

**State of Georgia  
Department of Administrative Services  
State Purchasing Division  
Travel Card Program Policy**

**I. State of Georgia Travel Card Program**

The purpose of this policy is to define the State of Georgia Travel Card Program (Program) and to establish minimum standards for Program Management and Travel Card (Card) possession and use. This policy is not intended to replace current State of Georgia statutes, State Purchasing Division (SPD) guidelines, State Accounting Office (SAO) Travel Regulations, or Executive Orders.

The State Travel Card Agreement with American Express (Provider) is the only authorized travel card for use by State employees, including employees of the Board of Regents and all colleges and universities. The Program provides an alternative to cash advances for travel and provides State employees who travel extensively on State business an alternative to using personal credit cards. Use of the card does not create a financial responsibility for the State of Georgia. **The State of Georgia is not liable to the Provider for any charges on the Card.** All amounts charged to the Card, including and without limitation, purchases, delinquency fees, or assessments, are the cardholder's liability. The cardholder must follow established travel reimbursement procedures for all travel expenses, including those placed on the Card, and is responsible for timely payment directly to the Provider for monthly balances.

Authorized travel expenses are defined in the SAO Statewide Travel Regulations, updated August 1, 2007. These regulations can be found on the SAO web site at [sao.georgia.gov](http://sao.georgia.gov). Click on the "More" link and go to Financial Reporting.

**At no time should the Card be used for personal purchases, regardless of the circumstance. Additionally, supervisors or approving officials of such actions, who knowingly or through willful neglect approve personal purchases with the Card are subject to the same disciplinary actions as the offender. Utilizing the Card for personal use may result in disciplinary action, including termination from state employment with possible criminal charges filed against violators of this policy.**

This Program is also available to all Authorities, local governments, and municipalities.

All forms referenced in this policy can be found on the State Purchasing Division web site at [statepurchasing.doas.ga.gov](http://statepurchasing.doas.ga.gov). Click on the State Charge Card Programs link under State Government or Local Government. Click on the Travel Card Program link to access this policy and all related forms.

## **II. Program Administration Roles**

### **A. State Purchasing Division Responsibilities**

1. The Department of Administrative Services, State Purchasing Division (SPD), is responsible for the statewide agreement and policy level management of the Program;
2. SPD will issue and maintain the Program Policy contained herein. If changes are needed statewide, the State Program Manager will issue an updated policy and notify all Card Program Administrators;
3. The State Program Manager will serve as a central point of contact to address all issues and changes necessary to the overall Program and coordinate such changes with the contractor and Program participants;
4. SPD will approve entity participation in the Program; and
5. The SPD Process Improvement and Audits unit will conduct periodic reviews of Card activities of all entities when that Entity falls under SPD authority. Reviews will focus on the level of compliance with statewide policies and procedures.

### **B. Entity Program Administrator Responsibilities**

Each Entity using the Program must contact the State Program Manager in order to use the Program. Each Entity must appoint a Card Program Administrator to serve as a liaison with the State Program Manager. The Entity Program Administrator responsibilities include:

1. Establish the internal policy for use of the Card that are within the terms and conditions of the State Policy as well as best business practices and controls;
2. Establish sufficient internal controls to ensure cardholder compliance with State Travel Regulations and Program Policy, including Hotel/Motel Tax Exemption requirements;
3. Review and approve all requests for individual participation in the Program;
4. Monitor and motivate cardholders to maintain their Program accounts in a current status; no cardholder may have an account in excess of 60 days past due;
5. Ensure that all cardholders and approving officials are aware of this position as the liaison with the State Program Manager;
6. Complete all required forms for the issuance of Cards; and
7. Any other duties as required to ensure enforcement of the State Travel Regulations.

### **C. Entity Program Management Responsibilities**

Entity management must:

1. Establish procedures to identify and approve employees who need Cards;
2. Establish procedures to follow in the event of lost or stolen Cards;
3. Establish procedures to cancel and collect Cards when it is determined that Cards are no longer needed or upon termination or transfer of the cardholder;
4. Identify appropriate spending limits and approving officials, usually the cardholder's supervisor;
5. Ensure cardholders complete required training to include a knowledge of SAO Travel Regulations;

6. Ensure cardholders sign Form SPD-TC001, Travel Cardholder Agreement, prior to receiving Cards;
7. Establish travel reimbursement procedures that include supervisory review and approval of all travel reimbursement requests prior to payment to the employee;
8. Establish procedures for the retention of cardholder travel reimbursement requests and supporting documentation. Minimum requirements are:
  - (1) State of Georgia or Entity-specific travel expense form;
  - (2) Receipts indicating nature of expenditure, including merchant name and location; daily room rates for hotels; and total amount of the transaction, including the indication of a "zero" balance for lodging transactions.
9. Establish procedures for annual independent (non-supervisory) reviews of cardholder expense reports and supervisor approvals. Internal policy should define the frequency, scope, and methodology of reviews; and
10. Ensure cardholders are reimbursed within 30-days for authorized travel expenditures.

