

**MANUAL**  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Governor's Office

**Subject:**

Commonwealth Travel Procedures Manual  
(Effective January 1, 2012)

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**By Direction of:**



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This manual is designed to assist all commonwealth travelers on official commonwealth business in making informed and cost effective travel decisions.

The authority for this manual is derived from [Management Directive 230.10, Commonwealth Travel Policy](#), Effective January 1, 2012.

This manual replaces, in its entirety, *Manual 230.1*, dated June 17, 2009, Effective July 1, 2009. This manual will be reviewed for updates periodically.

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## SECTION ONE: AIR TRAVEL

**1.1 Booking.** Airfare must be reserved via the commonwealth's online booking tool. Those who do not have access to the online booking tool must book their flights with the contracted travel agency or have an agency assigned travel arranger make arrangements for them. The online booking tool can be accessed at [www.travel.state.pa.us](http://www.travel.state.pa.us).

- International flights that include more than one country visited may be reserved through the contracted travel agency.

- Commonwealth travelers who are not employed by the commonwealth must follow the same procedures as employees if their travel is paid for by the commonwealth. Commonwealth travelers that do not have an assigned SAP identification number are not permitted to arrange their own travel. Travel arrangements must be made by an agency assigned travel arranger or designated commonwealth employee.

Commonwealth travelers are expected to book the lowest priced coach class airfare for domestic and international flights. Business and first class tickets are not reimbursable. It is not permissible to confirm a higher fare for upgrade eligibility or personal reasons. Upgrades at the commonwealth's expense are not permitted. A complimentary upgrade must be noted on the Travel Expense Report (TER).

Commonwealth travelers who are combining personal travel with official commonwealth business may only do so when the personal portion does not add any cost to the commonwealth. Travel arrangements must be made to accommodate the business duties of the commonwealth traveler and not personal preference. Strictly personal travel cannot be confirmed using the commonwealth's online booking tool.

**1.2 Lowest Logical Airfare.** Commonwealth travelers on official commonwealth business must book the lowest priced coach airfare that meets their approved itinerary and commonwealth travel policy. They are expected to use their best judgment to save on airfare cost.

Lower cost flights must be chosen within two hours before or after the preferred flight time when the alternative flight saves \$200.00 or more roundtrip.

Connecting flights must be chosen over nonstop flights when the connection does not add more than two hours to travel time and the connection saves \$200.00 or more. Commonwealth travelers are not required to take a lower fare if a change of airline at the connection point is required.

Domestic flights over \$800.00 roundtrip will be reviewed by COTO prior to the ticket issuance. Alternative options may be offered or supervisor approval may be required.

Lower cost fares, as outlined above, that are declined must be justified and imperative to the job functions of the commonwealth traveler.

- 1.3 Alternative Airports.** Commonwealth travelers shall view alternate airports for additional savings opportunities. Alternative airports within 90 miles of the home airport should be considered if the savings is \$200.00 or more. When there is a savings of \$300.00 or more, the alternative airport must be used.

The commonwealth traveler will be reimbursed for mileage when using a personal vehicle, or car rental and gasoline (whichever is less costly), and parking, if necessary.

In select areas, Park-and-Fly (hotel and parking in one rate) packages have been negotiated and may be utilized when selecting an alternative airport and a flight departure prior to 8:00 am.

- 1.4 Form of Payment.** All flights must be charged to agency airline cards, refer to Section 6.1, Agency Airline Card. The use of personal credit cards is not permitted.

- 1.5 Cancellations.** When a trip is cancelled after the ticket has been issued; the reservation must be cancelled via the online booking tool or contracted travel agency. Ticketed reservations must be cancelled at least one hour prior to the scheduled flight.

If the ticket is refundable, the contracted travel agency must be notified and a refund requested.

It is the commonwealth traveler's responsibility to closely examine the cancellation/exchange rules and fees before purchasing.

- 1.6 Exchanges.** Credits for cancelled tickets should be used as soon as possible. Most airlines require tickets to be exchanged and used one (1) year from original purchase. Any fees and/or additional collections must be charged to the agency airline card. Unused tickets that are not used prior to their expiration lose their value.

It is the commonwealth traveler's responsibility to use airline credits prior to expiration. Credits shall be used for their next trip if the airline serves the destination.

- 1.7 International.** International travel must be approved by the Governor's Office prior to confirming air flights. The required form is available on the travel website. (For additional information and agency procedure, contact your agency head.) An approval number will be assigned which must be supplied at the time of booking.

