

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 1-704

August 4, 2017

Administration and Management

Administrative Controls, NWSPD 1-7

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE TRAVEL CARD PROGRAM

NOTICE: This publication is available at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/>.

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Type of Issuance: Routine

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This instruction supersedes the NWSI 1-704, “*Travel Card Program*” Dated November 10, 2014. Changes were made to reflect the NWS Headquarters reorganization effective April 1, 2015. No content changes were made to this document.

Signed

7/21/17

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Chief Financial Officer/Chief
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Date

National Weather Service Travel and Purchase Card Program

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this procedure is to give guidance and information regarding the NWS Travel Card Program. The guidance listed in this procedure is in accordance with all GSA, DOC and NOAA regulations.

2. Government Travel Card Programs

The Contractor-Issued Government Travel Card Program was developed as an aid to employees who are frequent travelers (those who travel 5 or more times a year). The Government supplies the credit card to be used for official travel only. This credit card enables employees to obtain cash advances, pay for hotels, meals, taxis, etc. Employees are personally responsible for the charges made on the card and are also responsible for paying JP Morgan Chase in a timely manner (within 25 days upon receipt of statement). Employees are to file vouchers immediately upon their return from travel (within 5 workdays) so that reimbursement is received in time to pay the JP Morgan Chase bill when it arrives.

The National Weather Service (NWS) follows all NOAA regulations and policies for the DOC/NOAA Travel Card Program.

NOAA has established both an unrestricted and a restricted monthly card limit. Unrestricted credit card limits are set at \$5000 monthly. Restricted credit card limits are set at \$2500 monthly. Both credit cards have an ATM limit of (20%) per monthly cycle for the NWS. The monthly credit limit can be raised up to \$10,000 depending upon the need of the cardholder and at the request of the supervisor or Office/Regional focal point. Additional authorization from supervisor or Office/Regional FMC Coordinators are required for limits that must exceed the maximum \$5,000 for unrestricted limits or \$2500 for restricted limits with justification for consideration. ATM cash advance limits cannot exceed 20%. Limit increases must be returned to the standard limit after travel, by email notification, unless for special circumstances a permanent higher limit has been approved.

The NWS reviews inactive accounts, closes accounts and may further reduce monthly limits as needed. The NWS also reviews monthly activity reports to detect misuse and delinquencies in payments.

NWS requires all cardholders and supervisors to complete the GSA SmartPay online travel card training, every three years. Hard copies of training completion certificates are to be maintained at the office level. Upon request, reports of training completion and hard copy certificates are made available for review.

2.1 Approving Agency/Organization Program Coordinator

NWS has its own Approving Agency/Organization Program Coordinator (A/OPC). All

applications, maintenance changes, corrections, deletions and closures must be processed through the NWS A/OPC. The NWS A/OPC currently is Leslie Rivas, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, (CFO). Applications for the JP Morgan Chase travel cards are to be completed online at

http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/TF.Common_Travel_Forms.html.

Applicants traveling within 2 weeks of scheduled TDY date will need to contact the A/OPC to complete a RUSH application. Upon completing a RUSH application, applications should be faxed to 301-608-0850, to the attention of Leslie Rivas.

Maintenance changes are to be emailed to Leslie.Rivas@noaa.gov.

2.1.1 Application Forms

JP Morgan Chase will not accept any applications without the NWS A/OPC's signature. The NOAA Travel Office will not process any applications; however they may assist in maintenance changes for NWS employees, under emergency circumstances if the A/OPC and alternate A/OPC cannot be reached.

2.1.2 Website

More information on the travel card can be found on the CFO Web site at: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/cfo/tpc/travel_card_program.htm. Forms mentioned in this Directive can be found at this Web site and are in PDF format.

2.1.3 FMC Travel Card Monitors

FMC Travel Card Monitors for each NWS Office/Region have been established. These FMC Travel Card Monitors are responsible for monthly reviewing Card Holder Transaction and Hierarchy reports for delinquent and declined (or misused) accounts, contacting cardholders/supervisors for information and status of their delinquent or declined account, and reporting status to NWS A/OPC for each monthly report received. FMC Travel Card Monitors also act as liaison between NWS A/OPC and individual cardholders as needed. FMC Travel Card Monitors will submit Quarterly reports (see Appendix A) to NWS A/OPC via email.

2.2 NOAA Policy and Procedures

The NWS follows NOAA Travel Handbook Exhibit 301-10A, Policy and Procedures for use of the Contractor-Issued Government Travel Card. As stated in the Introduction, the only change to these regulations is NWS has its own A/OPC. The NOAA Travel Regulations regarding the Contractor-Issued Government Travel Card can be found at: <http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/JPMC.html>.

2.3 Applying for an Account and Filling Out Application

- Supervisor determines necessity of travel card for employee. This decision is based on the employee's job description and need for travel in that job. DOC currently lists the mandatory use of the travel card for an employee who travels 5 or more times a year.
- Employee and supervisor read the NOAA travel regulations (derived from the Federal Travel Regulations) regarding the use of the Contractor-Issued Government Travel Card. It is of utmost importance for the supervisor and employee to not only read the regulations, but adhere to and follow them explicitly. Employees are expected to fully comply with the regulations.
- In the event of misuse, the acknowledgment statement will be used as a legal document on the Government's behalf. The supervisor is required to ensure that policies and procedures are clearly communicated.

