



October 11, 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR: All NOAA/BIS/EDA Travelers

FROM: Kim A. Darling *Kim A. Darling*
Director, Finance Office/Comptroller

SUBJECT: Travel Advisory 17-1
J.P. Morgan Chase (JPMC) Government Travel Cards

REFERENCE: NOAA Travel Card Handbook

Background on the Government Travel Card

Under the terms of the government charge card contracts, Federal agencies receive rebates from charge card vendors based on the dollar volume and timeliness of payments for both the government travel card as well as the centrally billed account (CBA). The higher the dollar volume of transactions, and the quicker the payments, the greater the rebates earned. Therefore, when travel card accounts are delinquent - outstanding for more than 60 days - agency rebates are reduced. According to General Services Administration (GSA), Federal agencies received approximately \$282 million in rebates in FY 2015 for purchases made using all platforms of the government charge card, including travel cards. Delinquencies, however, prevent the government from earning the maximum potential rebates.

In an effort to follow the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), and to maximize NOAA's rebates,

- 1) Employees who travel for the Federal Government are required to obtain and use the J.P. Morgan Chase (JPMC) government travel card whenever and wherever possible;
- 2) Cardholders are required to pay their government travel card bill on time; and
- 3) Cardholders are required to use the government card for official travel only.

To ensure that NOAA rebates are not reduced and that they are instead maximized to their fullest potential, this advisory reminds cardholders of their roles and responsibilities for their card so that it is not canceled due to misuse and/or delinquency. All cardholders were required to take the GSA travel card training upon submission of their travel card application. Cardholders are also required to recertify their travel card training every three years. In addition, when a cardholder uses their card, they are bound by the JPMC Cardholder Agreement:

<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/docs/JPMC.IB%20Agreement.pdf>. The purpose of the training and the agreement is to remind cardholders that the government travel card will

not be used for personal purchases and payment is due no later than 25 calendar days from the statement date, regardless of when reimbursement is received.

Account Login

All current cardholders were sent their JPMC login information for PaymentNet when they applied for the card so that they can perform the following functions on-line:

- View their account transactions;
- Download their statement(s);
- Dispute charges; and
- Pay their bill.

If you have forgotten or misplaced your login information, please contact your servicing Agency Program Coordinator (APC) listed at the end of this travel advisory.

Address Change

It is the cardholder's responsibility to notify JPMC as they would other creditors when they have an address change. Cardholders who need to update their address can call JPMC at (888) 297-0781. When addresses are not kept current, cardholders will likely not receive paper statements and/or their new card when it expires. As a reminder, cardholders can always access their statement on-line via PaymentNet: <https://gov1.paymentnet.com/Login.aspx>

Security of the Card

You must exercise the same care and responsibility for the security of the card and account number as you would with a personal charge card. In order to keep your card secure and possibly prevent fraud, you must not allow a secretary, administrative or executive officer, or supervisor, to store the card.

Proper Use of the Card

Use of your card is limited to the official travel expenses authorized on your travel authorization (TA) and may include expenses such as meals, lodging, rental car, gas for rental car when authorized, and local transportation services when free shuttle service is not available at the temporary duty site (TDY) site. While most expenses can be charged to the travel card, cardholders who travel to remote areas where the card is not accepted may withdraw up to 80% of the estimated cash expenses on their TA from an automated teller machine (ATM). Cash withdrawals should never be made more than three days prior to travel and must never be made prior to obtaining an approved TA. Common carrier transportation (airfare, train, etc.) is automatically charged to the centrally-billed account (CBA) managed by SATO.

Improper Use of the Card

The Department has a 'Zero Tolerance Policy' on misuse. The underlying objective of the 'Zero Tolerance Policy' is to eliminate misuse and abuse in the travel card program so that it does not become necessary to impose disciplinary action on employees. In order to comply with the 'Zero Tolerance Policy', NOAA has appointed a travel card monitor (TCM) at each financial management center (FMC). The TCM for each FMC can be found at http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/documents/JPMC.TravelCardMonitorListing_014.xlsx. The TCM reviews monthly travel card charges to ensure that cards are being used for official travel expenses and not for personal use.

