

TRAVEL CARD



United States Department of Agriculture
Departmental Management
Office of the Chief Financial Officer
Financial Policy and Planning
Fiscal Policy Division
Washington, D.C. 20250

Travel Card Do's and Don'ts

Travel Card Do's:



1. **Do** use your card to pay for authorized, official travel expenses.
2. **Do** safeguard your card and protect it from being lost or stolen.
3. **Do** retain your receipts while on travel so you have accurate information to file a travel claim and reconcile your monthly statement.
4. **Do** submit payment in full for the travel card bill before the statement due date.
5. **Do** contact the bank customer service number in a timely manner, if you have questions about your monthly bill.
6. **Do** remember your card has a charge limit for food and automatic teller machine (ATM) withdrawals.
7. **Do** be aware that vendors report to the Department on the use of the card for non-travel related expenses.
8. **Do** obtain cash advances for official travel through an ATM, only if authorized by your agency.
9. **Do** follow your bank's dispute process for incorrect or erroneous charges.
10. **Do** become familiar with GSA's Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) and your agency's travel guidelines. Read the Agriculture Travel Regulation (ATR) DM-2300 or visit the USDA website for more travel card information.

Travel Card Don'ts:



1. **Don't** allow your travel card account to become delinquent. Delinquency occurs on the first day after the due date.
2. **Don't** put other employees' travel expenses on your card.
3. **Don't** use your travel card for personal expenditures not reimbursable on your travel voucher.
4. **Don't** use your travel card when you are not in official travel status.
5. **Don't** wait to report a lost or stolen travel card to the bank and your travel coordinator.
6. **Don't** forget to file your travel claim within 5 days after you complete your trip or every 14 days if you are on continuous travel.
7. **Don't** wait for your voucher reimbursement to pay your bill – see “Don't” item #1!
8. **Don't** use your travel voucher reimbursement for personal gain. Failure to pay the bank can result in termination of charge card privileges and/or garnishment of wages.
9. **Don't** charge office supplies, training, conference fees, photocopies, postal services, or equipment on the travel card. Use the purchase card or other acquisition procedures to procure non-travel services and products.
10. **Don't** obtain cash advances that exceed the authorized travel meals and incidentals (M&IE) per diem for the trip. Example: \$35.00 M&IE per diem x 5 days = \$175.00 is the authorized amount.

Important Travel Regulations:
Federal Travel Regulations (FTR)
General Services Administration
(GSA)
www.gsa.gov

FTR is contained in 41 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) chapters 300 – 304

Agriculture Travel Regulations (ATR)

<https://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/doc/DM2300-001.htm>

Be sure to check your Agency's travel directives!
US Bank URL
<https://access.usbank.com>



Cardholders should read and familiarize themselves with the contents of the bank's Card Agreement, the USDA Travel Card Regulation DR-2300-001 and agency specific policies regarding the use of the card. Additionally, cardholders should be familiar with FTR 301-51, 301-54, and 301-76. Questions concerning the card should be addressed to the local or primary travel card coordinator.

USDA Website for Travel Card Information:

www.usda.gov/procurement/ccsc/travel_card.htm

Visit this website for information on:

- Regulation, Policy, and Guides
- Guide to using U.S. Bank Access® Online
- U.S. Bank Access® Online Web-based Training
- Link to U.S. Bank Access® Online

Access® Online system and USDA policy training is required for cardholders prior to the issuance of a card. Web-based training for cardholders teaches the basics of what is expected of a cardholder, i.e., how to use the card properly, responsibility of users, etc. A quiz at the end of the course will be given to ensure that the training has been effective.

*Federal Travel Regulations (FTR 301-51-1) **require** the use of the Government contractor-issued travel charge card.*



Exemptions to the Use of the 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 card is impractical, e.g., group meals or when the travel card is not accepted)
8. Phone calls (when a Government calling card is available for use in accordance with Department policy)
9. When an employee has an application pending for the travel charge card
10. When individuals are traveling on invitational travel
11. New agency employees who must travel before receiving their travel card
12. Relocation allowances, except for en-route travel and house hunting trips

Your government travel card is a tool that assists you in the performance of your duties. The manner in which you use the travel card will reflect directly upon you as an employee and as an individual

You must use the card only for expenses incurred in connection with official travel. Possession of the card does not exempt you from the use of the Department's Travel Management Centers (TMC) or government contract carriers when required.

Use of the card does not relieve you of the responsibility to employ prudent travel practices and to observe rules and regulations governing travel at USDA, as set forth in the FTR, the ATR and any agency specific directives.

USDA Zero Tolerance Policy

The underlying objective of the "USDA Zero Tolerance Policy" is to eliminate **misuse and abuse** in the travel card program so that it does not become necessary to impose disciplinary procedures on any USDA employee.

The Zero Tolerance strictly prohibits the following misuses of the card:

1. Unauthorized charges and charges not associated with official travel
 - a. Personal and family member use of the card is forbidden
 - b. Additional prohibited activities are listed in Section 7b of the Government Travel Card Regulation, October 2003
2. Charges while not in an official travel status
 - a. Use of the 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 forbidden
3. Allow account to become delinquent
4. Failure to pay accounts with sufficient funds
5. Shared use of the card with another employee for official travel purposes
6. Failure to use the card while on travel unless exempted
7. Failure to properly use Government voucher reimbursements to repay travel expenses
8. Excessive cash advances, or cash advances not commensurate with official travel