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Helping People Help the Land...

RHODE ISLAND BULLETIN No. 250-7-1

DATE: January 9, 2007

SUBJECT: FNM – Use and Management of the Government Travel Card

Purpose: To provide employees with policies and procedures for the Government Travel Charge Card.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2007

A. GOVERNMENT TRAVEL CHARGE CARD

A government travel charge card is an account established by a commercial financial institution on behalf of individual Agency employees to which the cost of purchasing goods and services for official Agency business may be charged.

Government Travel Charge Cards are issued as either individually billed accounts with individual liability or as centrally-billed accounts, wherein the government is liable for all purchases, including those that are the result of misuse or abuse. Misuse or abuse may result in disciplinary actions against employees. Vendor banks retain financial liability for fraudulent transactions.

The Government Travel Charge Card Program was developed to procure transportation services, subsistence, and other allowable travel and transportation expenses incurred during official travel. The Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998 requires the mandatory use of the Government Travel Charge Card by employees who meet NRCS requirements for issuance of the Government Travel Charge Card.

Exemptions to mandatory use are:

- 1) New employees who are required to perform temporary duty travel en route to their first post of duty;
- 2) Employees who have had their Government Travel Charge Card canceled for cause by Bank of America (BOA);
- 3) Intermittent/seasonal employees; or
- 4) Employees not expected to travel once or more a year.
- 5) The use of the Government Travel Charge Card is limited to reimbursable travel expenses incurred in conjunction with official travel. The provisions of this policy apply to all employees of NRCS who have been issued or are applying for a Government Travel Charge Card.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

B. BILLING CYCLE AND SPENDING LIMITS

There is a monthly use limit of \$2,500 and a cumulative limit (in the event travel spans two or more months) of \$5,000 for all Government Travel Charge Cards issued to NRCS employees prior to October 1, 2005. For all Government Travel Charge Cards issued after October 1, 2005, there is a new restricted option set with a monthly use limit of \$1,500 and a cumulative limit (in the event travel spans two or more months) of \$3,000. This change is due to the Privacy Act issues related to the implementation of Credit Worthiness when applying for a Government Travel Charge Card.

Employees performing foreign travel, transfer of station (relocation), or a short/long term detail, may request, with supervisory concurrence, higher monthly limits for a specific travel situation. Supervisors will contact the appropriate Agency/Organization Program Coordinator (A/OPC) at least three (3) days prior to an employee's departure to request limit changes. Once an employee completes their travel assignment, the supervisor will notify the A/OPC to initiate action to reset the monthly limit. Please Note: NRCS State Offices may establish local, alternate procedures for controlling Government Travel Charge Card limit changes.

C. USDA ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

This policy conforms to the "*USDA Zero Tolerance Policy*" for any inappropriate charges and delinquencies (see Attachment G – "Use of the Government Travel Charge Card"). Zero tolerance strictly prohibits the following uses of the Government Travel Charge Card:

- 1) Unauthorized charges and charges not associated with official travel:
 - a) Personal and family member use of the Government Travel Charge Card is forbidden.
 - b) Additional prohibited activities are listed in Part G of this policy.
- 2) Charges while not in an official travel status:
 - a) Use of the Government Travel Charge Card in the vicinity of the official duty station or residence is forbidden unless used in connection with official travel.
 - b) Cash withdrawals from an automated teller machine are also forbidden, unless used in connection with official travel.
- 3) Shared use of the Government Travel Charge Card with another employee for official travel purposes.
- 4) Account delinquency beyond a 30-day period.
- 5) Failure to use the Government Travel Charge Card while on travel.
- 6) Failure to pay accounts with sufficient funds.
- 7) Failure to use Government voucher reimbursements to repay travel expenses.
- 8) Excessive ATM cash withdrawals or ATM cash withdrawals not commensurate with official travel.

The underlying objective of the "*USDA Zero Tolerance Policy*" is to eliminate misuse and abuse in the Government Travel Charge Card program and to avoid imposing disciplinary procedures on any NRCS employee. Proper use of the Government Travel Charge Card will preserve the reputation of NRCS, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and its employees, to achieve its mission and goals with integrity.

D. MERCHANT CATEGORY CODE (MCC)

BOA operates a monitoring system that incorporates use of a four digit Merchant Category Code (MCC). The MCC groups various merchants, products, and services into like categories i.e.; motels, restaurants, retail vendors, training establishments, banks, etc. This process will be used by BOA to monitor and control various Government Travel Charge Card purchases.

