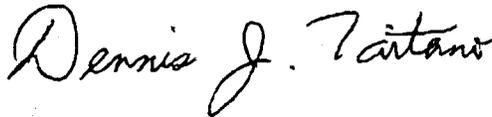


For: FSA Offices

Agency Credit Limit and Activating/Deactivating Government Travel Charge Cards

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Management



1 Overview

A Background

USDA is required by OMB to assess the credit worthiness of first time government travel charge card applicants to mitigate the level of risk for fraud and misuse by establishing an appropriate credit limit for each travel charge cardholder. As of March 1, 2006, FSA was required to use the new credit worthiness application. The new application allows applicants to receive either of the following travel charge cards:

- restricted travel charge card that has a credit limit of \$3,000 (\$1,500 cycle limit) for applicants with a credit score less than 600 or declines a credit check
- standard travel charge card that has a credit limit of \$5,000 (\$2,500 cycle limit) for applicants with a credit score of 600 or more.

USDA has also undertaken a project to have each agency review the Federal travel charge card program to strengthen the agency's internal control. As a result of this project, USDA recommended deactivating travel charge card accounts of travelers who travel less than 4 times a year.

B Purpose

This notice:

- reminds agency program coordinators about policy on activating and deactivating travel charge card accounts
- provides agency program coordinators the required credit limit for applicants based on creditworthiness.

Disposal Date	Distribution
September 1, 2008	All FSA Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

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1 Overview (Continued)

C Contacts

The following table provides contacts if there are questions about this notice.

IF located in...	THEN contact the...
the National Office or a State Office	travel office at 703-305-1408.
a County Office	State Office.

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 Action

A Completing the Travel Charge Card Creditworthiness Application

Travel charge card applicants shall do the following:

- obtain and print an application by doing the following:
 - go to **<http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/travel/travel.htm>** to access the new credit worthiness application
 - CLICK “Credit Card Application and Acknowledgment/Acceptance Statement”
- read the agreement between the employee and Bank of America
- complete the application in its entirety and sign at the bottom
- initial beside either of the following options:
 - “A” to authorize a credit check
 - “B” to decline a credit check

Note: Employees who decline a credit check will be issued a restricted charge card.

- submit completed application to the agency program coordinator. Be specific.

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2 Action (Continued)

B Appropriate Credit Limit for Travel Charge Cards

Agency program coordinators shall:

- review travel charge cardholders' accounts to ensure that the credit limit is set as follows:
 - \$8,000 for all accounts opened **before** March 1, 2006
 - \$5,000 for standard accounts opened on and **after** March 1, 2006
 - \$3,000 for restricted accounts opened on and **after** March 1, 2006
- ensure that the appropriate "option set" code is listed on account as follows:
 - "13034" for all accounts opened before March 1, 2006
 - "13033" for standard accounts opened on and after March 1, 2006
 - "13041" for restricted accounts opened on and after March 1, 2006
- **not** increase credit limits without a written justification signed by the employee's approving official

Note: Justification should state the employee's name, account number, last 4 digits of Social Security number, timeframe of increase, and reason for increase.

- file a copy of all requests to increase credit limits, signed by the approving official
- ensure all credit limit increases are decreased to the Agency's default credit limits once TDY is complete
- deactivate travel charge card accounts of employees who travel 4 or less times a year
- **not** deactivate travel charge card accounts, regardless of the 4 times a year criteria, for either of the following:
 - members of emergency response teams, Consent Decree Action Team, or similar positions
 - all supervisors
- **not** reactivate a travel charge card account without a written request signed by the employee's approving official approximately 7 calendar days **before** official travel begins

Note: Justification should state the employee's name, account number, last 4 digits of Social Security number, travel dates, and travel location.

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2 Action (Continued)

B Appropriate Credit Limit for Travel Charge Cards (Continued)

- reactivate approved travel charge card accounts by entering “Activation and Deactivation” dates into the EAGLS system

Note: Enter a date 7 calendar days **before** the beginning travel date under the “Activation” column and enter a date 3 calendar days past the ending travel date under the “Deactivation” column to cover unforeseen circumstances. This process will allow the cardholder to be activated and deactivated automatically.

- file a copy of all requests to reactivate travel charge card accounts, signed by the approving official.

C Effective Date

This policy is effective immediately.