

For: All FSA Employees

Misuse of the Travel Charge Card and Delinquency Payments

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Management



1 Overview

A Background

USDA DR 2300-001, Section 6f, states that employees who are issued a travel charge card assume the responsibility to use the card for official travel purposes and pay their charges in a timely manner. Using the card does not relieve the employee of the responsibility to employ prudent travel practices and to observe rules and regulations governing travel as set forth in FTR, the "USDA Zero Tolerance Policy", and agency specific policies and procedures. Cardholders are personally responsible for all items billed to the card, unless the card is reported lost or stolen. Employees shall pay the contractor according to the contractor bank's payment terms. These responsibilities are explained in the Agreement Between Agency Organization Employee and Bank of America, NA, attached to the application.

B Purpose

This notice reminds employees about:

- the appropriate use of the travel charge card
- responsibilities as cardholders
- Bank of America timelines for suspension and cancellation of travel charge cards.

C Contacts

If questions about this notice:

- County Offices shall contact State Program Coordinator
- National or State Offices shall contact Cynthia Chesley, FMD, at 703-605-0747 or Arthur Holmes, FMD, at 703-305-1240.

Disposal Date	Distribution
November 1, 2006	All FSA Employees; State Office relay to County Offices

Notice FI-2738

1 Overview (Continued)

D Labor-Management Obligations

Where exclusive representation exists, bargaining may be requested to the extent allowed by applicable statutes. Where contract language already addresses these policies and procedures for bargaining unit employees, contract language prevails.

2 Official Use of Travel Charge Card

A Using Travel Charge Card

The travel charge card:

- may **only** be used for official travel expenses incurred while in travel status away from the official duty station
- is **not** transferable and must only be used by the employee to whom it is issued.

Personal items and supplies needed to perform travel duties are **not** reimbursable as official expenses and may not be purchased using the government travel charge card simply because they are bought while an employee is in travel status.

If the card is used for any purpose or expenses other than official travel, disciplinary action may be taken according to the following:

- Agreement Between Agency Organization Employee and Bank of America, NA, paragraph 5
- Department of Agriculture (USDA) Government Travel Card Program Acknowledgment and Acceptance Statement, paragraphs 2 and 3.

Note: Both documents are attached to the travel card application. Employees sign the USDA statement and submit it with the travel card application.

Notice FI-2738

2 Official Use of Travel Charge Card (Continued)

B Misuse of Travel Card

If an employee intentionally or unintentionally misuses the card once, the employee will receive written notice. If the card is misused a second time, the card may be permanently deactivated.

State Offices shall immediately use the following “Guide for Credit Card Misuse” in determining the appropriate disciplinary action for an employee (Federal or county) who has misused his or her government-issued travel card.

Type of Misuse	Penalty for First Offense	Penalty for Subsequent Offense
Misuse – timely paid	Letter of counseling to 14- calendar-day suspension	14-calendar-day suspension to removal
Misuse – nonpayment	Letter of reprimand to 14-calendar-day suspension	14-calendar-day suspension to removal
Official use - nonpayment of credit card	Letter of reprimand to 14-calendar-day suspension	*14-calendar-day suspension to removal

*Continued nonpayment after initial discipline should be considered a subsequent offensive.

Penalty may vary within range by dollar amount and frequency of abuse. The higher the dollar amount and/or more frequent the misconduct the greater the penalty.

SED’s and AO’s should contact their servicing Employee Relations Specialist for advice and guidance before taking any disciplinary actions.

Note: Failure of the government to promptly reimburse employee should be a factor to consider in reviewing cases of delinquent payments.

Notice FI-2738

2 Delinquent Travel Card Payments

A Determining Account Status

The account status of an undisputed balance from the original statement date is as follows:

- good standing - pay within **30** calendar days regardless of voucher reimbursement status
- delinquent – **45** calendar days past due
- suspended - **61** calendar days or more past due
- cancelled – **126** calendar days past due.

Suspended accounts may be:

- reinstated upon full payment of the amount due
- canceled if suspended twice during the preceding 12 months and becomes past due again.

Note: Bank of America will not suspend an account if charges have been disputed by a cardholder.

B Action

Cardholders shall promptly resolve any outstanding balances on the travel charge card beyond 30 calendar days of the statement date.

Additional guidance is available:

- on the FFAS Travel Information page at <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/travel/travel.htm>
- by contacting Bank of America at 800-472-1424.