

The Ledger

A Newsletter of the University Controller's Organization

8/31/98 Electronic Update

ISR Distribution

Contrary to what was written in the last issue of the Ledger, ISRs, IPRs, and similar internal charge documents will be returned to the charging department at the end of the month as in the past. While the return of these documents by the Controller's Office should not be necessary, it has become evident that making such a sweeping procedural change at this time would cause tremendous hardship for everyone.

Be aware, however, that the Controller's Office will continue to work toward the goal of eliminating the labor-intensive task of returning these forms. We appreciate the written and verbal communications that we have received from many departmental personnel explaining why receipt of the charged forms is important. Many of the reasons were valid and need to be addressed.

However, it is appalling that some people do not realize that signing an ISR or similar document in advance without knowing who will use it, when, where, and for what purpose, is just like signing a blank check! Payment through an internal charge document is an expenditure to the department purchasing the goods or services. The responsibility of all departments to monitor and control these expenditures is exactly the same as if they had been incurred using a low value speed purchase order. Please take steps to gain better control over expenditure documents within the university.

Do not hesitate to voice your suggestions and concerns to Controller's Office personnel. Your feedback is important to us, especially during the implementation phase of the Banner system.

Air Travel Authority

When you book flights, you should be prepared to supply our contract travel agencies with an Air Travel Authority form. The Air Travel Authority form functions as a purchase order, allowing the travel agent to charge our account for your ticket. If you ask an agent to book a flight and do not have the form ready for him when he brings the ticket, you are asking him to attempt delivery of the ticket a second time or else leave the ticket without the authorization. No agent should be expected to violate his contract with Virginia Tech by issuing a ticket without having a purchase order/Air Travel Authority.

Account Code for Memberships

Often memberships are purchased for professors and professionals for educational purposes. That is, the employee may want to obtain professional or technical publications or a price break on conferences or workshops hosted by the group.

The University itself purchases institutional memberships designed to reflect institutional affiliation with an organization or agency. These memberships are of interest to the governor's office, and we are required to report on them annually.

Since the two types of memberships are quite different in focus, and there are two account codes available, departments should use 12220 for educational memberships which are incidental to obtaining educational materials, subscriptions, etc. The purchase of the professional or technical publication itself would also be coded to account 12220. In the Controller's Office, we will need to correct invoices using the wrong account because the annual report submitted to Richmond is based on account code 12210. It will help you and us, if you begin using 12220.

Record Retention Periods Changes

The latest release from the Library of Virginia increases the length of time that certain payroll records must be retained.

The retention period for payroll ledgers, registers and computer records is now four years instead of three. Time and attendance records (time sheets and leave reports) need to be retained for three years for salaried employees and five years for wage employees. These records used to be retained only three years for wage employees.

Special tips for the lodging of visitors

Hotel rates can be confusing. We all know that departments should expect to pay no more than state guideline rates (\$51 plus taxes per night) for hotel rooms in Blacksburg. There has recently been some confusion among hotel managers about this. Some hotels have what they call a "Virginia Tech rate". This rate is intended for visiting parents, and is somewhat lower than the list price. However, it is not the rate to be used for employees or visitors whose bill will be paid by the university. The hotels want to be sure that they do not extend the state rate unnecessarily. They may, therefore, ask for some form of identification when the visitor checks in. If the visitor is not a state employee, it is a good idea to provide a letter of introduction which says that the expense will be borne by Virginia Tech and the visitor should therefore be charged at the state rate.

The safest way to assure that the rate charged to a visitor is not more than the University can pay from state funds is to make the visitor's reservation from here rather than letting the visitor make his own reservation. We are all busy, but taking this extra step could save dollars and even time!

Websites of interest to international travelers:

1. For lodging/M&IE rates:

<http://www.state.gov/www/perdiems/index.html>

2. For currency conversion:

<http://www.oanda.com/converter/classic>

W9s

Let us help you with requests from vendors. If you need to supply a W9 or substitute W9 to a vendor – please forward the request to Becky Harrell in the Controller's Office. If you need a sales tax exemption form, call Purchasing!

Krogering Changes

1) **Kroger's change:** Kroger has moved its payment processing from Roanoke to Nashville. The vendor name and address for Kroger is listed as Kroger Limited Partnership 1, vendor number 311569568.

Please use this vendor number for all Kroger payments, including the Debit Card payments. Do not use The Kroger Company, the Blacksburg address, the Cincinnati address, or the Roanoke address for any payments.

2) **Virginia Tech's changes for Banner:** For all Kroger credit card payments, enter the trace

number in the invoice number field of the payment document. Enter the last 15 digits of the card number in the customer account number field. The card number is 16 digits -- just like our own personal credit cards. Since we have 15 spaces available in the Banner field, we will use the last 15 digits of the card number to identify the payment on the check. You no longer need to enter KRO before the card number.

PO tips

Please do not put the PO number in the Banner Invoice Number field. The PO number appears in the upper right hand corner of the form sent in for payment. The Controller's Office uses the invoice field to record the Document number that is generated by Banner.

Hardware Supply Discount

Heavener Hardware, in Blacksburg, is offering a 5% discount on all purchases by Virginia Tech departments when payment is made with an American Express Corporate Purchasing Card. This discount applies to the entire stock with some exclusions. The major exclusions are sale items,

special orders, promotional items, and rentals. All items purchased must be picked up.

This discount is included as part of a term contract the university negotiated with Heavener Hardware and will be available on a continuing basis.

Boise Cascade Update

Boise Cascade Office Supplies has made a contribution to the general scholarship fund of \$3,989.42. This covers total university business conducted during the March-June quarter of this year. This donation was calculated based upon 1.5% of our total order volume.