## SECTION TWO: GROUND TRAVEL

- **2.1 Temporary Fleet Vehicles.** An employee who needs to travel for commonwealth business originating in Harrisburg (providing that the employee does not have a permanently assigned vehicle or an agency pool vehicle is not available) must use a temporary fleet vehicle when available. The Department of General Services (DGS), Bureau of Vehicle Management, manages a fleet of vehicles for temporary use by commonwealth agencies. Refer to [Management Directive 615.1, Temporary Assignment of Commonwealth Automotive Fleet Vehicles](#).

Temporary fleet vehicles include Voyager fuel cards and EZPass transponder. Fuel and turnpike fees are included in the daily rate. Temporary fleet vehicles must be refueled using the Voyager card. Reservations for temporary fleet vehicles must be made electronically via the DGS website at <http://www.dgsweb.state.pa.us/ExtraNetPortal/apps.aspx>.

- **2.2 Car Rental.** If a temporary fleet vehicle is not available, commonwealth employees must choose the least expensive option between a rental vehicle or mileage reimbursement for use of their personal vehicle. The commonwealth has arrangements with preferred commercial rental car suppliers, that will provide rental vehicles to commonwealth employees. Car rentals must be used when it is determined that: 1) a temporary fleet vehicle is not available and 2) renting a car is the least expensive form of transportation. A worksheet and car rental rates are available at [www.travel.state.pa.us](http://www.travel.state.pa.us) to help commonwealth travelers determine the least expensive means of ground transportation. An employee who does not choose the least expensive option may not be reimbursed or fully reimbursed.

Car rentals must be reserved through the online booking tool and the preferred vendor. Commonwealth travelers, who do not have access to the online booking tool, must reserve with the contracted travel agency or have an agency assigned travel arranger make arrangements for them by using the online booking tool or call the contracted travel agency. Commonwealth travelers that do not have an assigned SAP identification number are not permitted to arrange their own travel. Travel arrangements must be made by an agency assigned travel arranger or designated commonwealth employee.

Commonwealth travelers who are 21 years or older and have a valid driver's license may operate vehicles under the agreement. For 15 passenger vans the minimum age is 25.

Approved rental car sizes are economy, compact, or intermediate (midsize), including hybrids. Other vehicle types require business need justification. Upgrades to other vehicle types are permitted so long as there is no additional cost to the commonwealth.

Vehicle rental rates do not include fuel and travelers must decline optional fuel offerings. The commonwealth traveler must refuel the rental vehicle prior to returning it to the rental car supplier with an equal amount of fuel as when it was picked up.

- Collision damage waiver insurance and liability insurance are included in the commonwealth rates. Commonwealth travelers, at their option, may purchase personal accident and personal effects insurance coverage; however, the commonwealth will not reimburse these expenses.

The rental receipt and car rental contract must be included with reimbursement submission of receipts.

- **2.3 Personal Automobile.** A commonwealth employee is only authorized to use his or her personally-owned vehicle, when: 1) it is the least expensive option (See Section 2.2, above.) and no temporary fleet vehicles are available **OR** 2) the supervisor determines in writing that use of the least expensive option is clearly not efficient. Employees are to secure supervisory authorization for use of a personally-owned vehicle in advance of such use. When an employee is authorized to use a personally-owned vehicle, the employee will be reimbursed at the higher Privately Owned Vehicle Reimbursement Rate established by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) in effect on the date(s) of travel. The current rate is listed at BCPO website. When the GSA rate changes, the commonwealth reimbursement rate changes with the same effective date.

- If an employee chooses to use his or her personally-owned vehicle but is not authorized to do so, the employee shall only be reimbursed at a rate equal to the lowest U.S. Government's General Services Administration Privately Owned Vehicle Mileage Reimbursement Rate as found in the Federal Travel Regulation Bulletin.

Mileage traveled by commonwealth travelers between their residence and headquarters is considered commuting miles. Commuting costs are not reimbursable. Commonwealth travelers who are required to travel from their residence to a temporary worksite will be reimbursed either from their residence or their office headquarters, whichever distance is shorter.

- 2.4 Shuttles and Public Transportation.** When traveling by air or train, commonwealth travelers should use shuttle services or public transportation when such options are available and less expensive than other means of ground transportation.

- 2.5 Train.** Coach class is the only approved service when traveling by domestic Amtrak train. Amtrak is encouraged when traveling to/from Harrisburg, Philadelphia, New York City and Washington DC and a cost savings is realized. Other cities served by Amtrak should be considered when there is a savings.

