

## GOVERNMENT TRAVEL CHARGE CARD INFORMATION

The following is a refresher for NRCS employees regarding the official government issued travel charge card.

- a. The Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-264) mandates use of the Government Travel Charge card for employees on official government travel. Employees are required to use the travel card for ONLY official expenses and travel related expenses away from the official duty station for which a travel voucher will be filed.
- b. The General Services Administration (GSA) has awarded a contract to issue charge cards to designated NRCS employees. Such cards are issued for official government travel expenses and are to reduce travel advances.
- c. Standard travel requirements, such as the use of contract city-pair airlines, use of restricted airline tickets, GSA car rental contracts, and meeting attendance approval, must be fully observed.
- d. NRCS employees with a travel card can obtain travel advances from authorized ATMs. Advances may be necessary to *cover incidental travel expenses such as ground transportation, parking, laundry fees, official telephone calls, tips, and light meals*. Advances should not exceed \$50 per day and should be obtained at the time of official travel.
- e. Use of the charge card does not relieve the employee of prudent travel practices and observance of rules and regulations governing official travel as set forth in the FTR, the “*USDA Zero Tolerance Policy*,” and agency specific supplements.
- f. Charges made to the travel charge card account will be billed each month directly to the individual employee (or paid directly to U.S. Bank once split disbursement is re-implemented). All charges billed directly to the individual employee are due in-full upon receipt. Partial payments are not permitted. If payment is not received before the next billing statement date then the individual’s charge card account is 30-days past due.
- g. An employee must utilize GovTrip for all official travel. Employees are to submit a travel voucher in GovTrip, together with any required receipts, to their approving official, within 5 working days after completion of a trip. Those in a continuous travel status must submit a voucher, at a minimum, every two weeks.
- h. Approving officials are to review vouchers to ensure accuracy and compliance with regulations and submit within 3 working days after receipt. Employees will be reimbursed for travel and transportation expenses authorized and allowable under the Federal Travel Regulation and the agency’s specific policies.
- i. Cardholders are to *immediately* report a lost or stolen travel card to: 1) the card-issuing bank; 2) their Program Coordinator; and 3) their supervisor.
- j. Employees will be held accountable for their management of the government travel charge card account. Any misuse or abuse may subject the employee to disciplinary action. Employees should review National Instruction/Title 360-Personnel, Part 300 – Misuse of the Travel Charge Card found at the following site <http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewerFS.aspx?hid=21509>.

## Employee “Do’s and Don’ts” for Travel Card

- DO become familiar with the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) and “USDA’s Zero Tolerance Policy” at <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/doc/DR2300-001.pdf>.
  - DO use your government travel charge card to pay for official travel expenses.
  - DO obtain travel advances for official travel through an ATM as authorized by your agency.  
Advances should not exceed \$50 per day and should be obtained at the time of official travel.
  - DO track your expenses while on travel so you have accurate information for filing your travel claim.
  - DO keep your receipts for all transactions made on your travel charge card.
  - DO file your travel claim within 5 working days after you complete your trip  
(or every two weeks if you are on continuous travel).
  - DO submit travel card payment in full for each monthly statement received.
  - DO be aware that misuse of the travel charge card could result in disciplinary actions.
  - DO follow the card-issuing bank’s dispute process for charges which are incorrect.
  - DO contact the card-issuing bank’s customer service number if you have questions about your monthly bill.
  - DO return your travel charge card to your Program Coordinator if you leave your agency.
  - DO immediately report a lost or stolen card to your Program Coordinator, the card-issuing bank and your supervisor.
  - DO destroy any lost or stolen cards that are recovered.
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- DON’T use your travel charge card for personal use such as clothing, toiletries, or gifts while on travel status.
- DON’T use your travel charge card to pay for alcoholic beverages (meals).
- DON’T use your travel charge card to pay for other individual’s meals and then accept cash.  
This would be similar to obtaining a cash advance.
- DON’T procure meals before or after travel at restaurants within your official duty station  
(airports on day of travel is not acceptable).
- DON’T obtain travel advances through the ATM which exceed your expected out of pocket expenditures for a trip.
- DON’T obtain travel advances through the ATM unless you are on travel or will be on travel shortly.
- DON’T obtain travel advances and then use your card for meals.
- DON’T obtain travel advances through the ATM after you have returned from travel.
- DON’T allow your monthly bill to become overdue as this could result in suspension or cancellation of your card.
- DON’T wait for receipt of your monthly billing statement to file your travel claim.
- DON’T forget that the card is issued in your name and liability for payment is your personal responsibility.
- DON’T write your personal identification number (PIN) on your card or carry your PIN in your wallet.