

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

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| **30.06 Travel Cards** | **Revised: October 12, 2023** |

GOVERNING REGULATIONS

The State of Texas Corporate Charge Card Program (including Travel Cards) is governed by the [State Travel Management Program](http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/) which is administered by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

2. TRAVEL CARDS

Texas A&M Forest Service has two types of Travel Cards. The agency is billed and liable for payments for Departmental Travel Cards. Cardholders are liable for payments for their Individual Travel Cards. The Travel Cards may be used for only official state business travel.

2.1 Departmental Travel Card

The Departmental Travel Card is utilized for the cardholder’s agency travel expenses.

* 1. Individual Travel Card

1. The Individual Travel Card is used by the cardholder to cover his/her business travel expenses.The cardholder is billed directly by the credit card provider and is personally responsible for payment of the bill. To be reimbursed for business travel expenses, the cardholder must submit a travel voucher.
2. Individual Travel Cards have a $200 limit per billing cycle on non-travel (retail) charges. In some instances, charges for travel-related expenses such as parking, taxis and gasoline may be coded by the merchant as "retail."
3. Individuals who need to purchase reimbursable, non-travel business expenses on a regular basis should contact their supervisor about obtaining a Procurement Card.

3. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITES

3.1 Credit Card Coordinator

The Credit Card Coordinator is responsible for answering credit card questions, addressing credit card issues and administering the credit card program. The Financial Accountant responsible for compliance reporting in the Payroll and Support Services Department is designated as its Credit Card Coordinator and all credit card requests must be processed through this person.

3.2 Department Heads

Department heads (or their designees) are responsible for administering Travel Cards at the field level to ensure compliance with agency requirements. Department head responsibilities include:

1. designating cardholders and assisting in determining cardholder credit limits.
2. assigning at least two preparers (a primary and a backup) for credit card voucher processing.
3. approving each monthly [Departmental Travel Card Expense Distribution Voucher](http://tfsfinance.tamu.edu/modules/finance/admin/procedures/Departmental%20Travel%20Card%20Expense%20Distribution%20Voucher.xlsx) after reviewing all transactions to determine that they are for valid business purposes and comply with applicable laws, policies, rules and procedures.
4. attending training sessions covering regulations, rules and procedures for credit cards.

3.3 Voucher Preparers

Voucher preparers are responsible for reviewing transactions of individual cardholders to ensure the transactions are assigned an appropriate accounting expense code. The voucher preparer has 20 days from receipt of the credit card statement to prepare a credit card voucher and forward it to the department for review, approval and submission to the Budgets and Accounting Department.

3.4 Cardholder

The cardholder is designated by the department head to utilize a Travel Card. The cardholder is responsible for following travel regulations, maintaining a detailed [Credit Card Transaction Log](http://tfsfinance.tamu.edu/modules/finance/admin/procedures/Credit%20Card%20Transaction%20Log.xlsx), keeping the card secure and submitting the monthly billing statement in a timely manner. The cardholder has ten days from receipt of the credit card statement to review, approve and submit the billing statement, transaction log and receipts to the voucher preparer. A cardholder may prepare his/her own credit card voucher.

3.5 Credit Card Provider Customer Service

Travel Cards are served by the credit card provider’s customer service center, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to assist the cardholderwith general questions about a travel card account. Contact information for the credit card provider appears on the back of the credit card and on the [Staff Resources](http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/staffresources/) web page.

4. OBTAINING A TRAVEL CARD

4.1 Requests

An employee may request a Travel Card through the following process:

1. Complete the [Credit Card Request Form](http://tfsfinance.tamu.edu/modules/finance/admin/procedures/Credit%20Card%20Request%20Form.docx), obtain the necessary approvals, and submit the form to the Credit Card Coordinator. Approvals are based on the employee’s need for the card and the demonstrated ability to fulfill administrative requirements.
2. The Credit Card Coordinator obtains approval for each credit card request from the Associate Director for Finance and Administration.
3. The Credit Card Coordinator requests issuance of Travel Cards from the credit card provider for approved applicants.
4. Records associated with the cardholder and the card are maintained in locked files by the Credit Card Coordinator. These records include the approved request form, a copy of the request to the credit card provider, a copy of the issued card, training documentation and any other documentation associated with the cardholder and/or approver.

