The Ledger

A Newsletter of the University Controller's Organization
Website: **http://www.controller.vt.edu**

New Travel Regulations Effective January 17, 2006

Effective January 17, 2006, the lodging and meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) limits were modified. The Federal Government updated their rates and the state followed suit by making changes to the maximum allowable expense for certain areas traveled. The biggest changes were to the M&IE rates. The M&IE for the Blacksburg/Christiansburg area went from $31 to $39 and the rates for the City of Roanoke went from $39 to $44. Note that some of the counties and surrounding locations for various cities were redefined and also note that Washington, DC now has multiple rates depending on the time of year the travel takes place.

Please use the rates as updated at http://www.co.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.

Additional changes effective January 17, 2006:

❖ Business meals are not allowed for an employee in travel status, as no exceptions to the M&IE per diem rates are authorized for overnight travel. The employee would be reimbursed the M&IE for the applicable business meal. Individuals who are not in travel status are eligible for meal reimbursement if they participate in a bona fide business meal.

❖ On a day trip where no per diem is reimbursed, a maximum of 15% of the taxi cab or shuttle service fare is reimbursable as a tip. For reimbursement, the Travel Expense Reimbursement Voucher must be divided into one amount for the fare and one amount for the tip. Receipts are not required for the tip reimbursement.

❖ Travelers must submit the Travel Expense Reimbursement Voucher to their supervisor within 30 working days after completion of the trip. In the case of continuous travel, the traveler must submit the voucher to the supervisor within 30 working days of the last day of travel for which reimbursement is requested. However, reimbursements must be processed in a timeframe that allows travel charge card payments to be made by the specified due date.

❖ When exception requests are made for lodging rates greater than 50% above the guidelines, the cost comparisons must now include the name and complete address of the hotels (including zip code) used for the cost comparison.

❖ Boarding passes are now required for all air and rail reimbursements.

If you have questions regarding the new travel regulations, please contact a member of the travel staff in the Controller's Office.

Banner Finance System Access Request

The online Banner System Access Request process is available through Information Resource Management's Internet Forms System. All Banner Finance System access requests should now be made through this system. We are discontinuing the use of the paper form that was located on the Controller's Office web page.

In addition, requests for Tuition Remission Access (existing or new Banner users) must also be made through the new online Banner Access Request System.

The online Banner Access Request System can be found by going to https://banweb.banner.vt.edu/vt/prod/vtirm.irm_forms_main.entry or by using the Banner Access Request System link under General Accounting on the Virginia Tech Controller's Office web page http://www.co.vt.edu/.

Please note that even though the form will be completed online, the online request form must be printed and signed by the Dean, Director or Department Head. The system does not have electronic approvals. The form must then be submitted to the Controller's Office, General Accounting, Postal Code 0312.

Processing of ISRs by Controller's Office

The Controller's Office receives hundreds of Interdepartmental Service Requests (ISRs) on the last few days of each month. ISRs are processed in the order they are received, and if your ISRs are received on or near the last day of the month, the Controller's Office cannot guarantee the documents will be processed before month end. To ensure that your department's ISRs are entered before month end, please submit them to the Controller's Office no later than five working days before the last day of the month. Even earlier submission is requested if possible. Please note if an ISR is submitted containing errors, the ISR cannot be processed until all errors have been corrected.

Also, if departments (providing the service) retain the original copy of the ISR, the document should be kept in accordance with the University's Records Retention Policy. The original document and all supporting documentation must be maintained for possible review by federal auditors, the State Auditor of Public Accounts, the Virginia Tech Office of Internal Audit, or the Office of the University Controller.

New Finance Web Report Available

A new finance web report titled "Potential OSP Payroll Funding Problems" is now available. This report allows departmental users to obtain an informational report that discloses budget problems or end date problems with sponsored program funds which will result in an automated employee funding change to their overhead fund if the problem is not addressed prior to the payroll processing. This report will allow departments to make funding changes prior to the payroll processing to eliminate retroactive funding changes.

This report should be run prior to the "last day to enter appointments, status changes, etc." per the salary and wage payroll schedule on the Controller's Office web page. For the February 16th salary pay date, the report should be run prior to February 3 (last day to enter appointments) and all applicable funding changes should be made in the system prior to this date.

Please contact Stacy King (kings@vt.edu) at 1-8624 with questions.