

Administrative Policy No: 13.21

Subject: Department Travel Cards – Purchases, Payments, and Disputes

Information Contact: Chief, Office of Administrative Resources (OAR)
MS 45800 (360) 664-6101

Authorizing Source:

[DES Enterprise Services Policy FP.03.01 Use of Credit Cards to Make Purchases of Goods and Services](#)

OFM State Administration & Accounting Manual (SAAM):

[Chapter 10](#), Travel

[Chapter 85.32](#), Goods and Services Expenditures

Resources:

RCW [42.52](#), Ethics in public service law

WAC [292-110-010](#), Use of state resources

Department of Enterprise Services Western States Contracting Alliance (WSCA) contract [00612](#)

DSHS Administrative Policy (AP):

[13.18](#) Purchase Cards – Obtaining and Safeguarding
Subchapter [19.10](#), Travel Policies

[13.20](#) Purchase and Travel account Rebates

[5.04](#), Records Retention

Forms:

[02-562](#), Trip Plan

[03-337](#), Travel Authorization

[17-185](#), Purchase Card Use Log

[17-185a](#), Ghost Travel Card Log

Resources:

[DSHS P-Card Program Website](#)

[OAS Travel Website](#)

Effective Date: September 18, 2008

Revised: August 14, 2015 ⁱ Housekeeping 6/22/18

Approved By: Original signed by Dana Phelps
Senior Director, Policy & External Relations

Purpose

This policy establishes the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) guidance for requesting, authorizing, and monitoring the use of Department Travel Cards.

Scope

This policy applies only to those DSHS employees authorized to use, monitor, or manage Department Travel Cards.

This policy does not apply to the use of non-travel Purchase Cards (See DSHS AP [13.19](#)), or fuel cards.

For policies and information on how to obtain and safeguard Department Travel Cards, see DSHS AP [13.18](#).

Definitions

Access Online means the website the Card Company provides DSHS employees to track card use, payment status, file disputes, and perform other accounting and reporting activities.

Account Manager is the individual the Assistant Secretary (or designee) assigns the responsibility for monitoring the appropriate use and timely payment of the Purchase Card Managing Account.

Airline Itinerary Detail Report is an Access Online report that includes the same data in the travel itinerary provided by state contracted travel agents and airlines. Because this data is transmitted directly from the travel agent or airline to the card company, it is considered equivalent to the travel itinerary email.

Card Company is the vendor(s) Department of Enterprise Services (DES) authorizes to issue purchase or travel accounts to DSHS.

Card Custodian is the individual the Account Manager assigns the responsibility for safeguarding the purchase card(s) and account number(s).

Contractor is any person, business, non-profit, or government entity who provides services to DSHS under a contractual agreement and not as an employee of DSHS.

CPU P-Card Administrator means DSHS Purchase Card Program Administrator within the Headquarters Central Purchasing Unit. This person is responsible for providing training, advice, direction, consultation and assistance related to Purchase Cards.

Department Travel Card means a Purchase Card issued to pay for authorized, business related travel expenses on behalf of DSHS.

Dispute occurs when there is a disagreement between the Merchant and DSHS that cannot be resolved. Examples include duplicate charges for the same transaction, incorrect rates, unauthorized charges for hotel incidentals, and failure to issue a refund.

Fiscal Analyst is the employee responsible for processing payments to the Card Company, overseeing the accuracy of account coding, preparing financial reports, or reconciling Purchase Card accounts.

Ghost Card is a Purchase Card account that does not have a plastic credit card associated with it. The Card Company issues a letter with the account information instead of an actual card.

Managing Account means a parent account that contains a group of one or more Purchase Cards. Managing accounts accept payments, but cannot accept charges for purchases.

Merchant means the travel provider (hotel, airline, agent, rental car company, etc.) that receives payment from DSHS using a Department Travel card.

Official State Business means activities performed by a state employee, as directed by their supervisor in order to accomplish work related to state programs or as required by the duties of their position or office.

Purchase Card is a credit card issued to make authorized purchases on behalf of DSHS. The card may be a plastic credit card or a Ghost Card. Purchase cards are a tool to streamline purchasing and accounts payable functions by offering an alternative to cash, vouchers, and open purchase orders. Purchase cards are also a cost effective means to pay for small purchases where the transaction costs exceed the value of the purchase.