Amtrak tickets must be reserved directly through Amtrak at [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com) or telephone and paid for with a corporate travel card or personal card. Amtrak passes are available for frequent trips.

International rail passes and point-to-point tickets must be reserved through the contracted travel agency prior to departure.

## SECTION THREE: LODGING

- 3.1 Lodging Expense.** Commonwealth travelers should expect services and accommodations that are safe and comfortable, not lavish or extravagant.

Commonwealth travelers on official commonwealth business are allowed lodging expenses when their destination is located more than 50 miles from both their headquarters and residence. Written pre-approval from an agency head or designated deputy must be obtained when lodging is required within this 50 mile radius. The approval must be submitted with the commonwealth traveler's receipts when requesting reimbursement.

Lodging expenses are reimbursed at actual cost within prescribed limits. Detailed receipts from the lodging property are required.

Upgraded accommodations that are an additional charge are not allowed. A complimentary upgrade must be noted on the TER.

- 3.2 Booking.** Lodging arrangements must be made through the commonwealth's online booking tool. Individuals who do not have access to the online booking tool must book their lodging with the contracted travel agency or have an agency assigned travel arranger make arrangements for them by using the online booking tool or call the contracted travel agency. Commonwealth travelers that do not have an assigned SAP identification number are not permitted to arrange their own travel. Travel arrangements must be made by an agency assigned travel arranger or designated commonwealth employee.

When available, commonwealth travelers must choose a commonwealth preferred property. Choosing a non-preferred property requires a business related justification. If a preferred property is not available, then a state government, unspecified government rate or lower must be confirmed at the time of reservation. The maximum allowable lodging rate for that destination must be adhered to.

Commonwealth travelers are not required to stay in tourist class properties to obtain a lower rate.

- 3.3 Maximum Allowable Lodging Rate.** The commonwealth's maximum per night lodging rates follow GSA maximum allowable lodging rates excluding taxes. Commonwealth travelers will only be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred, within the maximum allowable rate.

International maximum per night lodging rates can be found on the U.S. State Department website at <http://aoprals.state.gov>.



In instances where obtained lodging is not within the maximum GSA lodging rate, specific business justification is required. If an audit determines that the lodging could have been obtained within the maximum allowable rate, the commonwealth traveler may be responsible for the additional cost. Justification for booking must be imperative to the commonwealth traveler's official commonwealth business and must be given at the time of booking and must be submitted with reimbursement requests.

- 3.4 Tax Exemption.** (42 Pa C.S.A. 8522) The commonwealth is not subject to hotel occupancy or sales taxes imposed by local or county governments. The commonwealth is subject to state hotel occupancy tax only, (72 P.S. 7210). Commonwealth travelers will be reimbursed for this 6%.

Commonwealth travelers must present the completed REV1220 form for tax exemption to the hotel upon check-in. This form is available at the online booking tool and at [www.travel.state.pa.us](http://www.travel.state.pa.us).

These tax provisions apply only to lodging in Pennsylvania. Lodging outside Pennsylvania is not tax exempt and all taxes are reimbursable.

- 3.5 Form of Payment.** All lodging must be guaranteed with a credit card at the time of booking to hold the reservation. Commonwealth travelers who do not have a credit card and qualify to use the agency lodging card for payment must make reservations through the contracted travel agency following procedures outlined at [www.travel.state.pa.us](http://www.travel.state.pa.us); refer to Section 6.2, Agency Lodging Card.

Lodging payment is made at the time of check-in. Corporate travel cards must be used for payment when the commonwealth traveler possesses one. If the commonwealth traveler does not have a corporate travel card, other acceptable forms of payment are the agency lodging card, personal credit card, or cash.

- 3.6 Cancellation.** Commonwealth travelers should avoid nonrefundable rates. It is the commonwealth traveler or agency assigned travel arranger's responsibility to understand the cancellation rules of the room confirmed. Nonrefundable rates cannot be changed or cancelled; therefore, the commonwealth traveler is accepting the risk of a non-reimbursable cancellation fee.

Commonwealth travelers must cancel lodging arrangements according to the property's cancellation policy. No-show charges and penalties will not be reimbursed when the commonwealth traveler does not cancel reservations within the allotted time.

In the case of an emergency, when all efforts have been taken, and a fee is still charged, an exception must be requested from BCPO to have the fee reimbursed.

