

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 1-709

JANUARY 13, 2021

**Administration and Management
Administrative Controls, NWSPD 1-7
GOVERNMENT PURCHASE CARD**

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

OPR: W/CFO1 (D. McClure)

Certified by: W/CFO1 (J. Potts)

Type of Issuance: Routine

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This directive supersedes NWSI 1-709 *Government Purchase Card*, dated February 9, 2018.

Revisions include:

- The replacement of all links to the Commerce Acquisition Manual
- The replacement of a link to Citibank on page 3
- The addition of section 3.3 on page 3
- The addition of section 3.5 on page 4
- The replacement of a link to the DOC Procurement Memorandum on page 8
- Updated appendix with new Mandatory Critical Element
- Updated appendix with Government Purchase Card Flow Map
- Updated appendix to include Government Purchase Card designation memorandum
- Updated Appropriations Law memorandum

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John E. Potts
Chief Financial Officer/Chief
Administrative Officer

Date

Government Purchase Card

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1. Purpose

This procedure provides guidance to cardholders (CH), approving officials (AO) and fund certifying officials (FCO) regarding NWS management of the Department of Commerce (DOC) Purchase Card Program. Management of the DOC purchase card program includes responsibilities of a CH and/or an AO, cancellation of a government purchase card or an AO account, transfer of CH between AOs, and government purchase card utilization and reconciliation.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all NWS personnel involved in the DOC purchase card program.

3. Procedures and Responsibilities

3.1 Government Purchase CH Responsibilities

- Complies with Federal, Departmental and Operating Unit laws, regulations, policies and guidance as it relates to use of the purchase card;
- Completes micro-purchase transactions within GPC limits using an approved NOAA 36-31 (or its equivalent) and/or NOAA 36-30 prior to transaction.
- Completes training purchases within GPC limits authorized with a completed and Approved SF-182 as the authorized funding document. (A NOAA 36-31 (or its equivalent) may not be required for this purpose, depending on if the AO and Supervisor are the same individual).
- For additional required responsibilities, please see [Section 2 in the Commerce Acquisition Manual \(CAM\) 1313.301](#).

3.2 Approving Official Responsibilities

- Authorizes CH purchases of supplies and services using the NOAA 36-31 (or its equivalent), as the authorization document of record;
- Reviews SF-182 as the authorized funding document for training purchases within the GPC limit.
- At the Financial Management Center (FMC) level may serve as an emergency back-up to the normally assigned AO during absences, unavailability, or after hours.
- For required responsibilities, please see [Citibank Government Purchase Card Guide](#) or see [Section 2 in the CAM 1313.301](#).

3.3 NWS Budget Authority Responsibilities

The Budget Authority (BA), also known as a Budget Officer (BO), functions to review and certify the availability for funds of all government purchase card requests and the proper use of the proposed funding as outlined through FMC specific delegations. The BA/BO must be delegated in writing by the FMC FCO, and delegations at the FMC level for purchasing must be made by the BA/BO.

3.4 NWS Convenience Check Writers Responsibilities

- Recording government purchase transactions in the servicing bank's electronic tool;
- For additional required responsibilities, please see [Section 2 in the CAM 1313.301](#).

3.5 CFO GPC Program Coordinator Responsibilities

- Approves and coordinates new accounts for convenience checks
- New GPC cardholder accounts must be coordinated and approved by the CFO's Office GPC Program Coordinator.
- Conducts GPC audits as necessary or at the request of a NOAA bankcard center.
- New or changes to approving officials must be coordinated by the CFO's Office GPC Program Coordinator
- Reviews and maintains credit card and AO listings for NWS
- Coordinates between bank card center and FMCs

Some restrictions do apply. For instance, convenience checks shall not be used by individuals to write checks to themselves, or to any other individual or vendor for any of the restrictions noted in [Section 2 in the CAM 1313.301](#).

4. Application to Become a CH or AO

NWS managers shall determine if an employee's responsibilities require the use of a government purchase card. The manager will also determine who shall be identified as the AO for that employee.

For instructions on how to apply for a purchase card, please see [New Account Instructions](#).

5. Training Requirements

5.1 Initial Training

CH, AO, and Agency Program Coordinator (APC) shall document satisfactory completion of required training prior to nomination and appointment to the DOC purchase card program. In addition, CH, AO, and APCs shall certify in writing that they have read and understood the policies and procedures outlined in Commerce Acquisition Manual 1313.301.

For more specification regarding initial training requirements, refer to [Section 3 in the CAM 1313.301](#).

The FCO will complete the [NWS FCO and Budget Execution Personnel Training Requirement](#) per memo dated December 31, 2018.

5.2 Refresher Training

For more specification regarding refresher training requirements, refer to [Section 3.3 in CAM 1313.301](#).

