

**WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS SERVICES
BUDGET AND FINANCE DIRECTORATE**

PURCHASE CARD ALERT NUMBER 17

(Issue date: 08 January 2004)

THIS ALERT IS APPLICABLE TO:

APPROVING OFFICIALS



CARDHOLDERS



SUBJECT: Purchase Card Account Security and Government Contractor Employees

The purpose of this Purchase Card Alert is to provide specific guidance and clarification regarding the subject topics.

- 1) **ACCOUNT SECURITY: Only the Cardholder can use the purchase card number and it shall not be shared with anyone. The Approving Official has access to the Cardholders' account numbers for monthly reconciliation purposes.**
 - The purchase card number is like a password – it is to be protected from compromise. The authority to obligate the government is delegated to the appointed cardholder ONLY. This authority cannot be delegated to anyone else, whether a federal government employee or a contractor employee.
 - For internal control and security reasons, the individuals granted access to a purchase card account number must be meticulously controlled by the Purchase Card Program Management Office. In the event an account number is compromised or misused, the interests of both the government and the account holders must be protected. For this reason, the individuals with access to the account number must be readily traceable and identifiable.

- 2) **CONTRACTOR EMPLOYEES: Contractor employees shall not be issued purchase cards under the OSD/WHS Purchase Card Program. They shall not be granted access to the on-line US Bank CARE system.**

- **Issuing a purchase card to a contractor employee is strictly prohibited under the OSD/WHS Purchase Card Program.** There is a very limited circumstance where a contractor employee under a cost reimbursement contract can be issued a purchase card, but the contractor must go to GSA to have the account established and the card issued. It cannot be accomplished under the OSD/WHS Program.
- Access to the US Bank CARE system is not currently available to the Approving Officials and Cardholders under the OSD/WHS Purchase Card Program. The only individuals with access to the US Bank CARE system are the Agency Program Coordinators. There is a plan for future implementation that will grant the account holders limited access to the CARE system. However, contractor employees are prohibited from being account holders, and will not, under any circumstances, be granted access to the US Bank CARE system under the OSD/WHS Purchase Card Program.

If you have any questions regarding this Purchase Card Alert, or anything else under the Purchase Card Program, please don't hesitate to an APC's. The APC's are Ms. Tracy Williams (twilliams@ref.whs.mil) on 703-697-4341 or Mrs. Claudia Colvin (ccolvin@ref.whs.mil) on 703-697-0614.

You can access valuable information regarding the Purchase Card Program on our web page at:

<http://www.bfd.whs.mil/referencelib/cardholders/PCP.htm>