TCM's primary responsibility is to notify cardholders' supervisors when there is suspected misuse. Misuse of government travel cards is subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Department Administrative Order (DAO) 202-751, Discipline http://www.osec.doc.gov/opog/dmp/daos/dao202_751.html. Upon confirmation of misuse, the cardholder's supervisor is responsible for initiating the appropriate disciplinary action in coordination with their servicing Workforce Management Office (WFMO). Travel cards may be canceled by the servicing APC in cases of confirmed misuse and may be reported to the Office of Inspector General for further action. Disciplinary action for confirmed misuse ranges as follows per [DAO 202-751, Discipline](#):

- First offense - five day suspension to removal
- Second offense - 30-day suspension to removal
- Third offense - Removal

Misuse can include, but is not limited to:

- Cash withdrawals from an ATM during non-travel periods;
- Cash withdrawals more than three days prior to official travel;
- Expenses related to leave and/or expenses purely personal in nature while on official TDY travel;
- Using the card in and around an employee's official duty station (ODS);
- Personal and family member use of the card; and
- Non-payment of undisputed charges in a timely manner (delinquency).

Voucher Submission

Employees are reminded that they are required to submit their travel voucher(s) within five (5) business days of completing a regular TDY travel and every thirty (30) days when in an extended TDY or relocation status. Extended TDY is defined as travel beyond thirty (30) days. Employees in a relocation status are required to submit vouchers after each phase of their relocation and every (30) days when in a temporary quarters status. (See Federal Travel Regulation, Chapter 301-52.7, <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/ext/public/site/FTR/file/Chapter301p052.html/category/21868/#wp1091402>). Approving officials are required to promptly review and approve travel vouchers so that they are forwarded timely to the Accounting Operations Division, NOAA Finance Office for payment. Prompt preparation, approval, and submission of travel vouchers is key to ensuring that reimbursement will be made in time to allow travelers to pay their JPMC travel card account so it does not become delinquent.

Delinquencies

Payment is due upon receipt of the JPMC statement, and must be received by JPMC no later than 25 calendar days from the statement date. When an account is 61 days or more delinquent, it is suspended by JPMC and will remain suspended until the past due amount is paid in full.

Payment, in full, is due and payable to JPMC regardless if you have not been reimbursed.

Suspended accounts (accounts that are 61 days or more past due) are considered in direct violation of standards of conduct per [DAO 202-751, Discipline](#). Supervisors, along with WFMO, may take appropriate disciplinary action(s) that can range from written reprimand or suspension to job removal.

The cardholder's APC is required to monitor all monthly suspension and cancellation reports, and to notify the employee, employee's supervisor, employee's TCM, and servicing Chief Financial Officer (CFO) whenever an account is 61 days or more delinquent.

Cardholders who receive a delinquency notice from their APC must respond within three business days 1) the reason for their delinquency; and 2) the date their account will be paid. Please keep in mind that payment must be made immediately. Cardholders who do not respond to the notification and/or pay the delinquent amount may have their card canceled. Cardholders who refuse to pay their travel card bill when their account has been canceled for non-payment may be subject to garnishment of wages. Employees who have had their travel card canceled will be required to travel on personal funds for all future official travel. The guidance for disciplinary action for delinquency ranges as follows per [DAO 202-751, Discipline](#):

- Reprimand to removal;
- Five day suspension to removal; or
- 30-day suspension to removal.

Invalid Excuses for Delinquency

The following are examples of invalid delinquency excuses:

Address change;

“I haven't been reimbursed by NOAA yet”;

“I haven't filed a travel voucher yet”;

“I forgot”;

“I disagree with the charges” (Employees can file dispute on-line via PaymentNet:

<https://gov1.paymentnet.com/Login.aspx>);

“I never received a statement from JPMC”; and

“JPMC never cashed my check”.

Cancellation/Reinstatement

Travel card accounts will be canceled when:

- There is confirmed misuse;
- The account is 121 days delinquent;
- The account has two or more non-sufficient/bad checks within a 12 month period; and/or
- The account has three or more suspensions within a 12-month period.

Once an account is canceled, employees are expected to use personal funds for all future official travel. As a rule, canceled accounts will not be reinstated. Employees may request reinstatement using the following guidelines at

<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/JPMC.Reinstatement.doc>. JPMC reviews requests for reinstatement and makes the decision based on their financial risk.

Travel Card Payment Methods

Employees can pay their travel card account on-line via PaymentNet

<https://gov1.paymentnet.com/Login.aspx> or by phone (1-866-725-1183). Both services are free of charge. Paying by check is also an acceptable payment method.

For more information, please visit the NOAA Travel Office website at

<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/JPMC.html> and the *NOAA Travel Card Handbook* at

http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/documents/JPMC.NOAATravelCardHandbook.7.2016_004.doc. If you have any questions regarding this travel advisory, please contact your servicing APC:

- NWS employees contact Leslie.Rivas@noaa.gov (301) 427-6911;
- NMFS employees contact Jeanette.Rodriguez@noaa.gov (301) 427-8735;
- All other line office employees contact Rachael.S.Wivell@noaa.gov (301) 444-2136.