**3.7 Conference Lodging.** Conferences are not always confirmed at the lowest rate or a government rate. The commonwealth traveler is required to attempt to find lower cost lodging when the conference rate is higher than the maximum allowed lodging rate. That effort shall consist of attempting to obtain a lower rate at the same property or obtaining a lower rate at an alternative property within close proximity. Booking requirements (refer to Section 3.2, Booking) must be adhered to. When required to book with a hotel directly, and the rate is in an acceptable range, the commonwealth traveler may book through the conference or hotel directly.

When the conference does not have an official hotel, the commonwealth traveler is required to obtain a property within reasonable proximity to the conference at or below the maximum allowed rate, using preferred properties when possible. Additional transportation cost, if not staying at the conference headquarters, should be considered in the evaluation.

When it is required by the conference for an attendee to stay at a particular property and/or confirm the accommodations through the organization, the commonwealth traveler must include documentation of this requirement (such as the registration instruction sheet) with the receipt submission when requesting reimbursement.

When an agency is hosting a conference, the agency assigned travel arranger must attempt to use a preferred hotel if it meets their conference and rooming needs by contacting the hotel's sales department. If a non-preferred hotel is utilized, refer to Section 3.3, Maximum Allowable Lodging Rate. Information about procedures for booking a group is available on [www.travel.state.pa.us](http://www.travel.state.pa.us).

**3.8 Extended Stay.** Commonwealth travelers who are required to work away from their residence or primary worksite for 60 days or more may enter into an extended stay lodging agreement. Requests must be approved in advance and submitted through BCPO for approval. (For additional information and agency procedure, contact your agency head.) Failure to obtain approval prior to entering into a lodging agreement will result in the employee being liable for any costs.

Detailed justification comparing regular travel reimbursement and alternative lodging costs must be provided. The commonwealth's preferred extended stay properties and rates must be included in the comparison where available.

Reimbursement will be limited to lodging, necessary utilities (cable and phone are excluded), and mileage or transportation costs for a biweekly roundtrip between the worksite and the commonwealth traveler's permanent residence or headquarters. Subsistence expenses are not allowed. Mileage is not paid between lodging and temporary worksite.

## SECTION FOUR: SUBSISTENCE

- 4.1 General.** Allowances for subsistence are not flat rates and only amounts actually expended may be claimed. Reimbursement is subject to the limitations set forth in this section.

Subsistence is not allowed for commonwealth travelers who have been granted extended stay lodging agreements.

Reimbursement for alcoholic beverages is prohibited.

- 4.2 Reimbursement Amounts.** Employees who are not in travel status should refer to their collective bargaining agreements/memoranda of understanding for guidelines with regard to when and at what rates subsistence reimbursement may be available. Commonwealth travelers who are not represented by a union may be reimbursed for a meal up to \$8.00 if they are 50 miles or more from their residence and headquarters; and work more than two hours past their regular shift. Commonwealth travelers who are less than 50 miles away may be reimbursed for a meal up to \$8.00 if they are required to work two hours past their regular shift and are given less than two hours notice of the requirement.

Commonwealth travelers in overnight travel status on official commonwealth business may be reimbursed for meals, including tax and tips; the maximum reimbursement is not to exceed maximum GSA overnight subsistence allowance in a 24 hour period. The 24 hour period begins upon departure from home or headquarters, whichever is applicable, on official travel status. Detailed information is available at [www.travel.state.pa.us](http://www.travel.state.pa.us) or <http://www.gsa.gov>.

When the overnight travel encompasses a portion that is less than 24 hours, the subsistence reimbursement is limited up to 12.5% of the maximum daily reimbursement rate per full three hour period.

Commonwealth travelers who are provided meals during the course of their travel must deduct a corresponding meal rate from the maximum daily meal reimbursement rate of their subsistence reimbursement claim for each meal provided: 22% breakfast; 22% lunch; 56% dinner or the corresponding equivalent in a high-cost area.

Meals include those provided by hotels, meetings, conferences or any other source. Meals classified as continental breakfast do not need to be deducted. When a meal is provided in the cost of the hotel room and the commonwealth traveler opts to eat elsewhere, reimbursement for that meal will be made within the prescribed maximum daily meal reimbursement rate.

**4.3 High Cost Area.** Increased subsistence allowances are available in locations designated as high-cost areas. Subsistence allowances for these areas follow the GSA Meals and Incidental Expenses table. Information is available at [www.travel.state.pa.us](http://www.travel.state.pa.us) or [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov). The commonwealth will only reimburse the meal portion of these allowances and will not reimburse the incidental amounts as defined by the GSA. Incidental amounts are defined on the GSA website. Reimbursements for high cost areas, follow the same guidelines in Section 4.2, Reimbursement Amounts.