Retail Block. USDA has instructed BOA to decline Government Travel Charge Card use for the following MCCs:

- 1) Book and Magazine Subscriptions
- 2) Membership Fees
- 3) Training, Conference or Registration Fees *
- 4) Higher Education Expenses
- 5) Theme Parks
- 6) Management Consulting Services
- 7) Automobile Purchases; Car Repairs & Services
- 8) Clothing, Lingerie, Outerwear, Shoes, & Furniture
- 9) Hair Services, Cosmetics, Tattoos, & Massages
- 10) Emergency Medical Services
- 11) Office Supplies
- 12) Computers, Televisions, or Digital Equipment
- 13) Any other service or product is prohibited for personal, family, or household purposes
- 14) Any charges associated with a Government-owned vehicle (GOV) should be charged to the Voyager Fleet card assigned to the vehicle

*** Training, conference, or registration fees MAY NOT be paid with the Government Travel Charge Card.** All such fees must be paid using an alternate procurement method, i.e., Government Purchase Card (see USDA Departmental Regulation (DR) 2300-001, Government Travel Card Regulation, dated October 20, 2003, Section 7b(7)(c). If lodging costs are included in the registration fee, the costs must be deducted from the employee's travel voucher claim. It is Agency policy that only official government expenses be financed through use of the Government Purchase Card. However, in rare, extenuating circumstances where non-official expenses are included in the registration fee (outside activities, social events, etc.), the employee must reimburse the Agency for those non-official expenses.

Exemptions to the Use of the Government Travel Charge Card. GSA has exempted the following official travel expenses and/or classes of employees from the mandatory use of the Government Travel Charge Card:

- 1) Expenses incurred at a vendor that does not accept the Government Travel Charge Card
- 2) Laundry/dry cleaning
- 3) Parking
- 4) Local transportation systems

- 5) Taxi
- 6) Tips
- 7) Meals (when use of the Government Travel Charge Card is impractical, e.g., group meals or when the Government Travel Charge Card is not accepted)
- 8) Phone calls (when a Government calling card is available for use in accordance with Departmental policy)
- 9) When an employee has an application pending for the Government Travel Charge Card
- 10) When individuals are traveling on invitational travel
- 11) New Agency employees who must travel before receiving their Government Travel Charge Card
- 12) Relocation allowances, except for en-route travel and house hunting trips

E. TRAVEL ADVANCES

Cash Advances. You may use the Government Travel Charge Card to obtain cash advances for exempted expenses described above. These cash advances are limited to meals and incidental expenses rate (M&IE) for the location of the temporary duty location and other cash expenses identified above under "Exemptions to the Use of the Travel Charge Card." For this reason, cash needs should not exceed \$50 per day. In addition, NRCS will reimburse travelers for service fees incurred for those ATM advances not exceeding \$50 per day multiplied by the number of calendar days in domestic travel status (up to a maximum of \$350 per week). The weekly cash advance limit for international travel is \$1021. Cash obtained from the ATM in amounts greater than required for the travel duration are considered excessive cash advances. Actual use of the Government Travel Charge Card may be verified from the reports provided to NRCS by BOA.

Dollar Limitations. USDA has instructed BOA to place dollar limitations on the following types of charges and monitor them using the MCC process. Government Travel Charge Cardholders will be automatically precluded from exceeding the following dollar limitations. Attempting to exceed these dollar limitations will result in the charge being declined by BOA.

Travel Advances from the National Finance Center. Employees that have a Government Travel Charge Card have access to the ATM for cash withdrawals. Therefore, employees who have a Government Travel Charge Card may not obtain a travel advance from the National Finance Center (NFC) through the travel system, except for foreign travel.

A canceled Government Travel Charge Card account reflects unfavorable past performance. For this reason, employees with canceled Government Travel Charge Card accounts are considered high risk in the repayment of travel advances. Therefore, an employee who has had their Government Travel Charge Card canceled for misuse or non-payment may not apply for a travel advance from NFC. Common carrier tickets will be paid by the Agency. However, all other travel expenses will be paid by the employee and subsequently reimbursed.

However, in the case of extreme hardship, employees who have lost their Government Travel Charge Card privileges may request written approval for a travel advance on a trip-by-trip basis from the NRCS Chief Financial Officer (CFO). Such requests must be forwarded to the CFO (Director, Financial Management Division, NRCS) through the employee's travel approving

official. Consideration of such requests will be made on a case-by-case basis, and approval should not be assumed. The CFO will maintain a written record of all such approvals, as well as the basis for each approval for future Office of Inspector General review during program specific audits.

