner.

Receipt of obligating documents gives the Eastern Operations Branch the authority to process all IPACs related to that obligation. For obligated documents, all IPACs received before month end close are processed without Line Office Certification. All IPACs received before month end close will be processed.

Contract and Purchase Orders

The Commercial Branch processes payments for NOAA and BIS contracts, purchase orders, telecommunications, utilities, leases, non-federal training, gas card, bankcard, weather observers, work orders, foreign currency, and foreign student stipends. This includes on-time purchase orders, advance payment orders, reoccurring and non-reoccurring orders, accruals, de-obligations, monthly and year end closing, and blanket purchase orders. This branch prepares and distributes Form 1099s to all individuals and businesses receiving miscellaneous income from NOAA for services.

It is very important for invoices to be complete prior to submitting to EOB. Below is a checklist for invoice submission:

- ✓ **Invoice Received Date:** This is the date NOAA received the invoice from the vendor and should be recorded on the invoice and "Invoice Received" should be referenced next to the date.
- ✓ **Authorized Signature (s):** The authorized signature(s) must be written on the invoice or on the back of the OF -347 (Receiving Report). Please print the name above the signature.
- ✓ **Submitting OF-347(Receiving Report):** If submitting an OF-347(Receiving Report), the "date received" block should be the date the good/services were received. The "signature" block should be signed by an authorized party and the "date" should be the date the receiving was signed.
- ✓ **Accounting Breakdown:** The Accounting Breakdown for the invoice must be recorded on the invoice or be included with supporting documentation.



Eastern Operations Branch Contact Information

Specific Process Area Points of Contacts

Please go to the Finance Office Consolidation webpage (<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/FO%20Consolidation.html>) and select the **Eastern Operations Branch Contact Information** hyperlink. A PDF file will be displayed showing the most up to date contacts for the Eastern Operations Branch.

Specific Points of Contact for New Customers

In addition to the Specific Process Area Contacts, the following three supervisors have been identified as points of contact for new customers:

Process Area	Contact Name	Phone Number
Contracts/Purchase Orders/Utilities/Leases, Foreign Payments, Weather Observers, Work Orders	Vicki Bradford	301-444-2789
Travel & Transportation	Linda Mervicker	301-444-2781
Government & Grants	Diana.Carpenter	301-444-2778

Eastern Operations Branch Address

Accounting Operations Division
 Eastern Operations Branch
 20020 Century Blvd
 Germantown, MD 20874

Additional Contact Methods for the Eastern Operations Branch

The Eastern Operations Branch has set up an email address to answer any requests or inquires customers may have. All questions and requests for status should be directed to EasternOperations@noaa.gov



Frequently Asked Questions

Will there be an increase in staff to handle customer requests?

The Eastern Operations Branch will be increasing staffing levels to handle the increased workload. The Eastern Operations Branch is in the process of recruiting the staff needed to handle the increased workload.

Performance Standards

The Eastern Operations Branch has the following performance standards in place:

Travel Voucher	3 Business Days of receipt if no problems are found
Invoice Processing	Payments which are subject to the Prompt Pay Act (http://www.fms.treas.gov/prompt/index.html) will be processed according to this act For payments not subject to the Prompt Pay Act, the performance standard is 3 Business Days of receipt of proper invoice
Obligations	3 Business Days of receipt

How should customers send documents?

Most of our documents are received via mail which is the preferred method; however, we do accept documents which are faxed and scanned when necessary. If you do scan or fax the documents, the original does **not** need to be sent to EOB. Mail should be sent by document type and labeled on the address label the attention of the document type. For example, if a Travel Voucher is being sent to EOB, please make it to the attention of Travel Vouchers on the address label.

Please send all documents to the following address:

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Eastern Operations Branch
20020 Century Blvd
Germantown, MD 20874

What is the process to make Integrated Travel Manager (ITM) Group Administration updates?

For each ITM maintenance request, the Traveler Information Form must be completed. This form is located at the following link:

<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~cbs/itmtraveler.htm> and must be submitted to the Help Desk at Clientservices@noaa.gov. Please note that each field needs to be completed. Because the form can be several pages long, Client Services requires that the Group Administrator include the actual changes in the body of the email accompanying the form.



Will there be Eastern Operations Branch staff to assist with travel questions?

At this time we have seven full-time staff members assigned to travel and can answer travel related questions. The Travel and Transportation Team is listed in the Eastern Operations Branch Travel and Transportation Team Contact Information section of this document.

How can I access Frequently Asked Questions about TM 9.0?

You may access the website at <http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~cbs/index.html>. Select 'Integrated Travel Manager Information'.

Can the Eastern Operations Branch fix minor errors on travel vouchers and notify us of the correction?

Yes, we reset Travel Vouchers to be reduced only. Once the voucher is audited and a minor change is needed, we will contact Client Services have them reset to reduce the vouchers, make the correction in Travel Manager, stamp the voucher 'CFS Adjustment' and email the preparer of the change. Please let us know if this is sufficient notification.

How can I have access to financial information in the Commerce Business System (CBS)?

We encourage you and your staff to have access to financial information though the CBS Data Warehouse. In order to have access, users will need to complete the CBS User Access Form at: <http://www.coporateservices.noaa.gov/~cbs/forms.htm>

In the User Role section at the bottom of the form, the user needs to select the following from the drop-down list: **Discoverer FMC Business Area (General Use)**

The completed form should be submitted to the Help Desk at Clientservices@noaa.gov and they will set up the user to receive financial information in the CBS. In addition, the Client Services Branch offers training on Discoverer. To register for this training, please go to <https://doc.learn.com/noaa>. If you need assistance with the registration process, please send an email to cbs.trainingservices@noaa.gov.

Is there any other way we can contact the Eastern Operations Branch?

The Eastern Operations Branch has set up an email address to answer any requests or inquires customers may have. All questions and requests for status should be directed to EasternOperations@noaa.gov