

Subject:

Message from the Under Secretary - Proper Use of Citibank Government Travel Charge Cards

Date:

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From:

"VADM Conrad C. Lautenbacher Jr., USN (Ret.)" <Announcement@noaa.gov>

MEMORANDUM FOR: All NOAA Employees

FROM: Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.  
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)

SUBJECT: Proper Use of Citibank Government Travel Charge Cards

The use of Government credit cards, including Government travel charge cards, has increasingly been the subject of recent administration, congressional and media scrutiny. Too often, the scrutiny has led to negative publicity about federal employees misusing charge cards. This memorandum is being issued to ensure that NOAA employees have the knowledge to properly use Government travel charge cards.

You are required to use the Government contractor-issued travel charge card if you travel on official business two or more times a year. Using the Government travel charge card is optional if you travel on official business less frequently. In NOAA, we currently use the Citibank Visa Card as our Government issued travel charge card.

The use of the Citibank travel charge card is limited to expenses incurred incident to officially authorized Government travel. These expenses include cash advances from automated teller machines, meals (where possible), lodging, rental automobiles, and gasoline and other automobile related expenses. Although the preferred method to obtain common carrier transportation is through a centrally billed account at a travel management center, the Citibank travel charge card may be used, when necessary. Use of the card at or in the vicinity of the official duty station or residence is strictly prohibited unless its use is in connection with officially ordered travel. Personal and family member use of the card and purchases made in retail stores are also strictly prohibited.

You are personally liable for all charges which have been incurred on your Citibank travel charge card, regardless of whether the charges exceed the amount reimbursable under travel regulations. To ensure that you receive reimbursement in time to repay Citibank, you must prepare and submit your travel voucher to your servicing finance office within 5 days of completing a trip. Approving officials must promptly review and approve travel vouchers to ensure they are submitted within the required 5 days. In most cases, when vouchers are submitted to the servicing finance office in a timely manner, employees will be reimbursed for their expenses before payment is due to Citibank. Citibank will send a monthly billing statement if you have incurred expenses or made a payment. You must pay your Citibank bill in full when you receive it, but no later than 25 calendar days from the closing date on the

statement.

You must comply with Employee Responsibilities and Conduct, 15 CFR 0.735-16, which requires Department of Commerce (DOC) employees to pay each just financial obligation in a proper and timely manner. If you are delinquent paying Citibank or if you use your card for non-official purposes, your supervisor, in conjunction with human resources, will determine appropriate disciplinary action. Specific penalties will depend on the seriousness of the infraction and any aggravating or mitigating circumstances. Penalties range from written reprimand or suspension to removal from your job. At the discretion of your supervisor or Citibank, your travel charge card can be revoked at any time. Cards which are canceled or revoked are generally not reinstated. In addition, upon written request from Citibank, NOAA will collect from your disposable pay any undisputed delinquent amounts that you owe to Citibank.

To apply for a Citibank travel charge card, contact your program coordinator as follows:

- All Line and Staff Offices, other than NMFS and NWS – Jocelyn Griffin (301) 413-3066 ext. 158  
fax (301) 413-3066
- NMFS – Marlena Bowman – (301) 713-1364 ext 148  
fax (301) 713-2258
- NWS – Beth Downs (301) 713-1698 ext 167  
fax (301) 713-0662

To apply for the Citibank travel charge card, you must complete Section 2, “Cardholder Information,” and sign Section 6 of the Citibank travel card application. You must also complete and sign the Employee Acknowledgment Statement acknowledging that you have received, read and understand the policies and procedures related to use of the card. Your approving official or immediate supervisor must also sign the Employee Acknowledgment Statement.

When you receive your travel charge card, you must exercise the same care and responsibility for the security of the card and account number as you would with a personal charge card. You must not allow a secretary, administrative or executive officer, or supervisor to store the card. You must exercise caution and care when giving the account number to another employee to make travel arrangements on your behalf.

If you have questions about the proper use of the Citibank travel charge card, please contact your program coordinator listed above.

You can access on-line training on the proper use of the card at <http://www.ofa.noaa.gov/~finance/Citibank.htm>. You can obtain the Citibank travel card application, Employee Acknowledgment Statement, access to Citidirect, the Citibank Cardholder Agreement and DOC travel card regulations at the same Web site.