#### **D. Entity Program Cardholder Responsibilities**

Travel Card rewards, i.e. frequent flyer miles, lodging credits, etc, or traveler's insurance are not allowed to accumulate or be redeemed by using the State Travel Card. Cardholder responsibilities include:

1. Complete Entity Program Training including a complete understanding of SAO Travel Regulations and Entity travel reimbursement policy and procedures;
2. Sign Form SPD-TC001, Travel Cardholder Agreement, prior to card distribution;
3. Use the Card for official State of Georgia business travel for items indicated in Section III. Program Compliance, Section C, Allowable Purchases;
4. Obtain original, itemized receipts for Card transactions;
5. Cardholder must reconcile purchases each month by:
  - (1) Verifying each transaction against the Card statement to ensure valid charges are made to the account; and
  - (2) Following established Entity Travel Reimbursement processes;
6. Retain Card Statements and receipts for seven (7) years; and
7. Return the Card to the Entity Card Program Administrator if requested or if terminating your employment with the Entity.

### **III. Program Compliance**

#### **A. Internal Controls**

Each entity must develop and document (1) guidelines for distribution of Cards to cardholders and (2) internal control procedures that ensure Card usage is consistent with State and internal policies, and SAO Travel Regulations.

Internal controls should address separation of duties. No cardholder shall be his/her own reviewer/approver. Sufficient internal controls must be established and implemented to ensure that a knowledgeable individual, such as a direct supervisor, within the organization reviews the travel reimbursement request and receipts. Reimbursement must be made to the employee in a timely manner so that the employee can make timely payment to Provider.

If Entity top-tiered leadership (i.e. Commissioners or University Presidents) are cardholders, appropriate hierarchical approval for travel reimbursement requests would be the Governor and the Chancellor, respectively.

If the SPD Process Improvement and Audits unit determines that internal controls are not adequate, that unit has the authority to order policy improvements and/or place card restrictions on the Entity until such controls are established, documented, and implemented. DOAS reserves the right to appoint a 3<sup>rd</sup> party audit at the Entity's expense.

SPD will cancel any Program Cards that are confirmed as 90-days delinquent.

## **B. Card Issuance Requirements**

1. Cardholders must use Form SPD-TC001, Travel Card Profile, to request a card. If the Entity chooses to use another form, the request form must include cardholder name, billing address, work or home telephone number, work or home email address, spending limits (if any), and supervisor and Card Program Administrator signatures;
2. Cards cannot be issued to a department, division, or other work unit within the Entity. Cardholders must be State employees who travel regularly in the performance of job responsibilities and who have received training in State of Georgia Travel Regulations and Entity travel reimbursement procedures;
3. Cardholders must attend Entity-provided travel regulation training and sign Form SPD-TC001, Travel Cardholder Agreement, prior to receipt of the card; and
4. Cardholders must receive a copy of this Policy, the Entity travel card policy, and SAO Travel Regulations.

## **C. Allowable Purchases**

All purchases made with the Card must be for official State of Georgia business travel only for the cardholder whose name appears on the card. Accordingly, all cardholders should familiarize themselves with the provisions of Official Code of Georgia, Annotated, § 45-10-1 et.seq. Regarding State Employee Code of Ethics and Conflicts of Interest.

The following types of purchases meet the definition of travel-related expenses and are the only expenses allowed on the Card:

1. Airline tickets;
2. Ground transportation (airport shuttles, taxi, train, subway, rental vehicles, fuel for rental vehicles);
3. Lodging; and
4. Meals (within State Travel Regulation dollar limits).

## **D. Prohibited Purchases**

Purchases of goods or services which are for personal benefit are strictly prohibited. Utilizing the Card for personal use may result in disciplinary action, including cancellation of the Card and/or termination from State employment with possible criminal charges filed against violators of this policy.

Cardholders cannot pay travel expenses for other individuals, including other State employees, with the Card. If an exception to this requirement is needed, contact the State Program Manager for prior, written approval.

Cardholders cannot use the Card for the following, even if for State of Georgia business travel purposes:

1. Cash advances;
2. Entertainment (including movies and games);
3. Alcohol (including alcoholic beverages with meals permitted in Section C above);
4. Repairs, maintenance, and fuel for State-owned vehicles; and
5. Anything not permitted in Section C above.

#### **E. Training**

Entity Card Program Administrators must develop a training program that addresses cardholder and approver responsibilities to include State Travel Card Policy, SAO Travel Regulations, and Entity travel reimbursement procedures. Approvers/reviewers must also complete training for adequate understanding of approval processes and documentation requirements.

#### **IV. Card Program Policy Violations**

Cardholders are expected to adhere to all State and Entity policies and procedures governing the use of the Card. At no time will the Card be used for personal purchases regardless of the circumstance. Additionally, supervisors or approving officials of such actions who knowingly or through willful neglect approve personal purchases with the Card are subject to the same disciplinary actions as the offender. Utilizing the Card for personal use will result in disciplinary action, including termination from state employment with possible criminal charges filed against violators of this policy.