



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION

**Federal Highway  
Administration**

# Order

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## Subject

FHWA Travel Card Policy

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Par.

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1. **What is the purpose of this directive?** This directive provides updated policy concerning proper use of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Government travel card as well as travel card eligibility, training, cardholder responsibilities, and consequences of travel card misuse.
2. **Is this a new directive?** Yes, this is a new directive. It cancels guidance entitled "Travel Card Guidelines and Procedures," dated August 2003, and revised April 2004, as well as the memorandum entitled "New Travel Card Policy," dated October 23, 2003.
3. **What is the background of this directive?** On January 12, 2010, the Department of Transportation (DOT) issued its [Financial Management Travel Card Management Policy](#). This directive adopts that DOT policy and also contains policy applicable specifically to FHWA Government travel card holders.
4. **What authorities govern this directive?**
  - a. [Title 41, Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\), Chapters 300 - 304](#), Federal Travel Regulation (FTR).
  - b. [Title 5, CFR, Part 752](#), Office of Personnel Management Civil Service Regulations, Adverse Actions.

- c. [Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\) Circular No. A-123, Appendix B, Revised](#), Improving the Management of Government Charge Card Programs, issued January 15, 2009.
  - d. [DOT Financial Management Travel Card Management Policy](#), issued January 12, 2010.
5. **What is the scope of this directive?** The provisions of this directive apply to all employees in FHWA Headquarters and field offices who have a Government travel card.
6. **What is FHWA's policy concerning travel card use?**
- a. **Primary travel card policy.** It is FHWA's policy to use the [DOT Financial Management Travel Card Management Policy](#) as the primary guide to proper Government travel card use.
  - b. **Travel card eligibility.** All FHWA employees who are expected to travel are eligible to apply for a travel card, regardless of the number of times per year they travel. The concurrence of the employee's supervisor is required for approval.
  - c. **Cardholder Agreement.** All cardholders are required to adhere to the bank's Cardholder Agreement. Activating the travel card binds the cardholder to the terms of the agreement.
  - d. **Travel card training.** All FHWA employees applying for a travel card must first take the mandatory DOT travel card training, accessed through DOT's electronic training management system. Training must be re-taken every 3 years thereafter, as mandated by [OMB Circular No. A-123, Appendix B, Revised](#).
  - e. **Prohibited uses of the travel card.** All FHWA employees are required to use the travel card for all official travel expenses, in accordance with [Section 301-51.1](#) of the FTR. Prohibited uses of the travel card include, but are not limited to, the following:
    - (1) Personal expenses;
    - (2) Withdrawal of automated teller machine (ATM) cash for personal use;
    - (3) Local travel expenses. These should be paid with personal funds and reimbursed via a local voucher;

- (4) Withdrawal of ATM cash for local travel expenses; and
  - (5) Conference and registration fees.
- f. **Use of the travel card for cash withdrawal.**
- (1) Cash may be withdrawn only if a travel authorization has been approved. Cash withdrawals are for out-of-pocket expenses only and should not exceed the meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) rate, as authorized by [Section 301-11.101](#) of the FTR.
  - (2) Cash for travel may be withdrawn no more than 3 days before travel. Once the trip is complete, no cash may be withdrawn.
- g. **Delinquency and misuse of the travel card.** Suspensions and cancellations of travel card accounts due to delinquency are dictated by bank policy, as outlined in the bank's Cardholder Agreement. Supervisors are required to address suspensions, cancellations, and misuse associated with accounts. Disciplinary action may be taken. Cardholders who appear frequently on pre-suspension reports also risk disciplinary action, even if the travel card is not suspended. Disciplinary action is between the cardholder, the supervisor, and the Office of Human Resources (HAHR). A table of penalties that outlines the minimum administrative and disciplinary actions for managers can be found in the [DOT Financial Management Travel Card Management Policy](#).
- h. **Travel restrictions for employees with suspended or cancelled accounts.** Employees whose travel cards have been cancelled or suspended may not travel on behalf of FHWA.
- i. **Reinstatement of suspended or cancelled accounts.**
- (1) A cardholder whose account has been suspended or cancelled for misuse, or cancelled for delinquency, must wait six months to apply for reinstatement.
  - (2) Reinstatement requires submission of the following documents to FHWA's Travel Policy Team in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (HCF):
    - (a) A statement from the cardholder's supervisor detailing of the reasons for the delinquency or misuse;

- (b) A supervisor-approved corrective action plan for preventing future misuse; and
    - (c) Certification by the cardholder's supervisor that the cardholder has instituted behavioral changes meriting reinstatement.
  - (3) Reinstatement of accounts suspended or cancelled for misuse is at the discretion of FHWA's Travel Policy Team. Reinstatement of delinquent accounts is at the bank's discretion.
- j. **Consequences of loss of travel card privileges.** If the loss of travel card privileges prevents an employee from accomplishing his or her official duties, the employee may be reassigned, demoted, or removed from Federal service, in accordance with the [DOT Financial Management Travel Card Management Policy](#) and [5 CFR 752, Subpart D](#).

7. **What are FHWA's travel card program responsibilities?**

- a. The FHWA Travel Policy Team is responsible for updating FHWA travel card policy and guidance as appropriate.
- b. The FHWA Travel Policy Team is responsible for managing FHWA's Government travel card program and monitoring cardholder accounts.
- c. The FHWA Travel Policy Team is responsible for monitoring and tracking the DOT travel card training.
- d. HAHR is responsible for advising offices on disciplinary action for cardholders who misuse the travel card.
- e. FHWA supervisors are responsible for consulting with HAHR regarding disciplinary action for their employees who are cardholders with delinquent accounts or who misuse the travel card (see paragraph 6g).
- f. All FHWA employees who have a Government travel card are responsible for adhering to this directive and the following:
  - (1) The cardholder is responsible for managing the Government travel card. Resolving disputes regarding travel card transactions is the cardholder's responsibility, as stipulated in the Cardholder Agreement.

- (2) The cardholder is responsible for using the travel card for official temporary duty travel (TDY) expenses only. All undisputed charges must be paid on time and in full, even if the cardholder has not yet been reimbursed for the charges. Partial payments of statement balances are not permitted. Cardholders are required to file vouchers within 5 business days of the end of travel; those on long-term travel should submit a voucher every 21 days while on assignment.
- (3) The cardholder must use the travel card for all expenses related to official travel, including meals, transportation, and lodging. Official travel expenses that are exempt from the mandatory use of the travel card are listed in [Section 301-51.2](#) of the FTR. Personal funds can only be used in cases where the card is not accepted. In no case should personal funds be used to pay for common carrier transportation (air, train, bus, ship); this is in violation of the [FTR](#).
- (4) The cardholder must secure the travel card to prevent loss or theft. No one but the cardholder is permitted to use the card.
- (5) The cardholder must retain all records according to guidance in [Section 301-52.4](#) of the FTR.

8. **Where can I obtain additional guidance?** For additional information concerning FHWA's travel card program and TDY travel allowances, please contact FHWA's [Travel Policy Team](#).

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