



# The Ledger

*A Newsletter of the University Controller's Organization*

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## **Wal-Mart Purchases**

Wal-Mart has notified university account holders that Speed Purchase Orders will not be accepted after October 31, 2000.

The good news is that Wal-Mart **does** accept the University American Express Procurement Card (AMEX). Departments should use the AMEX card when making small university purchases at Wal-Mart and all other businesses that accept the card. Although Wal-Mart suggests using the new Wal-Mart Community & Business Charge Card, you should not enter into that contract. The state has provided the AMEX Procurement Card for small purchases.

The AMEX card provides advantages that the Wal-Mart card cannot provide:

- All invoices charged to the AMEX card are recorded in your monthly prompt pay totals as on-time payments thus helping your prompt pay percentages.
- AMEX Payments are paid centrally on the due date and the departments do not prepare an invoice to pay the bill monthly. This eliminates the daily checks the university has been sending to the Wal-Mart store.
- The AMEX charges can be distributed to multiple Banner funds when the "AMEX Payment Certification Form" (<http://www.purch.vt.edu/html.docs/forms.html>) and attachments are submitted. This would not be available on the Wal-Mart card. A journal entry would be necessary to distribute each of the charges.
- The AMEX bill can be charged to the special account code 13090 for supplies. The state will not accept this general supplies code for other invoices.
- The terms of the AMEX card will never require a late charge to your funds.
- The state has approved a procedure for deferring the credit memos for returned merchandise until the next billing period with the AMEX card. The same waiver has not been granted to "credits not yet applied" to other vendor accounts.

If you need an AMEX purchasing card, please contact Debra Bales in Purchasing at [dbales@vt.edu](mailto:dbales@vt.edu) or 231-8548. If you have questions about the use of the AMEX card, please contact Bradley Scott in the Controller's Office at [bsscott@vt.edu](mailto:bsscott@vt.edu) or 231-3623.

## **Other local businesses that accept the AMEX Procurement Card:**

Kroger  
Lowe's  
Taylor Office Supply  
Heavener Hardware  
New River Office Supply  
Mish Mish

Home Depot  
OfficeMax  
Sears  
Salem Office Supply  
CITC

In FY 2000, the university processed a total of 19,053 payments for these vendors. That is 19,053 vouchers that were typed and sent as payments that could have been included on the AMEX monthly payment.

### **Wades Foods, Inc. Payments**

The accountants at Wades Food, Inc. have been having difficulty in applying Virginia Tech payments to the correct accounts. Wades Foods on S. Main St. and Wades Foods on N. Main St. (formerly Radford Brothers) have separate accounts receivable systems. In order for Wades to credit your accounts, payments must be made to the store from which the purchase was made. The Banner System separates payments to the same vendor when different "remit to" addresses are used on the Banner invoice.

If you have made some purchases from the North Main store and some from the South Main store, **a Speed Purchase Order for each store must be used** even though both Wades Foods stores have the same vendor number. This is necessary to ensure that your department will receive proper credit for each of your payments.

The vendor identification number for Wades Foods, Inc is: 54-1051170. The individual addresses are as follows:

Radford Brothers/Wade's Foods  
1000 North Main Street  
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Wade's Foods  
1323 South Main Street  
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Please sort your Wades invoices by the addresses and prepare payment documents for each store separately. If you have questions, please contact Jeanie Quesenberry ([jque@vt.edu](mailto:jque@vt.edu)) in the Controller's Office at 231-2544.

### **Business Meals**

Business meals are reimbursable but the documentation must clearly support the purpose and business necessity for the meal. To be eligible for payment, the documentation must show that the business meal:

- is essential to the university's mission,
- is a business necessity,
- involves substantive and bona fide business discussions, and
- is recommended for payment by the department head.

Sometimes, documentation may seem clear to the department or the faculty member requesting reimbursement but may be unclear to others within the university or from the perspective of the general public. For instance, "met with donor" does not clearly convey that an individual is meeting with an individual to share information about the university or a certain college within the university. All reimbursement vouchers are open for the public review and should provide enough detail of the business meeting that the principle parties would not be embarrassed if the news media reviewed the transaction. If full disclosure of the event or the principle parties cannot be provided because of the private nature of the meeting, public funds should not be used to pay the expenses.

The names of all the attendees must be included with the documentation. Initials cannot be used as adequate support for public documents. Allowable business meal functions cannot consist entirely of employees from one department and they normally include non-Virginia Tech employees. Meal expenses at regularly scheduled meetings of university employees are not reimbursable because they can be scheduled ahead of time and, therefore, it is not a business necessity that they span a meal timeslot.

The department head is responsible for determining how many people should attend the business function.

### **AMEX P-card User Tips**

Here are some user tips from Sharon Gentry who reviews the university's monthly small purchase credit card bill.

**Tax Exempt.** Extra care is needed when ordering from internet catalogs to insure they know that the purchase is tax exempt. Some sites will provide a prompt to ask if you are tax exempt, but not all do. If you are not sure that taxes are being exempted, look for a customer service number to contact before placing the order. Some card holders have found it time-consuming and stressful to get the sales tax credited after the order has been placed and the goods received.

**Telecommunications services.** Generally invoices are required for pager service and cell phone services, making them ineligible for credit card payment. Also, there are contract service providers for these services that should be utilized. Please contact Purchasing if you have questions about what services can be purchased with the credit card and which cannot.

**Reviews.** Occasional improper use of credit cards is drawing increasing attention. For this reason, Purchasing is increasing the frequency of transaction reviews. Don't be surprised or offended if you get a phone call asking that you provide copies (not originals) of file documentation. This is largely routine and you are not being accused of anything. Your cooperation will be sincerely appreciated.

**Original Receipts.** Procedures require an original itemized receipt to back up each transaction. To a great degree this is happening. On the rare occasion that an itemized receipt has been lost or is not available, you should place a memo in the file explaining the circumstances and detailing what was purchased.

**Card Users.** For proper security, only the P-card holder should use the card. If the card is shared with others in the department, there will be no way to trace questionable charges. Sharing a card also makes obtaining file receipts more difficult. A credit card account can be established for any university employee who needs one as determined by the Department Head.