

# **The Ledger**

*A Newsletter of the University Controller's Organization*

Website: <http://www.controller.vt.edu>

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## **Lodging Rates Change Again**

Effective November 1, 2004, the lodging and meals and incidental expense (M&IE) limits will be modified. The Federal Government updated their rates and the state followed suit by making changes to the maximum allowable expense for certain areas traveled. Many of the rates went down but two important rates to Virginia Tech offices went up. The maximum allowable rate for hotels in the Blacksburg/Christiansburg area went up from \$55 to \$60 per night. The rate in the City of Roanoke went from \$59 to \$68 per night. All procedures for approving and seeking exceptions for rates exceeding the guidelines remain the same. The only change at this time is the revision of the applicable rates for the various locations. Note that some of the counties and surrounding locations for various cities are being redefined. Also note that the multiple rates for some of the destinations will be expanded based on the time of year the travel takes place.

Please use the rates as updated at [www.controller.vt.edu/procedures/p20335r.html](http://www.controller.vt.edu/procedures/p20335r.html). If you use these rates frequently, we suggest that you print a copy for your use. Additionally, the current version of the travel voucher includes a direct link to this lodging web site.

During the next few weeks, travelers who booked hotels at the old rates should mark their vouchers accordingly for the locations whose rates were reduced. The Controller's Office will pay the voucher using the old rates when documentation is included to indicate the arrangements were made before the rates were reduced. If you have questions regarding the new travel rates, please contact a member of the travel staff in the Controller's Office.

## **Travel Voucher Modified to Handle Daily Commute Miles**

During the past 4 months, travelers have been required to deduct their daily commute miles (DCM) from their business mileage. This guidance came from the Commonwealth of Virginia but is in line with the Internal Revenue Service policies regarding daily commute expenses (i.e., the employer cannot reimburse an employee for business mileage until they have exceeded their normal daily commute expenses). We've all found this new procedure to be time consuming because of the additional calculations necessary in preparing, reviewing, and auditing travel vouchers, especially for employees who incur daily business travel mileage expenses.

To help reduce the mathematical calculations for the daily commute mileage deduction, the Controller's Office has modified the on-line version of the travel voucher! The voucher now has a column for the user to enter the total miles traveled and a column for the DCM. The voucher will automatically calculate the reimbursable business mileage. Because this is a time-saver, we ask that you please link to version 7.1 of the travel voucher found at [http://www.controller.vt.edu/forms/Travel\\_Voucher.xls](http://www.controller.vt.edu/forms/Travel_Voucher.xls) and begin using this version for all

travelers. Your use of this version will save time for all involved by reducing the calculations in your department and in the Controller's Office.

Additionally, version 7.1 has been modified to give the user a warning message when the travel voucher accounting information does not balance with the travel voucher details. If you have questions regarding the use of the voucher, please contact the travel staff in the Controller's Office.

### **Automobile Travel for Individuals with Disabilities**

Due to the individual needs of travelers with disabilities, the motor pool is sometimes unable to provide modified vehicles to meet all requirements. Therefore, any employee (faculty, staff, or student) who due to their disability must use their own personal vehicle for business travel can be reimbursed at the higher personal mileage reimbursement rate (32.5 cents/mile), regardless of the number of miles traveled. See [www.controller.vt.edu/procedures/p20335d.html](http://www.controller.vt.edu/procedures/p20335d.html)

This policy applies to students only when they travel on authorized university business for which they may be reimbursed.

In order to receive the higher rate as an accommodation, the employee must register with the office of the ADA Coordinator in Personnel Services at Southgate Center. The ADA Coordinator will document the accommodations needed, verify that no motor pool vehicle meets those needs, and request approval from the Controller's Office for the employee to be reimbursed business mileage at the highest rate authorized by state law. This only needs to be done once, unless the disability is a temporary or changing condition. However, the employee must attach a copy of the approval letter to each reimbursement voucher.

Inquires can be directed to [adainfo@vt.edu](mailto:adainfo@vt.edu); 540-231-4638 or 540-231-9331 (V); 540-231-7227 (TTY).