**4.4 Meetings.** Luncheon or dinner meetings sponsored by the commonwealth will be paid under contract; therefore, no claims for such expenses may be presented on the TER.

Commonwealth travelers on official commonwealth business attending luncheon or dinner meetings, not sponsored by the commonwealth, are entitled to receive reimbursement for actual costs incurred with complete justification for incurred expenses that must be included with the submission of the TER. Justification includes matching receipts, approved expense verification methods, and when required, explanations in the corresponding comments section in the TER, provided that:

- The luncheon or dinner meeting is planned in advance and includes persons not employed by the commonwealth.
- The meal is an integral part of the meeting.
- The meal is served at the same establishment that hosts the meeting.
- The purpose of the meeting is to discuss business and the nature of the business is stated on the TER.

**4.5 Subsistence Expense Incurred on Behalf of Others.** Agency heads are authorized to incur reasonable expenses on behalf of others. Agency heads are also authorized to incur reasonable subsistence expenses on behalf of others and to approve reasonable subsistence expenses incurred by their deputies on behalf of others when the expenses are incurred as part of a business meeting under the following circumstances:

- The purpose of the meeting is to discuss official commonwealth business.
- The meeting includes either persons not employed by the commonwealth or employees of other commonwealth agencies whose attendance is relative to the official commonwealth business being conducted.
- The meal is an integral part of the meeting.

Commonwealth travelers covered by this section, such as employees required to transfer patients or prisoners, are at times required to spend money in the course of their official duties to satisfy expenses incurred on behalf of others.

Agency heads are responsible for submitting to BCPO, a list of employees eligible to incur expenses on behalf of others under this section.

Complete justification for incurring expenses must be included on the TER. Justification shall include:

- A list of names, positions, and agencies of individuals for whom the expenses were incurred.
- An explanation of the circumstances requiring expenses to be incurred on behalf of others. Itemized receipts for the expenses incurred are required.

Agency heads must request approval for additional agency personnel to incur expenses on behalf of others by submitting to BCPO a request containing full justification for the exception.

## SECTION FIVE: TRAVEL CREDITS

**5.1 Ethics.** The *Governor's Code of Conduct, 4 PA Code 7.151*, and the *Public Official and Employee Ethics Act, 65 Pa.C.S.A. §1101 et seq.*, prohibit the acceptance, retention, or use of personal travel/products/services by commonwealth travelers and appointed officials of promotions and offers including; but not limited to, frequent flyer credits, discount car rentals, hotel promotions, award certificates, bonus flights, reduced fare coupons, denied boarding compensation, cash, merchandise, or gifts obtained in the course of official commonwealth business.

**5.2 Frequent Flyer Guest Programs.** Commonwealth travelers on official commonwealth business may open and maintain frequent flyer/guest accounts with airlines, hotels, car rental companies, train service and other travel suppliers. Any credits, promotions, certificates, or other considerations earned in these programs must be used for official commonwealth travel.

Commonwealth travelers may not select a travel supplier based on the benefits of the frequent traveler program.

**5.3 Credit Card.** Commonwealth travelers may not use a personal credit card in place of the commonwealth corporate travel card or agency airline card in order to gain benefits from their credit card company.

**5.4 Other Compensation.** Commonwealth travelers on official commonwealth business who receive vouchers for denied boarding must use those vouchers for future commonwealth travel. If the voucher is transferable, the voucher can be used by another commonwealth traveler of the agency who is traveling on official commonwealth business.

Commonwealth travelers on commonwealth business who receive compensation for any customer-service-related issue must use that compensation in the course of conducting official commonwealth business.

## SECTION SIX: PAYMENT

### 6.1 **Agency Airline Card.** Each agency has an assigned purchasing card for airline charges.

All air transportation is billed to the agency airline card automatically when reserved via the online booking tool or the contracted travel agency. Commonwealth travelers are not permitted to use their corporate travel card or personal card for air flights.

BCPO reconciles monthly airline card billings to the airline usage report. Agencies review monthly billings and report discrepancies to the Office of the Budget, Office of Comptroller Operations, Bureau of Commonwealth Accounting; which works with agencies to resolve discrepancies.

Payments to the agency airline card issuer will be made centrally from the purchasing fund.

Agencies reimburse the purchasing fund via cost allocation in SAP at the end of each billing cycle. Agencies must ensure fund availability for the cost allocation process.