All CH, AOs and FCOs will take [Appropriations Law Training](#) every five years per memo dated January 4, 2021.

6. CH and AO Performance Plans

Performance plans for CH and AOs shall contain critical language within their performance plan to correspond with this responsibility. See Appendix A for mandatory critical elements.

7. Card and Account Security

CHs shall take appropriate precautions to protect the DOC purchase card and account information. CH's are responsible for preventing others from gaining access to their cards or account information. For additional required responsibilities to ensure account security, see [Citibank's Government Purchase Card Guide](#).

8. Purchasing

The purchase card may be used by CHs to make purchases that are otherwise authorized by Federal, Departmental and Operating Unit laws, regulations, policies or guidance.

For additional information on the process and requirements of use of the government purchase card please see: [Section 6 in the CAM 1313.301](#)

8.1 Single Purchase Limit Up to the Micro-Purchase Threshold

This instruction covers NWS purchase cards transactions at or below the micro-purchase threshold only.

- The default monthly billing cycle limit for all cardholders is \$10,000. However, higher monthly billing cycle limits may be requested by contacting the CFO GPC Coordinator.
- The maximum single purchase limit for cardholders who are not warranted contracting officers is the micro-purchase threshold. As defined in FAR 2.101, a micro-purchase is an acquisition of supplies or services, the aggregate amount of which does not exceed a threshold of \$3,500 except for acquisition of construction subject to the Wage Rate Requirements (construction), the limit is \$2,000, and for acquisition of services subject to Service Contract Labor Standards, the limit is \$2,500.
- In order to increase single purchase limit to \$10,000 coordinate with the CFO GPC Coordinator.

For further specifics, please refer to: [Micro-Purchase Threshold](#)

or

[Subpart 2.1 in the Federal Acquisition Regulations.](#)

8.2 Required Sources of Supplies and Services

Alternative sources should be considered for use only after the priority sources have been considered for fulfilling requirements and such consideration documented in the credit card file. CHs should contact their acquisition office if they need assistance in determining if their requirement can be satisfied by a required source.

For additional guidance regarding required sources of supplies and services, see:

[Section 6.9 in the CAM 1313.301](#)

8.3 Pre-Approval & Funds Certification

All purchases shall have prior approval by the CH and AO. Upon approval by the CH and AO, the BA/BO finalizes the document for Execution. Approval documentation shall be maintained in the CH file as proof of pre-approval. All approvals and funds certification will be done through the use of the current version NOAA Form 36-31, or its equivalent. An electronic version of NOAA Form 36-31 can be obtained at:

[Form 36-31](#)

8.4 Pre-Approval & Funds Certification Exceptions

Exceptions to obtaining formal written pre-approval from the AO using NOAA Form 36-31 or its equivalent are as follows:

- Verbal approval followed by written confirmation: In emergency/urgent situations, the Approving Official and Budget Officer may provide verbal approval to the

Cardholder; provided the cardholder the discussion via email, or in the remarks of the NOAA 36-31 (or its equivalent) when routed to the Approving Official, to include the item to be acquired and dollar amount, and requests the Approving Official acknowledge and approve at their earliest convenience.

- Alternative Approving Official: In emergency/urgent situations when the Approving Official cannot be reached, the Cardholder may seek approval from a Regional GPC Approving Official or other designated AO within the FMC.
- Budget Approval can be obtained by a designated FMC Funds Certifying Official in the absence of the normally assigned Budget Authority/Budget Officer for any GPC procurement action.

AOs and CHs are responsible for ensuring the “spirit and intent” of this advanced approval exception. The AO has the authority/discretion to withdraw advanced approval exception permissions outlined in this guidance if they determine a pattern of misuse.

At the earliest opportunity, but not later than 72 hours of the emergency procurement, the government MUST complete the administrative requirements normally associated with all government purchase card procurement actions as defined in this NWSI 1-709 to include, but not limited to:

- Initiation of formal purchase card transaction authorization form (NOAA Form 36-31 or its equivalent), AO, and Budget Authority/Budget Officer approvals;
- Ensure appropriate government purchase card log entries are entered in a timely manner to coincide with transaction;
- Appropriately annotate on NOAA Form 36-31 (or its equivalent) the reason for pre-approval exception with appropriate remarks.

It is incumbent upon every person affiliated with this pre-approval process to closely monitor the rationale and need for emergency requests. Determinations of abuse and violation(s) of the “spirit and intent” of this pre-approval guidance could result in corrective/administrative actions associated with the violation of procurement rules.

8.5 Higher Level Procurement Pre-approvals Requirements

The CH shall ensure that required approvals are received and copies of required documentation maintained in the purchase card file. For more information please refer to:

[Section 6 in the CAM 1313.301](#)

9. Government Purchase Card Restrictions

Purchase orders, government purchase card purchases and convenience checks are subject to

audit by the DOC Acquisitions and Grants Office (AGO) for compliance with delegated procurement authority and federal, DOC, and NOAA procurement regulations. If regulations are not followed, procurement authority can be withdrawn and penalties imposed upon the procurement official.