Travel Authorization means a written approval to use the Department Travel Card to pay for allowable travel expenses. The written approval should include, at a minimum, the estimated cost of the trip, modes of travel, dates, and business purpose of the trip. Recommended forms that can be used for this purpose include the *Trip Plan* ([DSHS 02-562](#)) and *Travel Authorization* ([DSHS 03-337](#)). Administrations may use similar DSHS forms or written approvals to authorize the use of the Department Travel Card.

Traveler means the DSHS employee authorized to travel on Official State Business and use the Department Travel Card as the method of payment.

Policy

- A.** DSHS Administrations must ensure charges on Department Travel Cards comply with State and DSHS travel policies including:
 - a. [SAAM Chapter 10](#), Travel
 - b. DSHS Administrative Policy Subchapter [19.10](#), Travel Policies
- B.** Department Travel Cards must not be used to make purchases for contractors unless specified in contract. Purchases for contractors must be made in accordance with the provisions of the appropriate contract.
- C.** DSHS must file Disputes with the Card Company within 60 days of the date on the statement on which the disputed or allegedly incorrect transaction first appeared. Card Custodians must make a reasonable attempt to resolve disputes with the merchant before initiating a Dispute with the Card Company.
- D.** Department Travel Card account balances must be paid in full within 30 days of the statement date. Accounts that reach 90 days past due are subject to suspension and/or possible closure.

Roles and Responsibilities

A. Travelers

1. Obtain an approved Travel Authorization prior to requesting use of the Department Travel Card.
2. Exercise caution when incurring expenses when traveling on state business.
3. Reimburse the state for any excess costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience.
4. Promptly provide receipts for all purchases to the Card Custodian.
5. If checking out a plastic Department Travel Card, promptly return the card to the Card Custodian once travel is completed.

B. Card Custodians

1. Obtain a Travel Authorization prior to finalizing travel arrangements and incurring charges on the Department Travel Card.

2. Use DSHS Form [17-185](#) Purchase Card Use Log, [17-185a](#) Ghost Travel Card Log (or similar internally developed form) to record the check out or use of the Department Travel Card.
3. Collect receipts from Travelers and file with or attach to the corresponding Travel Authorization.
4. Use the monthly billing statement or transaction reports from Access Online to compile supporting documentation for payment by the Fiscal Analyst. Supporting documentation includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Travel Authorization based on the appropriate travel policies;
 - b. DSHS Form [17-185](#) Purchase Card Use Log, , [17-185a](#) Ghost Travel Card Log or similar substitute form
 - c. Invoices or receipts from hotels, rental car companies, or other travel providers (parking, taxi, bus, train, etc.)
 - d. Travel itineraries received from the travel agency for airfare OR a copy of the Airline Itinerary Detail report, exported from Access Online.
5. Create a payment document and enter the appropriate account coding for all valid charges.
6. Promptly forward the payment document and all supporting documentation for approval and payment in accordance with Administration policy and procedures.
7. Notify the Account Manager and CPU P-Card Administrator of any Disputes. If a dispute is filed, monitor and cooperate with the Card Company's investigation of the dispute, which may include gathering documentation from staff.

C. Account Managers

1. Develop and implement a process to monitor Department Travel Card activity to ensure:
 - a. Travelers make valid purchases for pre-approved travel while conducting Official State Business, in accordance with State and DSHS travel policies.
 - b. Account balances are paid within 30 days

D. Fiscal Analysts

1. Process payments in accordance with [SAAM Chapter 85.32](#)
2. Identify the correct Managing Account number on the payment document.
3. Pay Department Travel Card balances in full within 30 days of the statement date.
4. Contact the CPU P-Card Administrator to request:
 - a. Refunds of credit balances or overpayments made to the Card Company

- b. Transfer of payments posted to the incorrect Managing Account

E. CPU P-Card Administrator

1. Oversee development and maintenance of the agency's policies and procedures regarding the control and usage of Department Travel Cards.
2. Monitor past due Department Travel Card balances and follow-up on accounts that exceed 45 days past due.
3. Assist Cardholders, Account Managers, and Fiscal Analysts with filing, tracking, and resolving Disputes.
4. Act as the Department liaison between DSHS Administrations and the Card Company when requesting refunds or payment transfers.

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- Remove links to repealed WACs and rescinded policies – SAAM Chapter 45, AP 13.22
- Add link to new DES purchase card policy
- Fix broken links to forms, bank contract
- Add new alternate version of p-card log for ghost travel cards
- Remove references to individual travel cards