F. DEACTIVATION AND REACTIVATION

Government Travel Charge Card accounts that remain inactive during a twelve-month period will be deactivated automatically by BOA, or when requested by an employee's immediate supervisor.

Infrequent travelers must contact BOA Customer Service using the telephone number provided on the reverse of the Government Travel Charge Card to determine their card status. Employees with a deactivated Government Travel Charge Card must contact their A/OPC no less than three (3) days prior to commencing travel (does not include weekends) to have their Government Travel Charge Card reactivated, if required. Please Note: NRCS State Offices may establish local, alternate procedures for Government Travel Charge Card reactivation.

G. RESPONSIBILITIES

The following offices/individuals have direct responsibilities for the use of the Government Travel Charge Card:

Employees

Employees who are issued a Government Travel Charge Card assume the responsibility to use the card for official purposes and pay their charges in a timely manner. Use of the Government Travel Charge 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 under the "*USDA Zero Tolerance Policy*" and Agency-specific policies and procedures.

NRCS Government Travel Charge Cardholders are personally responsible for all items billed to the card, unless the card was reported lost or stolen. Employees shall pay their bills in accordance with the contractor bank payment terms. These responsibilities are explained in the Cardholder Agreement that each employee signs during the application process. Furthermore, employees are not relieved of their obligation to pay the Government Travel Charge Card bill in those rare instances when the Agency has not reimbursed the traveler within the 30-days after receipt of a timely submitted voucher. (FTR 301-52.24)

Employees who apply for the Government Travel Charge Card will:

- 1) Complete and sign the Acknowledgment Statement recognizing receipt and understanding of the policies and procedures related to the use of the Government Travel Charge Card on the cardholder application; obtain the signature of the approving official or immediate supervisor on the cardholder application; and forward the application to their A/OPC for processing.
- 2) Secure the Government Travel Charge Card in the same manner as a personal charge card. The Government Travel Charge Card shall not be stored or kept by anyone other than the employee.
- 3) Black out all but the last six numbers of the Government Travel Charge Card

number from any receipts submitted with your travel voucher.

- 4) Obtain cash withdrawals from ATMs as discussed in Part H of this policy. Government Travel Charge Cardholders are issued Personal Identification Numbers by BOA to use this feature of the Government Travel Charge Card. **Employees who have been issued a Government Travel Charge Card may not obtain a travel advance from NFC unless foreign travel is authorized.**
- 5) Pay travel charge card bills in full when due and before the next statement date.
- 6) Conform to the “*Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch*,” 5 CFR Parts 2635. As a Federal employee, standards of conduct for public trust positions apply. The standards in Attachment A require employees to pay each financial obligation in a proper and timely manner.
- 7) Dispute a charge not made by the cardholder. It is the employee’s responsibility to contact BOA to dispute a charge. All disputes must be filed in writing within 60 days of the date the charge first appears on the billing statement. BOA can be reached by calling the customer service number provided on the monthly billing statement or on the back of the Government Travel Charge Card for the specific forms to file a dispute. The bank will need to know the following:
 - a) Employee name and account number;
 - b) Reference number of the disputed charge;
 - c) Name of establishment where charge was incurred;
 - d) Amount of the charge;
 - e) Statement date; and
 - f) Reason for dispute.
- 8) Notify the A/OPC when transferring between offices within NRCS. This notification is essential for internal management reports and mailing addresses to be kept current.
- 9) Return the card, cut in half, to your supervisor or A/OPC for cancellation when leaving, retiring or transferring to an agency outside of NRCS or work with you’re A/OPC to ensure the card is transferred to the receiving agency.
- 10) Employees will have seven (7) business days to respond to official inquiries regarding Government Travel Charge Card payment status. Responses to official requests must be in writing (E-mail is acceptable).

Government Travel Charge Cardholder’s Immediate Supervisor

The travel charge cardholder’s immediate supervisor will:

- 1) Authorize cash advances in amounts commensurate with the frequency and/or duration of travel. Cash advances should be reduced by the amount of expenses that will be charged directly to the Government Travel Charge Card.
- 2) Notify the employee of any questionable or inappropriate charges and/or delinquencies and give the employee the opportunity to explain the charge or

delinquency. A record shall be maintained of the notification and the explanation received from the employee.