9.1 Federal Appropriations Law Restrictions

For details regarding Government Purchase Card restrictions, please see [Section 6.13 in the CAM 1313.301](#). For additional information regarding Atypical expenses, consult the [NOAA Finance Handbook Chapter 15](#)

9.2 GSA Government-wide Restrictions

In accordance with the GSA SmartPay3® Program, the government purchase card shall not be used for travel or travel-related expenses; excluding conference rooms, meeting spaces, and local transportation services such as Metro Fare cards, subway tokens, and cash advances.

9.3 Departmental Restrictions

DOC regulations prohibit the purchase of supplies or services that should be placed on a travel card or fleet card, including the purchase of gas or oil for DOC-owned vehicles and repair of DOC or leased vehicles with the government purchase card.

10. Recordkeeping and Documentation

10.1 General

Every government purchase card transaction requires documentation. This documentation must be maintained either in an individual transaction file or in a consolidated monthly file with individual transaction data consolidated and clearly identified for each individual transaction processed during the month. Retain Delegation of Authority letters and training certificates with a file by fiscal year for auditing purposes.

10.2 Purchase Card Transaction Documentation

The CH shall maintain documentation for each government purchase card transaction for a minimum of 6 years as mandated by [the DOC Procurement Memorandum](#). Transaction file documentation must be accessible for review purposes and shall include, at a minimum:

- Request for purchase with available funds, signed and dated by the requestor (NOAA Form 36-31 or its equivalent);
- Completed SF-182, reviewed by the AO of record;
- Required pre-approvals (See NWS Instruction 1-709 8.3 and 8.4 for specifics);
- Documentation of all post-purchase actions;
- Copy of online transaction, itemized receipts, and/or faxed verification of order;
- Delivery receipt or packing slip;
- Copy of appropriate DOC property forms, if accountable personal property;
- Memorandum or remarks explaining any unique circumstances for the transaction, as applicable; and
- SF-182: [Authorization, Agreement and Certification of Training \(Section F\)](#) and actual certificate of completion serves as receipt and acceptance.

10.3 Reconciliation Documentation

The reconciliation files shall include, in addition to the items outlined in the CAM Section 7:

- Purchase card ordering log;
- Statement of account, signed and dated by CH and AO;
- Printed copy of reconciliation;
- Monthly transaction files; and
- [Funds Certification for Government Purchase Card Purchase memorandum](#) (if applicable).

11. Reconciliation

The following are the steps that the CH takes to reconcile the monthly DOC purchase card account:

- Pulls all purchase requests, receipts, justifications and invoices from their monthly file to match each transaction;
- Communicates with the appropriate personal property official in the event that equipment, software, etc., is purchased to ensure 1) the correct object class is validated by using the object class code determination tool at [O.C. Determination Tool](#) 2) the asset is bar coded, 3) the property official is given all necessary paperwork;
- Logs into Citibank and reconciles the monthly statement against receipts;
- Ensures all purchases are entered into the log in Citibank and those entries match reconciliations; and
- Reconciles on time and AO is informed of the need to certify transactions.

All purchase card transactions should be reconciled and approved by the AO by the 10th of each month. CHs may reconcile at any time during the month, as soon as the transaction is in Citi-manager. All transactions must be reconciled by the CH and certified by the AO.

For more information on document level adjustments (DLA) contact CFO1.

If at any time a purchase CH receives a notice of audit from NOAA Finance Audit Team, that CH is responsible for timely and accurate response. The CH will supply all information requested by the audit team quickly and accurately. AO will follow up with CH ensuring documentation was submitted in a timely manner.

12. Program Oversight and Surveillance

The NOAA APC will make use of the management controls periodically to reduce card misuse and abuse. Review [Section 10 in the CAM 1313.301](#) for more complete details of this procedure. NOAA will conduct random sample audits of CH and AOs ensuring they are adhering to applicable requirements.

13. Consequences for Purchase Card Misuse and Abuse

Violations of purchase card laws, regulations, policies and guidance may result in immediate suspension of the card and disciplinary action against the CH, AO, or both. The range of disciplinary actions, which may vary with the severity of the infraction, will be applied in accordance with DOC employee relations, legal, and management guidelines.

Review [Section 10.6 in the CAM 1313.301](#) for more information.

14. Additional Information

For further regulation and procedures refer to the [CAM 1313.301](#)

APPENDIX A – Commerce Alternative Personnel System Mandatory Critical Element



Mandatory Critical Element

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Purchase Card Responsibilities

Purchase Card Holders

Applies to: All purchase card holders covered by the Commerce Alternative Personnel System (CAPS).