### 6.2 **Agency Lodging Card.** Each agency has an assigned purchasing card for overnight lodging and tax charges. Monthly charges are paid through the purchasing fund and cost-allocated back to the agency. Physical cards are in the possession of [COTO](#), who is the secondary cardholder. The use of the agency lodging card for payment to the hotels must be authorized by [COTO](#). Instructions for requesting the use of the agency lodging card are available on [www.travel.state.pa.us](http://www.travel.state.pa.us).

Each agency must designate a staff member to be the primary cardholder. The responsibilities of this person include the oversight and reconciliation of charges to the card. The agency is responsible for disputing any unauthorized charges with the lodging vendor. Charges on the monthly statement should be supported by the reservation confirmations and/or reports from the contracted travel agency.

The agency lodging card can be used only for lodging costs and applicable taxes. Incidental expenditures remain the responsibility of the commonwealth traveler. A commonwealth traveler who chooses not to use the agency lodging card may use a personal card for payment.

The agency lodging card can be used for payment of lodging for commonwealth travelers on official commonwealth business by:

- o Groups of ten or more overnight rooms at the same hotel during the same time;
- o An employee who does not have a corporate travel card and is traveling to a one time event;

- An employee who travels less than four times in a one-year period and does not have a corporate travel card;
- An employee awaiting the issuance of a corporate travel card;
- Commonwealth travelers not employed by the commonwealth, such as; board members, or commissioners, or witnesses.

All costs charged to the agency lodging card will default to General Ledger account "6311010, Travel – Lodging". The agency must provide to the Office of the Budget, Office of Comptroller Operations, Bureau of Financial Management default coding to be used, such as cost center, SAP fund, internal order number, or Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) element.

[COTO](#) approves or declines the use of the agency lodging card, and notifies the agency. Upon approval, [COTO](#) will notify the hotel and advise the agency that the payment is confirmed.

[COTO](#) will provide commonwealth traveler names and other pertinent information to BCPO. BCPO will match the information against the TER to ensure compliance with applicable policies.

**6.3 Corporate Travel Card.** Participation in the corporate travel card program is mandatory for employees expected to be in overnight travel status four or more times each year. It is strongly recommended that any employee eligible to receive a corporate travel card should do so if they expect to travel on any official commonwealth business. The card issuer will issue corporate travel cards.

Employees can use their cards only while in travel status and only for authorized business purposes.

Corporate cards will be suspended or canceled for misuse or nonpayment:

- Employees who use the corporate travel card for personal purposes.
- Employees whose uncontested corporate travel card charges become 61 days past due.
- At 91 days past due delinquent charges and late fees of management employees will be subject to recovery procedures. BCPO will withhold the maximum amount allowable from the employee's paycheck each pay period, up to the total amount. BCPO will forward amounts withheld to the card issuer until the debt is paid in full.

Employees whose cards have been cancelled are not eligible to utilize any other commonwealth payment method. Such employees may also be subject to disciplinary action. The bank will not reinstate canceled cards. Late fees are not reimbursable.

Agency heads will establish procedures to ensure compliance with policy and appoint agency coordinators.



The Office of the Budget, Office of Comptroller Operations, Chief Accounting Officer will appoint a program administrator.

Supervisors will:

- Within five work days of receipt of notification of an employee who is 91 days delinquent, advise employee by memorandum the corporate card account is 91 days past due and schedule in-person or telephone meeting to review.
- Question employee regarding whether debt is uncontested, whether employee has received commonwealth reimbursements to which employee is entitled, and what arrangements employee has made with card issuer for payment of the debt. Depending upon the employee's answer, proceed as follows:
  - If debt is uncontested, employee has received eligible travel expense reimbursements, and employee has neither paid charges nor made arrangements with card issuer for payment, issue written reprimand and provide copy to agency coordinator.
  - Inform management employee that outstanding charge amounts due will be recovered from management employee's paycheck.
  - If debt is contested, contact card issuer to ascertain status of adjustment due.
  - If arrangements for payment have been made with card issuer, contact card issuer to confirm that arrangements are satisfactory.
  - If eligible reimbursements have not been received, contact BCPO, Travel and Payroll Accounting Services Division, Travel Audit Section, to ascertain status of outstanding TER requests and if they were timely filed.

Agency Human Resources Office will:

- Recover cards from terminated employees, and forward to agency coordinators.
- Impose discipline in accordance with policy.
- Begin recovery of uncontested delinquent balances from management employees.

