

# The Ledger

*A Newsletter of the University Controller's Organization*

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

Vol. E, No. 46

July 17, 2006

## Personal Vehicle Mileage Rates Increase

Effective July 1, 2006, the reimbursement rate for an employee to perform official job duties is as follows:

- If a Motor Pool vehicle was not available or the use of a personal vehicle was cost-beneficial, an employee shall be reimbursed at an amount equal to the most recent business standard mileage rate as established by the Internal Revenue Service. Currently, this rate is 44.5 cents per mile.

Below is a summarization of the reimbursement rates in the Controller's Office Procedure 20335d: Automobile Travel located at:

(<http://www.co.vt.edu/procedures/index.html#travel>)

Reimbursements for the use of personal vehicles are made at the following rates which are based on the costs of maintaining motor pool vehicles and the most recent business standard mileage rate as established by the Internal Revenue Service:

30 Cents Per Mile	Round trip is 100 miles or more and a Motor Pool vehicle is available.
44.5 Cents Per Mile	Round trip is less than 100 miles and a Motor Pool vehicle is available.
44.5 Cents Per Mile	Motor Pool vehicle is not available. (Motor Pool must provide a certification)
44.5 Cents Per Mile	Round trip is 100 miles or more, a Motor Pool vehicle is available and there is an economic benefit to the Commonwealth for using a personal vehicle. (Economic benefit must be well supported with an analysis of the personal vehicle versus a state vehicle charges.)

The travel voucher form has been updated to reflect this rate change.

Please download the new version of the travel form at:

[http://www.co.vt.edu/forms/index.html#accounting\\_services](http://www.co.vt.edu/forms/index.html#accounting_services)

## **Modification to the Fund by Account Web Report**

The Fund by Account Web Report has been modified to allow users the option to exclude Sponsored Programs funds that have no current year activity and have a budget end date in a prior fiscal year. The report automatically defaults to the exclude option. If users would like to have the funds be included in their report, they can change Option Number 7 from a “Y” to an “N”. If you have any questions of concerns related to these changes, please contact Stacy King at 231-8624 or [kings@vt.edu](mailto:kings@vt.edu).

## **Audit Observations**

Internal Audit would like to make the university community aware of various types of high-pressure vendor tactics that it has recently observed directed at university departments.

High-pressure marketing usually involves products needing constant replacement such as office supplies and maintenance supplies. Telephone solicitors often read from printed scripts and use a pre-prepared list of responses to deflect objections. While many different ploys are used, the Federal Trade Commission has identified the following common tactics:

- They rarely deal with an authorized purchasing agent.
- They may mislead you to solicit an order.
- They might try to con you with a fabricated tale of a “disaster.”
- They may claim to be conducting a survey of office equipment or updating their records.
- They often try to pressure you into placing an immediate order.
- They might offer free gifts for orders that are larger than what is really needed.
- They often misrepresent merchandise, including the quality, type, size and brand name.
- They may refuse to accept returned merchandise shipped without your prior consent.

### **Warning Signs:**

1. Firm’s name intended to sound like the manufacturer or your regular supplier.
2. You must act on the offer that day.
3. Telemarketer or mailing makes it appear the vendor has done business with you before.
4. Unwilling to send written information on the offer or references.
5. Unwilling to give you a telephone number.
6. Caller asks for your credit card number as identification.

7. Caller asks for serial number on your copier.
8. Caller asks for social security number.
9. Merchandise arrives, but you have no record of ordering it

To learn more about types of scams, and what you can do to avoid them in your department, visit the FTC web site at

<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/buspubs/supplies.htm>.

If you receive unordered merchandise through the U.S. mail, you do NOT legally have to pay for it or return it at university expense. It is customary to offer to return the merchandise if the seller pays postage and handling. You can inform the vendor that you reserve the right to keep the merchandise or dispose of it after a reasonable time (30 days or so).

Public employees entrusted with procurement responsibilities should always strive to find the best combination of quality and price for their organization, without being unduly influenced by high-pressure tactics or free gifts, even if the vendor tries to assuage guilt by claiming the gift can be "used in the office."

If you're contacted by a suspicious vendor or receive unordered merchandise that you think is a scam, please contact Internal Audit or Purchasing so we can make the university community aware of any emerging tactics.