- 3) If an explanation is inadequate to support a questionable charge, the supervisor shall contact the appropriate NRCS servicing Finance and/or Human Resources office for guidance regarding questionable charges or appropriate disciplinary action. At the discretion of the Agency, the employee's Government Travel Charge Card may be suspended. The travel charge cardholder's immediate supervisor should maintain documentation of referrals to the Agency's servicing personnel and document the resolution of the incident.
- 4) Suspend the Government Travel Charge Card if there is a pattern of inappropriate use or insufficient explanation for repeated delinquencies.
- 5) Provide their A/OPC with the Government Travel Charge Card for cancellation when it has been suspended because of inappropriate use or delinquency.
- 6) Notify the A/OPC when an employee is transferring between offices within USDA.
- 7) Retrieve the Government Travel Charge Card from the employee and return it to the A/OPC for cancellation when an employee leaves, retires, or transfers to another Government agency.
- 8) Assure the appropriate official signs an exit clearance or other form to document cancellation of the Government Travel Charge Card when an employee leaves USDA.

Agency/Organization Program Coordinators (A/OPC's)

Each NRCS "accounting station" (State Office, Center and National Headquarters) should have an Agency/Organization Program Coordinator (A/OPC) and a back-up. Every A/OPC will regularly utilize their access to the Bank of America Electronic Account Government Ledger System (EAGLS) online reporting system, provided by BOA, to keep abreast of Government Travel Charge Card misuse and delinquency trends. NRCS is committed to enforcing USDA Department Regulation 2300-001, Government Travel Card Regulation that sets forth USDA's Zero Tolerance Policy.

A current listing of the Agency/Organization Program Coordinators and their backups, including names, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for each NRCS "accounting station", is provided as Attachment C to this policy.

To increase NRCS' retention of Government Travel Charge Card rebates and to minimize delinquencies, A/OPC's are responsible for utilizing the reporting tools in EAGLS to assist management in identifying Government Travel Charge Card delinquencies and misuse. Therefore, A/OPC's should closely review the monthly delinquency reports provided by BOA, especially for those employees who are in a pre-suspension status. The information provided by EAGLS should be forwarded to supervisors and NRCS senior management for appropriate action, including counseling, disciplinary action, and salary offset.

Agency/Organization Program Coordinators will also:

- 1) Monitor the use of Government Transportation System (GVTS) centrally billed accounts (CBA). GVTS/CBA accounts are direct-billed to NRCS and can only be

used for the common carrier expenses. The traveler will not incur common carrier expenses when the GVTS/CBA is used, but all other expenses must be paid by the traveler using a personal credit card or with personal funds. Use of the GVTS/CBA results in significant administrative costs to the Agency, and should only be used to pay for:

- a) Common carrier expenses for non-government persons traveling on invitational travel orders;
- b) Foreign travel common carrier tickets;
- c) Those employees not issued an individually billed Government Travel Charge Card; or
- d) Those employees that have had their Government Travel Charge Card canceled for misuse or non-payment (all other travel related costs).

The authorizing office must create a travel authorization for GVTS/CBA use by notating "GV" in the "method of payment" field of the travel authorization. If the traveler has never traveled previously for NRCS and they are not an NRCS employee, the authorizing office must also set up a vender code using the traveler's social security number, to enable record matching with BOA invoices. It is imperative that the authorizing office process GVTS/CBA authorizations in a timely manner to maintain the required 0% delinquency rate for the GVTS/CBA.

- 2) Provide eligible employees requesting a Government Travel Charge Card with a copy of the BOA Cardholder Agreement and either a copy of this bulletin or the web location of this bulletin.
- 3) Ensure completeness of the Employee Acknowledgment Statement on the cardholder application.
- 4) Maintain a central file of the signed cardholder applications for all employees who are current cardholders.
- 5) Monitor the contractor-issued monthly charges and delinquency reports identified in Attachment B of this bulletin and review BOA reports to identify employees who: have left USDA; have violated the "*USDA Zero Tolerance Policy*" or have had additional administrative restrictions placed on their accounts. (Electronic and web-based reports should be used whenever possible to reduce paperwork in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act.)
- 6) Notify the employee, in writing, of possible misuse or delinquencies (30 days or greater), with a copy to the employee's supervisor. Provide the employee with seven (7) business days to respond. If an acceptable response is not received within seven (7) business days, the matter will be referred to the employee's supervisor for resolution. For consistent notification procedures within USDA, use the A/OPC Memo to Employee examples provided as Attachment C (Inappropriate Use Notice), Attachment D (Unauthorized Use Notice) or Attachment E (Delinquent Notice) to this bulletin.