Agency Coordinators will:

- Ensure employees are aware of the card availability and understand the program.
- Distribute and process applications and information.
- Review applications for completeness and accuracy.
- Cosign and mail applications.
- Update and distribute cardholder lists to all agency bureaus and human resources offices.
- Monitor reports of personal use by employees.
  - Contact employee using appropriate letter.
  - On third infraction, recover the corporate travel card, and inform issuer that employee's card privileges have been canceled.
  - Inform BCPO, Travel and Payroll Accounting Services Division, Travel Audit Section, employee is not eligible for travel advances.
  - Notify BCPO, employee's Bureau Director, [COTO](#), and the employee that the employee is no longer eligible for any other commonwealth payment method.
- Monitor delinquent accounts. Inform cardholder and supervisor of delinquent status and policy on cancellation of corporate travel card:
  - Accounts 61 days past due - Confirm that employee has submitted TER and has been reimbursed for eligible expenses.
    - Advise employee that payment for uncontested charges must be made at once.
    - Advise employee that card privileges will be suspended or terminated for non-payment of uncontested charges.
    - Advise employee that disciplinary action may result unless arrangements are made to pay the amount due.
    - Confirm contact with employee by completing and sending appropriate letter to employee, employee's supervisor, and agency human resources office (keep a copy in coordinator's file).

- Accounts 91 days past due – Send appropriate letter to inform the employee's supervisor of the delinquency, including the amount delinquent, with copy to agency human resources office. Inform the supervisor that the delinquent card has been canceled and that the supervisor should contact the employee.

Cardholders will:

- o Complete application for the corporate travel card and forward to agency coordinator.
- o Safeguard corporate travel card.
- o Follow corporate travel card policy and abide by terms and conditions.
- o Pay uncontested billings when due in full (prior to the beginning of the next billing cycle).

Office of the Budget, Office of Comptroller Operations, Bureau of Financial Management will:

- o Act as program administrator.
- o Approve designee(s) as agency coordinator(s).
- o Coordinate training as required.
- o Develop, in conjunction with the Office of Administration; the Office of the Budget, Office of Comptroller Operations, Chief Accounting Officer; and agency coordinators, guidelines for actions on delinquent accounts.
- o Prepare monthly delinquency reports for distribution to agency coordinators.
- o Monitor actions taken by agencies on delinquent accounts and report to the Office of the Budget, Office of Comptroller Operations, Chief Accounting Officer when agency actions fail to produce acceptable results.
- o Assess and report on program effectiveness.

Office of the Budget, Office of Comptroller Operations, Bureau of Commonwealth Payroll Operations will:

- o Develop and implement procedures to support responsibilities.
- o Reimburse employees in accordance with policy.

- o Upon receipt of notification from agency human resources office, withhold amounts as necessary from management employees, and forward payments to the card issuer. Inform employee and employee's supervisor of appropriate dates and amounts to be withheld.

Sample letters referenced in the above section are available at BCPO website.

**6.4 Cash Advance.** Employees are expected to provide sufficient funds to defray current expenses. Cash advance is to be considered only after all other avenues of payment are explored and exhausted. Cash advance will not be issued to a employee with a corporate travel card.

Cash advance may be made from advancement account to individual employee in active pay status. Approval is requested through SAP to BCPO and must be submitted a minimum of ten business days prior to travel. Justification must include a breakdown of all costs.

Advance will not be made for less than \$500.00. Cash advance will not be granted for subsistence only. Upon approval by BCPO, the cash advance will be provided no more than five business days before the travel date. No more than two advances are allowed per calendar year.

Employee must return the advance or submit a TER within 30 days after the end date of travel. Failure to do so will be reported to the agency and the employee will be subject to disciplinary action. Open advances that are 180 days after the date of travel will be deducted from the employee's pay. Upon termination, open advances will be deducted from the employee's final pay. If recovery cannot be made at that time, with the approval of the agency legal office, outstanding advances will be deducted from retirement benefits.

Receipts are required for all expenses paid for with the advance. A personal check or money order made payable to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for amounts advanced in excess of actual expense must be submitted to BCPO.

## SECTION SEVEN: REIMBURSEMENT

- **7.1 General.** Commonwealth travelers are expected to exercise good stewardship of funds when traveling on official commonwealth business. Commonwealth travelers on official commonwealth business will receive reimbursement of actual expenses incurred in the performance of their duties within prescribed maximums. Complete justification for travel expenses must be included with the submission of the TER. Justification includes matching receipts, approved expense verification methods, and when required, explanations in the corresponding comments section in the TER. Any expenditure disallowed by BCPO is the responsibility of the employee.

