

Department of Natural Resources Travel Card Program Policy and Procedures

I. State of Georgia Travel Card Program

The purpose of this policy is to define the State of Georgia Travel Card Program (Program) and to establish minimum standards for Program Management and Travel Card (Card) possession and use. This policy is not intended to replace current State of Georgia statutes, State Purchasing Division (SPD) guidelines, State Accounting Office (SAO) Travel Regulations, or Executive Orders.

The State Travel Card Agreement with American Express (Provider) is the only authorized travel card for use by State employees. The Program provides an alternative to cash advances for travel and provides State employees who travel extensively on State business an alternative to using personal credit cards. Use of the card does not create a financial responsibility for the State of Georgia. **The State of Georgia is not liable to the Provider for any charges on the Card.** All amounts charged to the Card, including and without limitation, purchases, delinquency fees, or assessments, is the cardholder's liability. The cardholder must follow established travel reimbursement procedures for all travel expenses, including those placed on the Card, and is responsible for timely payment directly to the Provider for monthly balances.

Authorized travel expenses are defined in the SAO Statewide Travel Regulations updated August 1, 2007. These regulations can be found on the DNR Intranet.

At no time should the Card be used for personal purchases, regardless of the circumstance. Additionally, supervisors or approving officials of such actions, who knowingly or through willful neglect approve personal purchases with the Card, are subject to the same disciplinary actions as the offender. Utilizing the Card for personal use may result in disciplinary action, including termination from state employment with possible criminal charges filed against violators of this policy.

II. Program Administration Roles

A. State Purchasing Division Responsibilities

1. The Department of Administrative Services, State Purchasing Division (SPD), is responsible for the statewide agreement and policy level management of the Program;
2. SPD will issue and maintain the Program Policy contained herein. If changes are needed statewide, the State Program Manager will issue an updated policy and notify all Card Program Administrators;
3. The State Program Manager will serve as a central point of contact to address all issues and changes necessary to the overall Program and coordinate such changes with the contractor and Program participants;
4. SPD will approve entity participation in the Program, and
5. The SPD Process Improvement and Audits unit will conduct periodic reviews of Card activities of all entities when that Entity falls under SPD authority. Reviews will focus on the level of compliance with statewide policies and procedures.

B. Entity Program Administrator Responsibilities

Each Entity using the Program must contact the State Program Manager in order to use the Program. Each Entity must appoint a Card Program Administrator to serve as a liaison with the State Program Manager. The Entity Program Administrator responsibilities include:

1. Establish the internal policy for use of the Card that are within the terms and conditions of the State Policy as well as best business practices and controls;
2. Establish sufficient internal controls to ensure cardholder compliance with State Travel Regulations and Program Policy, including Hotel/Motel Tax Exemption requirements;
3. Review and approve all requests for individual participation in the Program;
4. Monitor and motivate cardholders to maintain their Program accounts in a current status; no cardholder may have an account in excess of 60 days past due;
5. Ensure that all cardholders and approving officials are aware of this position as the liaison with the State Program Manager;
6. Complete all required forms for the issuance of Cards; and
7. Any other duties as required to ensure enforcement of the State Travel Regulations.

C. Entity Program Management Responsibilities

Entity management must:

1. Establish procedures to identify and approve employees who need Cards;
2. Establish procedures to follow in the event of lost or stolen Cards;
3. Establish procedures to cancel and collect Cards when it is determined that Cards are no longer needed or upon termination or transfer of the cardholder;
4. Identify appropriate spending limits and approving officials, usually the cardholder's supervisor;
5. Ensure cardholders complete required training to include a knowledge of SAO Travel Regulations;
6. Ensure cardholders sign the Travel Cardholder Agreement form prior to receiving Cards;
7. Establish travel reimbursement procedures that include supervisory review and approval of all travel reimbursement requests prior to payment to the employee;
8. Establish procedures for the retention of cardholder travel reimbursement requests and supporting documentation. Minimum requirements are:
 - a. State of Georgia or Entity-specific travel expense form;
 - b. Receipts indicating nature of expenditure, including merchant name and location; daily room rates for hotels; and total amount of the transaction including the indication of a "zero" balance for lodging transactions.
9. Establish procedures for annual independent (non-supervisory) reviews of cardholder expense reports and supervisor approvals. Internal policy should define the frequency, scope, and methodology of reviews; and
10. Ensure cardholders are reimbursed within 30-days for authorized travel expenditures.

D. Entity Program Cardholder Responsibilities

Travel Card rewards, i.e. frequent flyer miles, lodging credits, etc, or traveler's insurance are not allowed to accumulate or be redeemed by using the State Travel Card. Cardholder responsibilities include:

1. Complete Entity Program Training including a complete understanding of SAO Travel Regulations and Entity travel reimbursement policy and procedures;
2. Sign the Travel Cardholder Agreement form, prior to card distribution;

3. Use the Card for official State of Georgia business travel for items indicated in Section III. Program Compliance, Section C, Allowable Purchases;
4. Obtain original, itemized receipts for Card transactions;
5. Cardholder must reconcile purchases each month by:
 - a. Verifying each transaction against the Card statement to ensure valid charges are made to the account, and
 - b. Following established Entity Travel Reimbursement processes;
6. Retain Card Statements and receipts for seven (7) years; and
7. Return the Card to the Entity Card Program Administrator if requested or if terminating your employment with the Entity.