In situations that require it, reactivate Government Travel Charge Cards for those employees who have had their Government Travel Charge Card deactivated for non-use, and when approved by the employee's supervisor, for authorized travel. For those employees who have lost their Government Travel Charge Card privileges because of misuse or delinquency, the A/OPC may not reactivate an employee's Government Travel Charge Card under any circumstances.

H. USE OF CASH TO PROCURE TRANSPORTATION TICKETS

FTR 301-51.100 states, "You must use a Government contractor-issued travel charge card or a centrally billed account (GVTS/CBA) to procure common carrier tickets when the cost is more than \$100. This regulation does not allow the use of cash or personal credit cards to purchase common carrier transportation except when the Agency authorized a traveler to use a reduced fare for group, charter, excursion arrangements, or under emergency circumstances where the use of other methods is not possible."

The Deputy Chief for Management and the Chief Financial Officer has the authority to approve the use of cash or non-Government charge to procure emergency passenger transportation costing more than \$100. This authority may be re-delegated by the Chief Financial Officer.

At the time of issuance of this bulletin, the Delegations of Authority provided in the General Manual, Title 130 – Agency General, Part 400 – Mission Statement, Subpart B – Delegations of Authority, 400.11 – Delegations of Authority for the Deputy Chief for Management, this authority has been re-delegated to "Administrative Officers" (State administrative officers, the Headquarters Administrative Officer, and the administrative officers for the Caribbean and Pacific Basin Areas) and to certain "Specialty Officers" within NRCS. This regulation also applies to non-Government travelers under invitational travel orders. Therefore, non-government persons under invitational travel orders must use a government-contracted travel management center for their common carrier tickets.

I. COLLECTION OF DELINQUENT AMOUNTS

In accordance with the cardholder agreement, employees are obligated to pay the undisputed balance within 30 days. Government Travel Charge Card account balances that are delinquent are eligible for the USDA automatic Government Travel Charge Card salary offset program. Upon written request from BOA, USDA will collect from an employee's disposable pay any undisputed amounts owed.

Administrative offset from the employee's disposable pay may not exceed 15% unless a cardholder authorizes a higher amount. USDA must follow the due process requirements contained in FTR 301-54.100 before any deductions can be made. An \$85 administrative fee shall be added to the delinquent balance when the salary offset is scheduled. NFC will notify the employee by letter informing them of their rights. Before initiating a salary offset action, the Agency will verify the employee has been reimbursed for a properly filed travel voucher.

Employees with delinquent Government Travel Charge Card accounts will be subject to disciplinary actions.

J. ONLINE PAYMENT TO BANK OF AMERICA

BOA offers a free online bill payment process to employees with a Government Travel Charge Card. [MyEasyPayment.com](https://www.myeasypayment.com) allows an employee to access and make a payment to their government charge account with ease and convenience at no cost. All payments made through [MyEasyPayment.com](https://www.myeasypayment.com) will be applied to the account within two to three (2-3) calendar days.

Please sign the "Attachment C" and return to supervisor. Any questions pertaining to this bulletin may be directed to Jan Lathum, Budget Analyst

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roylene Rides", is written on a light-colored rectangular background.

ROYLENE RIDES AT THE DOOR
State Conservationist

Attachments

Attachment A

Government Employees Standards of Conduct

The following excerpts are pertinent to the use of the Government Travel Charge Card. These excerpts are from Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 2635, "Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch", Section 2635.101, "Basic Obligations of Public Service":

"Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to laws and ethical principles above private gain." (For example, do not take advantage of the Government Travel Charge Card privileges for your personal use.)

"Employees shall put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties." (For example, abide by the Agency policy in carrying out your responsibilities as a cardholder.)

"Employees shall not knowingly make unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the government." (For example, do not make purchases with the Government Travel Charge Card if purchases have not been authorized.)

"Employees shall not use public office for private gain." (For example, do not use the Government Travel Charge Card to make a personal unauthorized purchase.)

"Employees shall satisfy in good faith their obligations as citizen, including all just financial obligations." (For example, pay your Government Travel Charge Card bill on time. A check returned for insufficient funds does not demonstrate good faith in paying your bills.)

"Employees shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law or the ethical standards set forth in this part." (For example, do not avoid agency policies and procedures for administrative convenience.)