For assistance with TERs contact travel audit help desk at 800-824-0626 or [co-travelaudits@state.pa.us](mailto:co-travelaudits@state.pa.us).

- **7.2 Reimbursement Claim.** All commonwealth travelers who travel on official commonwealth business must submit for reimbursement of expense in SAP a TER that includes justification. The TER is routed for agency approval and submitted to BCPO. Reimbursement is authorized once all required travel justifications are submitted to BCPO. Commonwealth travelers who do not have an SAP ID must submit a paper TER to BCPO with complete justification. Commonwealth travelers with an SAP ID are required to submit a TER with complete justification when submitting a TER for approval.

Commonwealth travelers are responsible for ensuring that expenses claimed in the TER are proper, accurate, and incurred in official commonwealth business. A commonwealth traveler who knowingly presents a false or fraudulent claim may be subject to penalties under criminal statutes.

- Supervisors must review and approve TERs submitted by commonwealth travelers to ensure the necessity, propriety, and accuracy of the travel expense. Supervisors must review all justification for TERs. Failure to exercise care in the review and approval of travel expenses may result in disciplinary action.

Submission of a TER must occur within 60 business days of the date of travel. Reimbursements paid more than 60 business days past the last date of travel are generally considered taxable income by the IRS, and may be reported as such. Travel expenses are reimbursed by the commonwealth within 15 business days of BCPO receiving an approved TER with all applicable attachments and receipts.

- **7.3 Third Party Reimbursement.** Commonwealth travelers must indicate on the TER that a third party reimbursement is expected. All commonwealth travelers that are reimbursed by non-state funds must have the vendor remit payment to BCPO. Checks received are not to be cashed but must be endorsed payable to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and submitted to BCPO immediately.

Commonwealth travelers must include a copy of the invoice being sent to the vendor or some official form of documentation showing the reimbursement agreement along with their receipts. BCPO will audit for the receipt of the reimbursement due.

- 7.4 Justification.** Justification includes matching receipts, approved expense verification methods, and/or when required, explanations in the corresponding comments section in the TER. For commonwealth travelers whose TER is processed through SAP or an agency assigned travel arranger, justification must be in electronic format.

All expenses in which a receipt is normally received must include the following information on the receipt:

- Name and address of the vendor
- Date of service
- Description of service
- Amount paid for each individual item

Credit card slips and statements are not acceptable in lieu of receipts.

Expense verification method includes BCPO-3302, Declaration of Missing Receipt, which may be used for:

- Vending machine subsistence, parking meter, or unmanned toll booth expense, when a receipt is not provided. A complete explanation is required.
- Situations when it is impossible to secure a required receipt. These instances should be rare and will require the commonwealth traveler to first contact the vendor to obtain a receipt. A complete explanation of the situation and follow up efforts is required on the BCPO-3302, Declaration of Missing Receipt.

Additional information is required on the TER in these situations:

- When driving on commonwealth business, commonwealth travelers must enter daily starting and ending locations or a location specific enough for an auditor to validate the distance traveled.

When claiming miscellaneous expenses, commonwealth travelers must provide an explanation of the item.

When requesting reimbursement for out-service-training travel, agency approval must be included with complete justification when submitting to BCPO.

- 7.5 Audits.** Travel and subsistence expenses are subject to audit by BCPO, who may ask for additional documentation to complete the claim.

Travel arrangements that are not compliant with commonwealth travel policy will be subject to review and audit. Justifications for expense will be reviewed and may be subject to clarification.

The audit will include reviewing the propriety of the expenses incurred. For patterns of unusual claims, agencies and/or BCPO may require additional approvals or documentation for future claims.

## **7.6 Miscellaneous Expense.**

Baggage:

- Baggage handling and gratuities are limited to reimbursement of \$1.50 per piece.
- Fees for baggage check with airlines will be reimbursed at the actual expense and are limited to the first checked bag. Any additional baggage is conditional on a traveler's job function and less expensive alternative avenues of transportation (such as sending the supplies ahead via shipping). A receipt and explanation is required with the TER.

International Travel: With proper documentation, justification, and approval the commonwealth will reimburse:

- Commission for currency conversion or traveler checks when deemed necessary.
- Services of guides, interpreters, packers, or drivers when deemed necessary.
- Fees for the issuance of passport or visa, inoculations, and affidavits when required for business international travel.
- Other optional airline fees are not reimbursable, including advance seat reservation fees, internet, snacks, and any other fees imposed by the airline that are not essential to air travel.