



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
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FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION MEMORANDUM NO. 94-008 (II.G.1)

To: Bureau Assistant Directors, Administration
Director, Administrative Services
Bureau Finance Officers
Chief Division of Fiscal Services

From: Stephen J. Varholy
Chief, Division of Financial Administration

Subject: Travel Advances for Employees with the Travel Charge Card

The purpose of this Financial Administration Memorandum (FAM) is to remind bureaus of the Department's policy on issuing/authorizing travel advances for employees with the travel charge card. Based on recent inquiries and discussions, it appears that the department's policies are not being carried out in a consistent manner. Employees who anticipate traveling on official business two or more times a year are regarded as frequent travelers, and are encouraged to obtain a travel charge card from the current charge card contractor (currently American Express). Frequent travelers who choose not to obtain the travel charge card or lose card privileges are to be held to the same travel advance limits that apply to cardholders.

In a memorandum dated August 23, 1990, the Director of Budget and Program Resource Management (presently the Director of Fiscal Resources) provided the following basic policy governing the issuance of travel advances:

The amount of cash advanced for official travel purposes will be held to the minimum amount necessary for the accomplishment of the travel without imposing a financial burden on the traveler. Amounts advanced will be recovered in an expeditious and efficient manner to preclude the advances from becoming delinquent. Maximum use will be made of the Government Travel Management System Program (i.e., individual government contractor-issued charge cards and Government Travel System (GTS) accounts for transportation).

The policy for computing the amount of a travel advance is as follows:

The total amount of travel advance issued will not exceed the out-of-pocket expenses expected to be incurred by the employee (i.e., the meal and incidental expense allowance

[plus] tolls, parking, taxi, and other expenses not customarily charged) [41 CFR 301-10.3(b)(1) and (2)]. Frequent travelers who elect not to request a contractor-issued charge card [or whose travel card has been suspended] will assume the financial burden of paying for lodging, car rental and other expenses that would customarily be charged on the charge card. Employees who are offered the charge card and decline participation in the program or who have lost charge card privileges because of nonpayment of previous charges will not be issued an advance larger than those with charge cards [41 CFR 301-10.3(c)(4)]. Travel advances under \$50 will be issued only in extreme hardship cases.

The preferred method for issuing a travel advance is by U.S. Treasury check, provided there is sufficient time (two or more weeks prior notice) to process the payment before travel. If the time is insufficient to process a Treasury check, then an imprest fund may be used to provide the advance. In bureaus participating in the Automated Teller Machine (ATM) Program, an ATM withdrawal is to be specified on the travel authorization for the appropriate travel advance amount. The travel advance amount issued by ATM should not exceed the amount to which the traveler is entitled to receive.

Bureaus are hereby asked to verify that the above policies are being followed -- where they are not being followed, please take immediate corrective action to fully comply. If you have questions or require additional information regarding this FAM please contact Bill Webber on (202) 208-5223.

cc: Bureau Chief Financial Officers

Prior Financial Administration Memorandums
on this subject:

No. 90-094 dated November 29, 1990 - Active
No. 90-076 dated September 6, 1990 - Active