Instructions: Copy and paste the information below into the employee's Form CD-541 incorporated into an existing Critical Element.

Results of Major Activities

- Authorized purchase card transactions are completed for official Government business only.
- Purchase card transactions are reconciled in the accounting system.
- Purchase card files are maintained.

Criteria for Evaluation

- Authorized purchases are completed in accordance with guidance on use of the purchase card outlined in Federal, Departmental, and Operating Unit laws, regulations, and policies.
- Purchase card transactions are accurately reconciled to the correct accounting codes by the established due dates.
- Transaction files are accurately maintained and include the required documentation specified in operating unit guidance.

Purchase Card Approving Officials

Applies to: All purchase card Approving Officials covered by the Commerce Alternative Personnel System (CAPS).

Instructions: Copy and paste the information below into the employee's Form CD-541 incorporated into an existing Critical Element.

Results of Major Activities

- Purchase card purchases are reviewed.
- Accounting codes in the purchase card system are reviewed.
- Reconciliation of cardholder transactions are verified.

Criteria for Evaluation

- Purchase card activities are reviewed prior to the purchase in accordance with Federal, Departmental, and Operating Unit laws, regulations, policies and guidance as it relates to use of the purchase card.
- Accounting codes in the purchase card system are reviewed by established due dates.
- Reconciliation of cardholder transitions are accurately verified by established due date.

APPENDIX A - Appropriations Law Memorandum



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration
National Weather Service
1325 East West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3283
Office of The Chief Financial Officer/
Chief Administrative Officer

MEMORANDUM FOR: NWS Headquarters, Regional & Office Directors

FROM: John E. Potts POTTS.JOHN.ED
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Date: 2020.12.23 15:46:38 -0500

SUBJECT: Mandatory Training on Appropriations Law

This memorandum defines the National Weather Service's (NWS) Appropriations Law Training requirements for all NWS employees whose duties include the management of appropriated funds. This policy is effective January 4, 2021 and remains in effect until rescinded.

Policy:

All NWS employees whose duties include the management of appropriated funds are required to complete Appropriations Law training. Specifically for the NWS, this includes all Senior Executive Service employees, Headquarters and Regional Headquarters Division and Branch Chiefs, Meteorologists-in-Charge, Hydrologists-in-Charge, Program and Project Managers, Funds Certifying Officials, Government Purchase Card Approving Officials, Government Purchase Card Holders, Budget Analysts within the OCFO/CAO Budget Execution and Formulation Division, Deputy Chief Financial Officer, Contracting Officer Representatives, Requisitioners, Budget Officers and Administrative Officers.

The standard comprehensive course will address core Appropriation Law concepts, including: time, purpose, and amount; the bona fide needs rule; reprogramming and the Anti-Deficiency Act. This course is normally offered in a four-day curriculum however it must be a minimum of three days in length to receive credit. The course is provided by several different vendors and it can be an in person or a virtual class.

Unless a specific waiver is granted by the CFO, all employees referenced in this memo must complete the training one year from the referenced effective date above or the employee's hire date. If an employee has completed this training within the last 5 years, he or she has satisfied this initial training requirement.

Refresher training: Appropriation Law training refresher class must be taken every 5 years. The class must be a minimum of two days in length to receive credit and it can be an in person or a virtual class. All questions concerning this policy should be addressed to the NWS Internal Controls Manager, Dawn McClure. NWS will develop opportunities to provide group training where possible.

All Appropriation Law training must be entered into the Commerce Learning Center (CLC) by your Financial Management Center CLC Training Coordinator in order to receive credit. CLC Reports will be monitored in order to ensure compliance with this memorandum.

APPENDIX A – Government Purchase Card Memorandum



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Weather Service
1325 East West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3283
Office of The Chief Financial Officer/
Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: December 4, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR: National Weather Service (NWS) Headquarters, Regional and Office Directors

FROM: John E. Potts
Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer, NWS

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SUBJECT: Office of Chief Financial Officer Government Purchase Card Coordinator Designation Memorandum

As the NWS CFO/CAO, I appoint the Internal Controls Manager Dawn McClure as the CFO Government Purchase Card (GPC) Program Coordinator under the Department of Commerce's Purchase Card Program. This designation is effective immediately.

With this Designation, the roles and responsibilities are:

- Approves GPC holder's accounts consistent with NWS GPC baseline.
- Approves new approving official's accounts.
- Conducts GPC audits as necessary or at the request of a NOAA bankcard center.
- Reviews and maintains GPC holder's and Approving Official's listings for NWS.
- Coordinates between NOAA bankcard center and NWS Financial Management Centers on data calls and/or training.
- Approves and coordinates with FMCs on new accounts for convenience checks.

APPENDIX B – Government Purchase Card Flow Map



National Weather Service Government Purchase Card

(Micro Purchase)

