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## INFORMATION

USAID/General Notice  
M/FM  
03/01/2000

Subject: Mandatory Travel Card Usage

This notice is a general response to questions from employees on the Policy Reminder - Mandatory Use of Travel Cards.

### **Why do I have to use the Government-Sponsored Travel Card?**

The Law says if you are a Government employee, then you will use the Travel Card for expenses incurred for Official Travel, when at all practicable.

Public Law (PL)105-264, dated Oct 19, 1998 dictated the mandatory use of the Government-Sponsored Travel Card for Official Government Travel by employees.

GSA, the Executive Agent for the Federal Travel Regulations, published the Final Implementing Rule, 41 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 301-51 in the Federal Register of Jan 19, 2000 on page 3054.

USAID Policy is: "All USAID personnel traveling two or more times per year are required to obtain and utilize the Agency's Government-Sponsored Travel Card. Travelers must use their Government-Sponsored Travel Cards to pay for lodging, meals (where the card is accepted), rental vehicles, excess baggage, and other related travel expenses." (ADS 577.5.1) and later updated to "All direct hire and PSCs must have the Government-issued travel charge Card (VISA)" (Interim Policy #19)

### **When did it go into effect?**

The Final Rule, 41 CFR 301-51, is effective on February 29, 2000. Agency implementation of the PL was accomplished in November 1998 with the publication of ADS 577 and updated the policy with Interim Policy 19, March 1999.

### **Why can't I use my personal credit card?**

The law makes no provision for using personal credit cards. It specifies that the Government-Sponsored Travel Card will be used. The reason is that the Government receives a rebate on travel expenses charged to the Card.

### **Can I use the card for other than Official Business purposes?**

The card is to be used for Official Travel expenses only; it is not for personal use. Using it for non-official purposes may result in disciplinary actions.

### **I can't use the card because the Paying Office is too slow in reimbursing me.**

If you are having problems getting timely payments from the Paying Offices, contact them directly. The same Public Law, PL 105-264, requires Paying Offices to pay interest to you for late payments. The Paying Office has 7 calendar days to notify you if there is an error that requires additional documentation or that there is something wrong with the voucher that would preclude them from making payment within 30 calendar days from the date of receipt of a complete voucher. They must pay you interest when the interest amount is over \$1. It is required by law and is not an option for the Paying Office.

Remember, mail isn't the only way to get supporting documentation to the paying office. Use the various technological alternatives available to reduce transit times, e.g., FAX and scanned images attached to e-mails.

The Paying Office is not required to wait 30 days to make payment, but must make payment within the 30-day window.

If you are on extended TDY you can get interim payments every 30 days in order to make payments against Travel Card billings.

### **Where do I get an application for the Government Travel Card?**

Applications for the Travel Card can be obtained from the Travel Card Coordinator {Richard Levine, M/MPI, (202) 712-3380}. Once completed, the application should be returned to the Travel Card Coordinator. It may be Faxed to reduce processing time (202) 216-3380.

### **What can I do to get timely billings?**

When mail delay might cause late payments, you may request the vendor provide FAX billings in lieu of receiving your billing by mail. In the near future billing information will be available at any time through the internet.

### **Who is responsible for paying the bill?**

The individual employee is responsible for paying their own bills on time as determined by the contract specifications. Based on the contract, you have 30 days from the billing date, plus a grace period of 15 days before a payment is late and becomes delinquent. That's why it is imperative that you make arrangements with the vendor to get your statements in a timely manner, if mail will be too slow.

See ADS 577.5.2 for your responsibility as related to payment and liability. This is a contract, and the vendor is required to comply with contractual specifications. However, you should know your responsibilities and alternatives for problem resolution when using the Travel Card. This also includes reading the agreement conditions that you signed in accepting the card. Both the ADS and the agreement provide contacts with the vendor to use for problem resolution.

### **What can the Vendor do if my payment becomes delinquent?**

After you payment becomes delinquent, the Vendor can initiate Suspension and/or Cancellation, if it is appropriate. Due process for Suspension and Cancellation against the Credit Card Holder is shown in ADS 577.2c. It defines the conditions and timeframes for the various contractor actions authorized against the Cardholder for delinquent payments, as well as the Travel Card Coordinator's role in the process. They are too detailed to be included in this document. If you have concerns, read the specifics since they mirror the contractual conditions. If you still have questions, please contact the Travel Card Coordinator, Richard Levine, M/FM/PPC, (202) 712-5996

If you have a question that was not answered in this notice and/or it pertained to obtaining an exemption, please contact the Travel Card Coordinator, Richard Levine, M/FM/PPC, (202) 712-5996.

Point of Contact: Any general questions concerning this Notice may be directed to Joe Keady, M/FM/PPC, (202) 712-5744.

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