



# DOC Charge Card Program

## APC Digest

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## Securing Government Purchase Cards

*Agency Program Coordinators, Cardholders, Approving Officials, and Managers of Cardholders and Approving Officials shall read and understand the DOC Purchase Card policy ~ Commerce Acquisition Manual 1313.301*

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Cardholders may be held personally responsible for card and account misuse. Therefore cardholders shall take appropriate precautions to protect their purchase card and account information:

- ♦ Cardholders shall NOT carry purchase cards on their person (i.e., purses, wallets, or pockets) unless conducting an over-the-counter transaction
- ♦ Account information should only be given to vendors to complete a purchase transaction
- ♦ Cardholders shall keep purchase cards and account information in a secured environment (i.e., locked desk drawer, or a locked safe) to prevent access by unauthorized personnel
- ♦ Multiple cards shall not be stored together
- ♦ Cardholders shall only do business with reputable merchants
- ♦ Cardholders shall ensure that vendor websites are secure (i.e., "https")
- ♦ Cardholders shall not transmit purchase card information over a facsimile machine
- ♦ Cardholders shall not permit copies of their purchase cards to be maintained by vendors

# Determining Price Reasonableness



When purchasing products or services from commercial sources, cardholders should gain some knowledge about the merchants that typically provide the products or services the cardholder wishes to obtain:

- ⇒ Do they offer reasonable prices?
- ