

PART 301-51-PAYING TRAVEL EXPENSES

Subpart A-General

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301-51.1(a) What is the preferred method to procure common carrier transportation?

The preferred method to procure common carrier transportation is a centrally-billed account (CBA) at a Travel Management Center (TMC). In emergency situations when the J.P. Morgan Chase (JPMC) Government travel card is used to procure common carrier transportation, you must follow the requirements of *Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), 301-10.106(a) – (c)*. In order to receive full reimbursement, employees are required to annotate the complete account number on the passenger receipt when using the individual Government JPMC travel card to purchase e-tickets.

301-51.2(a) What classes of employees are exempt from the mandatory use of the JPMC Government travel card?

In addition to the classes of employees exempted in the FTR, and in the Department of Commerce (DOC) Travel Handbook from the mandatory use of The JPMC travel charge card, NOAA exempts employees who have a disability that would either limit or prevent them from using a Government travel card.

Employees with a disability will submit a memoranda of request for exemption from the mandatory use of the Government travel card:

- Must be substantiated in writing by a competent medical authority;
- Must be signed by the Assistant Administrator, Line Office or Director, Corporate Office; and
- Will be reviewed for approval on a case-by-case basis by the Director, Finance Office/Comptroller.

301-51.3(a) Who has the authority to request all other exemptions from the mandatory use of the JPMC Government travel card?

Memoranda of request for all other exemptions from the mandatory use of the JPMC Government travel card must be signed by the Line Office Chief Financial Officer (CFO)/Management and Budget Chief, or Corporate Office Director, and be submitted thru the Director, Finance Office/Comptroller, to the NOAA CFO. The NOAA CFO will forward requests to the DOC Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration for approval. DOC must report all exemptions to General Services Administration (GSA).

301-51.5 How may I pay for official travel expenses if I receive an exemption from the use of the JPMC Government travel card?

When you receive an exemption from the use of the JPMC Government travel card, you are still expected to procure common carrier transportation on the CBA within a TMC, and use one of the following methods to pay all other official travel expenses:

(a) Personal funds (cash or personal charge card) will be used to pay for official travel expenses for:

- Employees who travel five times or less a year and elect to not use the JPMC Government travel card;
- Employees whose travel cards have been canceled because of delinquency or use for non-official purposes; or
- Intermittent, seasonal, or temporary employees who have limited appointments.

NOTE: Travel advances will not be authorized for employees mentioned in 301-51.5(a).

(b) Travel advances are authorized to pay for official travel expenses for:

- Invitational traveler who possess a bank account (bank account can be either a U.S. bank account or foreign bank account); or
- Employees with disabilities who were granted an exemption. A travel advance form and memoranda of request should be faxed to your servicing finance office. In addition, the original travel advance form should be mailed to the servicing finance office for proper documentation; or

NOTE: The total advance amount is based on Block 6 of the Travel Manager Travel Authorization Default form and is limited to 80% of the estimated cash expenses. In addition, ATM withdrawals taken from the JPMC Government travel card can never exceed 80% of the estimated cash expenses.

(c) Convenience checks are advances which can be used to pay for official travel expenses for:

- Invitational travelers who do not possess a bank account.

301-51.8 How does the NOAA office obtain travel advances?

The NOAA office can obtain travel advances one of the following ways:

(a) **Travel Advance:** The NOAA office will submit a travel advance form and a travel authorization to the servicing finance office. The travel advance will be deposited directly to the traveler's bank account within 2 – 3 days (notify your servicing finance office for direct deposit set-up); or

(b) **Convenience Check:** Effective April 10, 2009, the DOC Office of Financial Management transferred to the DOC Office of Acquisition Management the management and oversight responsibility for Imprest Fund Replacement Convenience Checking Accounts. As a result, effective June 15, 2009, Agency Program Coordinators (APCs), are responsible for convenience check issuances and oversight, including Imprest Fund Replacement Convenience Checking Accounts. Please see the Commerce Acquisition Manual (CAM), Section 4, Convenience Checks for more information:

(<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/conveniencechecks.pdf>)

301-51.9 Who do I contact to apply for a JPMC Government travel card?

- (a) All Line and Corporate Offices, other than NMFS and NWS, will call (301) 444-2109, fax (301) 413-3066;
- (b) NMFS employees will call (301) 713-1364 x194, fax (301) 713-2258; and
- (c) NWS employees will call (301) 713-0420 x123, fax (301) 608-0850.

301-51.10 TRAVEL CARD MONITOR GUIDE

Travel Card Monitors Director's of each Financial Management Centers_(FMC) or their designee must:

(1) Complete on-line cardholder training so that there is a basic understanding of the travel card program and submit training certificates to their servicing AOPC. This on-line training provides information on traveling for the Government and reviews how to use the travel card. GSA's on-line travel training course:

<http://fss.gsa.gov/webtraining/trainingdocs/traveltraining/index.cfm>

(2) Review and have knowledge of the following:

- Federal Travel Regulation Chapter 301-51:
http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentType=GSA_OVERVIEW&contentId=14161
- NOAA Travel Regulation, Chapter 301-51:
<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/TR.301-51.pdf>
- Department Administrative Order (DAO) 202-751
<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/JPMC.misconduct.pdf>
- Travel Card Do's and Don'ts:
<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/JPMC.do-dont.pdf>
- NOAA's JPMC travel card website for rules and regulations of the JPMC travel card:
<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/JPMC.html>

(3) Call your servicing AOPC if further interpretation of reports and/or further guidance is needed:

- All Line and Corporate Offices, other than NMFS and NWS, will call (301) 444-2136, 20020 Century Blvd, Suite 1C, Germantown, MD 20874
Fax (301) 413-3066
- NMFS employees will call (301) 713-1364 x194
Office of Management and Budget
1315 East West Highway, Room 1441 Silver Spring, MD 20910
Fax (301) 713-2258
- NWS employees will call (301) 713-0420 x104
1325 East West Highway, Room 18407 Silver Spring, MD 20910
Fax (301) 608-0850

(4) Refer to “PaymentNet Access Instructions” when accessing the JPMC’s PaymentNet system to view cardholder statements and download reports:

<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/JPMC.travelcardmonitorplacemat.doc>

(5) Ensure that all employees in your FMC who perform five or more official trips a year are issued the card, unless an exemption has been granted.

(6) Contact cardholders to ensure that they have an up-to-date training certificate on file. Travel cardholders are required to complete the on-line training course every 3 years:

<http://fss.gsa.gov/webtraining/trainingdocs/traveltraining/index.cfm>

(7) Assist cardholders whose travel vouchers have not been authorized by approving officials in a timely fashion so that cardholders can make timely payments to JPMC. Travel vouchers must be submitted to the servicing finance office for payment within 5 working days after completion of travel, or every 30 days if in a continual travel status.

(8) Advise employees to submit requests for reinstatement of canceled accounts to the Line Office Chief Financial Officer (CFO)/Management and Budget Chief, or Corporate Office Director, which will be submitted to JPMC for approval:

<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/JPMC.Reinstatement.doc>

Note: Cards are rarely reinstated when canceled by JPMC.

(9) Prepare and submit to the servicing AOPC quarterly reports of disciplinary actions taken for cardholders whose accounts are delinquent or have been misused. The AOPC will review the travel card monitor’s reports of disciplinary actions to ensure appropriate disciplinary actions were taken consistently for all NOAA FMCs. If appropriate disciplinary action is not taken, the reports will be forwarded to the Line Office CFO/Management and Budget Chief, or Corporate Office Director for review. Negative reports are required.

Quarterly reports will be submitted in the following format:

Travel Card Monitor/FMC Information: Travel Card Monitor name, FMC Office Title, FMC Code, and Phone Number.

Traveler Information: Traveler’s Name, Type of Misuse, and Disciplinary Action Taken.

Quarterly reports are due by COB January 15, April 15, July 15, and October 15 of each year and will be submitted to the appropriate AOPC. Reports must be retained for a one-year period before they are destroyed.

(10) Review each of the following monthly reports by scheduling the reports to run on the 5th of each month through JPMC's PaymentNet system. Refer to the "Travel Card Monitoring Guide" when downloading JPMC reports:

<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/JPMC.TRAVEL%20CARD%20MONITORING%20GUIDE.pdf>

Each month you will review the listed JP Morgan Chase Reports to monitor your travel card accounts under your Hierarchy and to check for Misuse and Delinquency. Reports are best viewed in Excel, but can be viewed in PDF as well. Some reports will indicate the format to use. A report without data indicates that there is no activity to review for that month.

Cardholder Listing by Hierarchy – This report will show the travel card accounts that are listed under your hierarchy. This report is used to make sure the correct travel card accounts are listed under your hierarchy and it will also show you the status of the travel card account. This report can also be used to verify account closures.

Accounts Renewing Within Three Months – This report identifies accounts that will expire within three months of the report date. This report is used to check for accounts that should be canceled.

Delinquencies with Current Balance – This report will show delinquent accounts that are 30 days past due, 60 days past due, 90 days past due, etc. The servicing AOPC in NTR 301-51.9 is responsible for notifying the employee, their supervisor, the travel card monitor, and the Line Office CFO of a delinquency when the cardholder's account is 61 or more days past due. Travel card monitors must ensure that the employee's supervisor takes appropriate administrative disciplinary action when travel card accounts become delinquent, i.e., the account is past due 60 days or more.

Declines – This report will show charges that have been declined and will indicate the reason for the decline. This report is useful to monitor potential travel card misuse and can also be an indicator of possible fraud on an account that may be unknown to the cardholder.

Cash Advance Detail by Hierarchy – This report shows cash advance charges from the cardholders. This report is used to monitor potential misuse of the travel card by a cardholder who may be making cash withdrawals while not on official government travel.

Unusual Activity Analysis – This report will show unusual transaction activity. (No data may be found when you run this report, because there is not any unusual transaction activity to report for that month) This report is used to determine if a transaction was misuse of the travel card.

Transaction Detail – This report will show you all purchase transactions incurred within the month and should be used to monitor misuse. Travel card monitors us ensure that employees are not misusing their travel card. Misuse is defined as using the travel card for personal use, e.g., using the travel card while not on official business and/or using the travel card to purchase personal items. Notify the employee’s supervisor of any questionable or inappropriate charges. At the discretion of the travel card monitor or the supervisor, the card may be revoked for misuse. See “Travel Card Misconduct and Corrective Measures at the following web-site:

<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/JPMC.misconduct.pdf>