2.4 Completing a Travel Card Application

Employee fills out the Government Travel Card Application. Instructions for filling out the form can be found on the NOAA Finance Travel Card program Web page at:

http://www.nws.noaa.gov/cfo/tpc/travel_card_program.htm

- Employee takes GSA SmartPay® 2 online training for the Travel Card and prints the certificate. A copy of the certificate is to be retained at the local level, and serves as the only proof of training. The training must be completed every three years. The training is located at: <https://training.smartpay.gsa.gov/>.
- All NWS GSA SmartPay 2 Certificate of Completion and Employee Acknowledgment Statements (Appendix B) are to be emailed to Leslie.Rivas@noaa.gov.
- If there is an urgent need (less than two weeks) for a travel card, complete RUSH application from NOAA Finance Website: http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/documents/JPMC.RushTravelCardInstruct_002.doc and contact your NWS A/OPC. Rush Travel Card applications containing PII must be sent by Accellion (Commerce-OCIO secure file sharing site).

Maintaining Government Travel Card Account Information. The maintenance form is no longer used to update account information. To maintain travel card accounts, email is used to make name changes, address (home and office) changes, phone number changes, account closures, etc. email to Leslie Rivas. The email should include:

- Cardholder's name as it appears on the card.

- Last six digits of the card no.
- Type of Action:
 - Account Closure (notify in advance of employee separations)
 - Address Change
 - Change in Office/Region (state from what region to what region)
 - Limit Increase (with justification)
 - Name Change (also requires a fax with supporting documents, ie., marriage license, divorce decree)
- Reason for the Request (i.e., retirement, transferring out of NOAA, Infrequent Traveler)
- Requester's Name, Phone No., and email address
- Approved by: (Approving Official's Name, Phone No., and email address)

2.5 Travel Card Account Closures for Separation Clearances (CD-126)

NWS HQs Cardholders are to return the card to the A/OPC along with the CD-126 Separation Clearance Form for signature. The account activity is reviewed for any unpaid balances.

Accounts with zero balances are closed, and clearances for the travel card are signed. Accounts with unpaid balances should be paid in full before clearances are signed. The card is destroyed by the A/OPC.

NWS Regional and Field Office are to give the card to their supervisor for clearances. The supervisor or their designated contact is to send an email to Leslie.Rivas@noaa.gov including the following information:

- Cardholder's name as it appears on the card
- Last six digits of the card number
- Type of Action: Account Closure for Separation Clearance
- Date of Separation
- Requestor's name, phone number, and email address
- Supervisor's name, phone number and email address

Accounts activity is reviewed as stated for NWS HQs employees. An email response from the A/OPC will state that the account has been closed with either a zero balance, or an unpaid balance of \$_____, and to destroy the card at the local level. Clearances should not be signed until unpaid balances are paid in full. Therefore, plan clearances for the Travel Card well in advance of the separation date, when possible. The supervisor may sign the clearance form at the local level, unless otherwise notified.

2.6 Disputing Charges to Your Government Travel Card Account

- If the bill for your travel card includes charges you did not make, call the JP Morgan Chase customer service number found on the back of your Government Travel Card (1-888-297-0781) **immediately** and or complete an online dispute via <https://gov1.paymentnet.com/Login.aspx>. After you login to JP Morgan Chase Paymentnet, select Transaction, click dispute, confirm email address and Merchant State if applicable, and select from drop down menu the reason of your dispute.
- Contact the vendor who has made the incorrect charge and have them credit your account. If the vendor will not cooperate and issue a credit, you are responsible for filling out a Dispute Form and faxing it directly to JP Morgan Chase.
- The Dispute form should be **faxed to 1-866-865-2298 along with your complete name and card number at the top of the dispute letter**. JP Morgan Chase requests that travel card dispute forms be faxed to them. In addition, dispute forms should include a **written statement** explaining why the charge is in dispute and what steps were taken to correct the problem.

2.7 Disciplinary Action/Timeline for Billing

JP Morgan Chase supplies Office/Regional focal points with monthly reports to enable them to monitor delinquent activity of their employees' accounts. It is important that all Offices/Regions take appropriate action against employees who abuse or misuse the travel card or who do not adhere to travel card regulations and policies. At this time, NWS follows the travel card misconduct table issued by DOC in January 2001, and will ensure that Offices/Regions will be updated on any changes to the travel card misconduct table. Delinquency letters of notification are sent directly to the employees and their supervisors, if an account is past due over 60 days. In compliance with NOAA Travel Office guidance, the NWS requires that both the employee and their supervisor respond to the A/OPC within 5 workdays to explain the circumstances and what is being done to clear the account balance, as well as what is being done to prevent further delinquencies, and if there are any disciplinary actions. Disciplinary actions are to be coordinated by the supervisor through Human Resources.

2.7.1 Government Travel Card Timeline for Billing

The Commerce Bankcard Center has published a JP Morgan Chase Timeline that outlines billing times and payment due dates. It can be found at: <http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/docs/JPMC.timeline.pdf>. Accounts must be paid in full within 25 days of receipt of the billing statement. Accounts not paid within the 25 day period are automatically placed in pre-suspension.

2.7.2 DAO 202-751 – Disciplinary Action

DOC has supplied provisions for disciplinary action currently based on DAO 202-751 (Exhibit 5). This DAO can be accessed at:

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

2.8 Request for Reinstatement

In the event of cancellation by JP Morgan Chase, a request for consideration of reinstatement can be made via the A/OPC for NWS. This can be accessed at:

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

2.8.1 Submitting Request for Reinstatement

The following steps are in place with NWS Headquarters to submit these requests. The Office/Regional Directors Administrative Officer will maintain specific procedures.

- Employee submits written explanation to immediate supervisor, addressed to JP Morgan Chase.
- Supervisor submits recommendation and copy of employee's explanation to Office/Regional Director.
- Office/Regional Director submits written request to NWS A/OPC. Written requests should include:
 - Explanation of events leading to cancellation.
 - Explanation of disciplinary action taken by supervisor.
 - Written statement by supervisor/Director guaranteeing that monthly review of account will be conducted.

NWS A/OPC will compile the information for JP Morgan Chase's considerations.