4.2 Training

1. Card Holders

Employees are required to complete the on-line credit card training course in TrainTraq prior to approval to receive a card. Disbursement of Funds training is required to be completed prior to approval to receive a card and every two years thereafter.

1. Approvers

Voucher approvers are required to complete Distribution of Funds training and the Disbursement of Funds – Approver Class when assigned approver responsibilities and every two years thereafter.

5. USE OF A TRAVEL CARD

5.1 Credit Limits

1. Normal Operations

The standard credit limit is $1,000 for the Departmental Travel Card. The Individual Travel Card credit limit can be requested by the applicant on the credit card provider’s application; however, application approval is based on the applicant’s credit score as determined by the credit card provider. Credit limits greater than the standard limits are requested based upon a needs assessment for the cardholder by the supervisor and associate director. Written justification must be provided to the Credit Card Coordinator on the Credit Card Request Form.

Permanent credit limit increases are approved by the Associate Director for Finance and Administration.

Temporary credit limit increases may be approved by the Credit Card Coordinator. A temporary increase is requested in writing (email is sufficient) providing justification for the request. The credit limit is returned to its previous level at the end of the billing cycle.

Credit limit changes are processed through the credit card provider by the Credit Card Coordinator.

The Credit Card Coordinator annually reviews the credit cards outstanding and each cardholder’s level of activity and then makes recommendations for credit limit adjustments. Changes to credit limits of an employee require approvals from the appropriate supervisor, associate director and the Associate Director for Finance and Administration.

1. Emergency Response

All requests for temporary credit limit increases for emergency response are submitted through the Texas Interagency Coordination Center (TICC).

TICC reviews the request to determine how much increase is appropriate for the situation. TICC then contacts the Credit Card Coordinator with the request for the increase.

The Credit Card Coordinator works with TICC to return the credit limit to the cardholder’s normal level at the appropriate time.

5.2 Transaction Limits

A transaction is limited to the cardholder’s available credit.

5. 3 Business Use

A Travel Card is issued in the cardholder’s name with the State of Texas seal and the wording "Official Use Only" clearly indicated on the card. This card is for agency business purposes only and may not be used for personal or non-business transactions. The cardholder is personally responsible and accountable for the card.

5.4 Travel Guidelines

All travel must comply with Administrative Procedures and [Textravel](https://fmx.cpa.texas.gov/fmx/travel/textravel/). Specific travel guidelines pertinent to travel cards include the following:

a. Meals

Generally, meals are not allowed to be charged to the Departmental Travel Card. Employees should purchase meals with their personal funds or on their personal credit card (or Individual Travel Card) and seek reimbursement on a Travel Reimbursement Voucher.

An allowed exception to the above limitation is group meals purchased by logistics staff on an emergency response incident. The cardholder is responsible for keeping receipts for all Departmental Travel Card charges along with maintaining a list of agency employees and non-agency employees when meals are charged. All charges must be itemized to show the meal expenditures for each agency employee and non-agency employee.

b. Lodging

Personal telephone, fax, game and movie charges for personal entertainment are not to be charged to the Departmental Travel Card and must not be direct billed to the agency.

The cardholder is responsible for keeping receipts for all lodging charged to Departmental Travel Cards. For cardholders handling group lodging, a list of agency employees and non-agency employees must be provided. All charges must be itemized to show the lodging expenditures for each agency employee and non-agency employee.

c. Transportation

If a rental vehicle is required, only an agency employee may rent a vehicle under the contract with the State of Texas. Vehicle rentals may be charged to a Departmental Travel Card unless other arrangements for direct billing have been made.

1. Airfare

The mandatory form of payment for all airline fares is the state-issued corporate travel charge card. See State Travel Management Program – [Airline Contract](https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/programs/travel-management/airline.php).

e. Reimbursable Incidental Travel Expenses

See section 8.1(a) of Administrative Procedure, [20.03 Travel](file:///Q:/admin_procedures/2003%20Travel.docx) for a list of reimbursable incidental expenses.

f. Non-Reimbursable Expenses

See section 8.1(b) of Administrative Procedure 20.03 Travel for a list of non-reimbursable incidental expenses.

g. Non-State of Texas Employees

Texas travel guidelines do not apply to personnel who are not employees of the State of Texas. When the Texas A&M Forest Service requests emergency response assistance from personnel and/or agencies outside the State of Texas, the agreement between Texas A&M Forest Service and that agency and/or individual should be followed.