III. Program Compliance

A. Internal Controls

Each entity must develop and document (1) guidelines for distribution of Cards to cardholders and (2) internal control procedures that ensure Card usage is consistent with State and internal policies, and SAO Travel Regulations.

Internal controls should address separation of duties. No cardholder shall be his/her own reviewer/approver. Sufficient internal controls must be established and implemented to ensure that a knowledgeable individual, such as a direct supervisor, within the organization reviews the travel reimbursement request and receipts. Reimbursement must be made to the employee in a timely manner so that the employee can make timely payment to the Provider.

If the SPD Process Improvement and Audits unit determines that internal controls are not adequate, that unit has the authority to order policy improvements and/or place card restrictions on the Entity until such controls are established, documented, and implemented. DOAS reserves the right to appoint a 3rd party audit at the Entity's expense.

SPD will cancel any Program Cards that are confirmed as 90-days delinquent.

B. Card Issuance Requirements

1. Cardholders must use the Travel Card Profile form to request a card.
2. Cardholders must be State employees who travel regularly in the performance of job responsibilities and who have received training in

- State of Georgia Travel Regulations and Entity travel reimbursement procedures;
3. Cardholders must attend Entity-provided travel regulation training and sign the Travel Cardholder Agreement form prior to receipt of the card; and
 4. Cardholders must receive a copy of this Policy and SAO Travel Regulations.

C. Allowable Purchases

All purchases made with the Card must be for official State of Georgia business travel only for the cardholder whose name appears on the card. Accordingly, all cardholders should familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Official Code of Georgia, Annotated, § 45-10-1 es.seq. Regarding State Employee Code of Ethics and Conflicts of Interest.

The following types of purchases meet the definition of travel-related expenses and are the only expenses allowed on the Card:

1. Airline tickets;
2. Ground transportation (airport shuttles, taxi, train, subway, rental vehicles, fuel for rental and personal vehicles);
3. Lodging, and
4. Meals (however, will only be reimbursed within State Travel Regulation dollar limits)

D. Prohibited Purchases

Purchases of goods or services that are for personal benefit are strictly prohibited. Utilizing the Card for personal use may result in disciplinary action, including cancellation of the Card and/or termination from State employment with possible criminal charges filed against violators of this policy.

Cardholders cannot pay travel expenses for other individuals, including other State employees, with the Card. If an exception to this requirement is needed, contact the State Program Manager for prior, written approval.

Cardholders cannot use the Card for the following, even if for State of Georgia business travel purposes:

1. Cash advances;
2. Entertainment (including movies and games);
3. Alcohol (including alcoholic beverages with meals permitted in Section C above);
4. Repairs, maintenance, and fuel for State-owned vehicles; and
5. Anything not permitted in Section C above.

E. Training

Entity Card Program Administrators must develop a training program that addresses cardholder and approver responsibilities to include State Travel Card Policy, SAO Travel Regulations, and DNR travel reimbursement procedures. Approvers/reviewers must also complete training for adequate understanding of approval processes and documentation requirements.

IV. Card Program Policy Violations

Cardholders are expected to adhere to all State and Entity policies and procedures governing the use of the Card. At no time will the Card be used for personal purchases regardless of the circumstance. Additionally, supervisors or approving officials of such actions who knowingly or through willful neglect approve personal purchases with the Card are subject to the same disciplinary actions as the offender. Utilizing the Card for personal use will result in disciplinary action, including termination from state employment with possible criminal charges filed against violators of this policy.

V. Department of Natural Resources Procedures to Enforce Policy

A. DNR Program Administrator

The Program Administrator for DNR is Rhonda Henslee. Her contact information is:

2 Martin Luther King, Jr., Dr.
Suite 1070 East Tower
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
(404) 463-2062
Rhonda.Henslee@dnr.state.ga.us

B. To Request a Card

You must be a full-time State employee who travels at least twice a month. If you meet this requirement, you can fill out a Travel Card Profile form and have your Supervisor/Approving Official sign the form. Attach a justification letter and route the request through your Division Director or appointee to the Program Administrator.

C. Lost or Stolen Cards

Please call 1-800-528-2122 to report a lost or stolen Card. An email must be sent to notify the Program Administrator too.

D. Canceling a Card

If you leave DNR, the Cardholder or Supervisor/Approving Official will need to email the Program Administrator to cancel the Card. In addition, if you have not used your card for more than 90 days, the Program Administrator may automatically cancel your Card. The Supervisor needs to ensure that the Card is shredded.

E. Cardholder Responsibilities

Each month that the Card is used, the Cardholder will need to match up receipts to the Statement along with the Travel Reimbursement form signed by the Supervisor/Approving Official. The Cardholder must retain this information for seven (7) years and provide copies upon request.

Also, any change in personal information needs to be emailed to the Program Administrator. Examples are names changes, contact information changes, etc...

F. Approving Officials

The Approving Official is the Supervisor of the employee that signs all travel reimbursement forms.

G. Violations

The Card will be monitored each month. Any misuse of the Card will be reported to the Cardholder and the appropriate Division Director or appointee.