### **I-9 Reports Distributed Electronically**

The I-9 Performance Reports (PZSI9MA) that are mailed by the Payroll Office each month will be provided electronically starting with the October 2004 report. A departmental employee has been designated for each organization number (six digit organization number) to receive the notification. In addition, monthly reports to senior management and executive management will be sent electronically. The email that the designee receives will contain the URL link to the web distribution system where the report can be accessed.

Please help us to ensure that these notifications are sent to the appropriate party. If the department representative changes (for whatever reason), the email address of the departmental employee changes, or the notification is not received in a timely manner, notify Eddie Shumate at [eshumate@vt.edu](mailto:eshumate@vt.edu). The reports should be available approximately three working days after month end.

The quarterly senior and executive management summary letters will continue to be sent in paper format.

If you have questions or issues, please feel free to contact the Payroll Office at 1-5201.

## **Spotlight on Business Practices—P-Card**

**Audit Results.** A recent review by the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) revealed that some American Express Corporate Purchasing Card (P-card) holders circumvented their authorized P-card transaction limit. The P-card holders accomplished this by working with vendors to create several invoices. Each invoice was below the authorized spending limit; however, the transaction as a whole totaled more than was authorized. To compound matters, there was no indication that the supervisor detected this practice during the monthly review.

The APA formally cited the university for these instances of misuse and will make P-card reviews an item of increased attention in future audits. The individual P-card holder, Department Head and College Business Manager have been notified about the cited areas of misuse and corrective action has been initiated.

There are approximately 700 P-cards in active use. Being cited for misuse on six P-cards certainly does not indicate that everyone is taking unauthorized liberties. However, the fact remains that some P-card holders have exceeded their authority and as a result, the university has been cited and will continue to be periodically examined in this area.

**P-card Authorization Review.** We are required to conduct a review of the spending limit for each P-card on an annual basis and make any adjustments that are warranted. In the near future, Department Heads will receive a mailing summarizing the P-cards activity in their unit. Using this report, we are asking Department Heads to conduct a review of the spending limits for each card and if necessary increase or decrease spending limits.

We ask for your cooperation in promptly completing this evaluation.

## **Virginia Tech Foundation Funded Purchases**

The Virginia Tech Foundation, Inc. (VTF) is a private corporation and cannot use public state procurement processes. Because it is a separate entity with separate accounting systems and bank accounts, the university DOPP form and the P-Card cannot be used to make purchases for the VTF nor can they be used to charge university expenses directly to VTF funds. (VTF fund codes cannot be used on American Express monthly expense distribution forms or the DOPP form.) If a department wishes to make purchases for the university and their source of funds is the VTF, they should first make the purchases using state and university policies. Those expenses must be first charged to public funds and then the department may reimburse them with VTF private funds.

## **Building Greater Supplier Diversity**

The following is summary information related to increased efforts to improve level of expenditures being made with small, woman-owned and minority-owned businesses (SWAMs).

- State-wide initiative to increase participation by SWAM businesses in public sector procurement.
- Disparity study conducted in 2004 highlighted areas of inequity

- Governor's Task Force convened to study process and make recommendations
- Executive Order 29 plus a series of specific directives issued
  - Change processes and take action to improve results
  - Expand certification program to include woman-owned and small businesses
  - Formulate and implement detailed plans at each Institution and Agency
  - Revamp central agencies to provide increased program support
  - Quarterly vs. annual reporting requirement
- VT Plan submitted Sept, 2004
  - Increase awareness and publicize sources
  - Increase outreach efforts to locate SWAM suppliers
  - Implement subcontracting plans and reporting in major contracts, including construction
  - Increased buyer action to attempt to locate a minority or woman-owned source for each procurement valued over \$2,000.
  - Attempt to increase number of contracts with minority and woman-owned suppliers and increase campus participation in using those contracts
  - Designate point-of-contact resource to help campus purchasers locate SWAM suppliers: Melissa Dietrich, 231-6675, mdietric@vt.edu