1. Arrangements must be made by an agency cardholder to charge lodging, meals and airfare expenses for non-State employees to the Departmental Travel Card.
2. Telephone charges, movies and other miscellaneous expenses are not to be charged to the agency.
3. Texas hotel occupancy taxes must be paid for lodging of non-State employees.

5.5 Credit Card Transaction Log

a. The Credit Card Transaction Log is required and provides a method for expenditure tracking while using the card. Cardholders use a new log for each month’s purchases and fill it out as each purchase is made. Cardholders should be specific when listing items purchased. The log and the receipts are required backup for the credit card voucher.

b. A receipt must be obtained for each purchase and kept with the transaction log. Screen prints are acceptable for Internet orders and order forms for fax/mail orders ifa receipt/invoice is not provided by the vendor. Print screens or order forms must show price. POS terminal receipts are acceptable if supplemented by an itemized receipt or detailed invoice.

5.6 Statement and Payment

a. The credit card provider mails a central billing statement to the Credit Card Coordinator each month, listing all transactions by cardholder during the billing period. The Credit Card Coordinator prepares a voucher for payment of the central billing statement and sends the approved voucher to the Budgets and Accounting Department. The Budgets and Accounting Department pays the central billing statement in full upon receipt.

b. Each cardholder receives a memo statement each month listing purchases and other transactions posted to the cardholder’s account. Upon receipt of this statement the cardholder has ten days to review and process the memo statement:

* 1. Match the memo statement with the Travel Card transaction log.
  2. Attach all supporting documentation (receipts, packing slips, etc.)
  3. Note any additional information pertinent to any purchase.
  4. Verify that all transactions are valid.
  5. Forward the package to the voucher preparer.

c. The voucher preparer forwards each completed credit card voucher to the department head or other authorized approver for review and approval. The approved credit card voucher and supporting documentation is submitted to the Budgets and Accounting Department for processing within 40 days of receiving the memo statement. Copies are retained by the cardholder and voucher preparer. A separate credit card voucher is required for each billing statement.

d. Generally, a state agency may not pay for goods or services before their delivery to the agency. Vendors should charge the account only when goods are shipped. Back orders should not be charged until the goods are shipped. (Refer to the Advance Payments topic in Guidelines for Disbursement of Funds.)

e.Individual Travel Card accounts are payable upon receipt of the statement. If the cardholder fails to make timely payment, the agency and/or the credit card provider may take corrective actions with the account and the cardholder.

f. Delinquency assessments, late payment charges, etc., are not reimbursed by the agency.

5.7 Disputed Charges

If a cardholder finds a discrepancy on a monthly billing statement, the cardholder should contact the supplier and attempt to resolve the problem directly. If a cardholder cannot resolve a disputed item directly with the supplier, the cardholder should contact the Credit Card Coordinator for assistance in filing a dispute against the supplier. The credit card provider will place the charge in a "Statement of Dispute" status and the account may be given a provisional credit until documentation is received from the supplier. A copy of the form and letters are kept as documentation.

1. If the charge documentation is in order, the transaction is re-posted to the account, and the dispute is closed.
2. If the charge is suspected to be fraudulent, the card is immediately blocked. A new card is then issued to the cardholder, if appropriate. If the charge is subsequently determined to be legitimate, the transaction is then re-posted to the new account.
3. If the charge is not legitimate, the provisional credit is made final, and the dispute is closed.

6. SECURITY OF THE TRAVEL CARD

The cardholder calls the credit card provider to activate the Travel Card before attempting to use it. Upon receipt of the card, the cardholder signs the back of it and keeps it in a secure place.The card is treated with at least the same level of care that the cardholder uses with personal cards. **The only person authorized to use the Travel Card is the cardholder whose name appears on the card.**

7. LOST OR STOLEN CARDS

If a card is lost or stolen, it is imperative that the cardholder immediately contact the credit card provider to block or cancel the card. After contacting the credit card provider, the cardholder notifies the Credit Card Coordinator and the department head. Prompt action can reduce the agency’s liability associated with fraudulent activity.