Attachment B

AUTHORITIES

- 1) [Title 31, United States Code \(U.S.C\), section 1111 \(31 U.S.C. 1111\)](#). Provides rulemaking authority to improve economy and efficiency in the United States Government.
- 2) [The Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982 \(FMFIA\) \(Pub.L. 97-255 and 31 U.S.C. sec. 3512\)](#). Amends section 113 of the Accounting and Auditing Act of 1950 as to requirements for the performance of reviews of the systems of internal controls and the annual issuances of a statement (report) as to the adequacy of the Agency's internal controls to the President and Congress.
- 3) [Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act \(41 U.S.C. 433 \(b\)\(3\)\)](#). Directs the Administrator of the Office of Federal Procurement to provide Government-wide procurement policy and leadership in the development of procurement systems of the executive agencies.
- 4) [Chief Financial Officers Act \(CFO\) of 1990, as amended](#). Establishes a financial management leadership structure; requires long-range planning; requires audited financial statements for all trust and revolving fund operations; establishes a pilot project requiring Federal agencies to prepare and have audited agency-wide financial statements; and strengthens accountability reporting.
- 5) [Office of Management and Budget's \(OMB\) Circular A-123 and Appendix B \(Revised February 2006\)](#), Improving the Management of Government Charge Card Programs. Requires agencies to have an ongoing requirement to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken to comply with the requirements of this policy. For example, agencies must periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the controls put in place to mitigate the risks of payment delinquencies and charge card misuse.
- 6) [USDA Departmental Regulation \(DR\) 2300-001](#), "USDA Travel Card Regulation," October 20, 2003. Provides Zero Tolerance policy and procedures that USDA employees must follow for official travel. The full USDA policy may also be found at <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/>.
- 7) [Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998](#). The Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998 (TTRA) requires Federal employees to use Government Travel Charge Cards for all payment of official Government travel; and, amended Title 31, U.S.C. to: establish requirements for prepayment audits of Federal Agency transportation expenses, authorize reimbursement of Federal Agency employees for taxes incurred on travel or transportation reimbursements, and authorize test programs for the payment of Federal employee travel expenses and relocation expenses.
- 8) [Federal Travel Regulation](#) (FTR), 41 CFR Parts 301-51, 301-52, 301-54, 301-70, 301-71, and 301-76. The FTR governs temporary duty travel allowances.

Attachment C

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA) GOVERNMENT TRAVEL CARD PROGRAM ACKNOWLEDGMENT & ACCEPTANCE STATEMENT

1. The Government Travel Card Program provides travelers with a means of financing their official travel expenses without obtaining costly travel advances or using their own funds. Only official Government expenses incurred as a result of temporary duty travel may be charged to the travel charge card. Expenses include meals, lodging, rental car, transportation tickets, and any other authorized travel related expenses. Travelers are expected to use the travel charge card whenever and wherever practical for all these expenses prior to the use of an automatic teller machine (ATM). ATM use requires supervisory approval and is available for limited cash advance amounts where use of the travel charge card is impractical.
2. Use of the travel charge card for any other purpose than official Government travel business is NOT AUTHORIZED and is considered misuse of the travel charge card program. Delinquencies in payment of the monthly travel card billing or uses of Non-Sufficient Fund checks for payment are considered travel card abuse. Card misuse and abuse may be subject to disciplinary actions under the appropriate agency and civilian personnel regulations.
3. The “*USDA Zero Tolerance Policy*” strictly prohibits the following use of the card:
 - a. Unauthorized charges not associated with official travel.
 - (1) Personal and family member use of the card is forbidden.
 - (2) Additional prohibited activities are listed in Section 7b (7).
 - b. Charges while not in an official travel status.
 - (1) Use of the card in the vicinity of the official duty station or residence is forbidden unless used in connection with official travel.
 - (2) Cash withdrawals from an automated teller machine are also forbidden.
 - c. Shared use of the card with another employee for official travel purposes.
 - d. Account delinquency beyond a 30-day period.
 - e. Failure to use the card while on travel.
 - f. Failure to pay accounts with sufficient funds.
 - g. Failure to use Government issued voucher reimbursements to repay travel expenses.
 - h. Excessive cash advances not commensurate with official travel.

Cardholders should read and familiarize themselves with the contents of the bank's Card Agreement, the USDA Travel Card Regulation 2300-001 (<http://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/files/dr/DR2300-001.htm>) and agency specific policies regarding the use of the card. Questions concerning the card should be addressed to the local or primary travel card coordinator.

4. I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand the above policy. I agree to the terms of the Bank of America Card Agreement and to abide by the “*USDA*

Zero Tolerance Policy.” I understand that failure to comply with the terms of the Bank of America Card Agreement and to abide by the “USDA Zero Tolerance Policy” may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal.

_____ (SIGN/DATE)
SIGNATURE OF CARDHOLDER