8. AUDIT OF CREDIT CARD RECORDS

The credit card vouchers, transaction logs and other supporting documentation are maintained in the Budgets and Accounting Department. These records are subject to audit by the State Comptroller, System Internal Audit Department and other external entities.

9. COMPLIANCE MONITORING

9.1 Compliance monitoring is the responsibility of all persons involved in the use, processing and payment of credit card activity. This includes the voucher preparer, approver, accounts payable staff and the Credit Card Coordinator.

This chart indicates the appropriate positions responsible for checking for each of the listed potential fraud indicators. Due to the decentralized nature of the agency and its cardholders, both the voucher preparer and approver must be vigilant in watching for irregularities. If any irregularities are observed, the voucher preparer and/or approver should immediately report the activity to the Credit Card Coordinator for further investigation.

| **Potential Fraud Indicator** | **Responsible Review Level** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Voucher Preparer** | **Voucher Approver** | **Accounts Payable** | **Credit Card Coordinator** |
| Unusual vendor name | Yes | Yes |  | Yes |
| Unusual activity for a cardholder | Yes | Yes |  | Yes |
| Repeated misuse by a cardholder | Yes | Yes |  | Yes |
| “Round” number purchases (could be gift cards, etc.) | Yes |  |  | Yes |
| Missing receipts or altered documentation for a transaction | Yes | Yes | Yes |  |
| Transaction on the statement, but not on the transaction log | Yes | Yes | Yes |  |
| Unnumbered or sequentially numbered receipts | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| Duplicate charges | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| Purchases made outside regular work hours | Yes |  |  | Yes |
| Activity by non-cardholder or terminated employee | Yes | Yes |  | Yes |
| Cardholder approval of own credit card voucher |  |  | Yes |  |
| Receive a request to change payment instructions (e.g., deposit payment to a different bank) | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |

## 9.2 The Credit Card Coordinator, on a monthly basis, reviews a selection of credit card vouchers. Any credit card voucher that contains certain types of transactions (such as a credit or a prohibited charge) is referred by the accounts payable office to the Credit Card Coordinator for review prior to final approval of the credit card voucher.

## 9.3 The Credit Card Coordinator, on a monthly basis, reviews all detail transactions for travel cards. Certain transaction types are selected for review, including questionable vendors, duplicate purchases, questionable cardholder activity, vendors such as fueling stations, large dollar purchases and questionable purchase patterns. In addition, transactions for certain categories of cardholders are reviewed, including high credit limit cardholders, cardholders who have been previously counseled, new cardholders and terminated employees. The Credit Card Coordinator examines the selected transactions and, when appropriate, contacts the cardholder to obtain additional explanation. Transactions records are also retained for the fiscal year to enable month-to-month analysis.

9.4 Upon completion of the review, any findings of improper card use along with the responses from the cardholders are forwarded to the Associate Director for Finance and Administration for further action. The Credit Card Coordinator retains documentation of the review, findings, and subsequent actions.

10. CARD TERMINATION

10.1 If a cardholder does not use the Travel Card for six or more consecutive billing periods, the card may be cancelled by the agency.

10.2 When a cardholder terminates employment, the supervisor is responsible for processing the cardholder out of the agency. The supervisor completes a checklist of activities including collecting and destroying the credit card, collecting outstanding receipts and documentation, and notifying the Credit Card Coordinator. The Employee Development office also advises the Credit Card Coordinator when an employee terminates. The Credit Card Coordinator directs the credit card provider to cancel the card.

10.3 Non-compliance with laws, policies, rules and procedures may result in revocation of cardholder privileges. Additional disciplinary action may be taken by the supervisor in consultation with the Human Resources Manager. The Credit Card Coordinator will provide pertinent information gathered during compliance monitoring.

CONTACT: [Credit Card Coordinator](mailto:mkarns@tfs.tamu.edu), (979) 458-6682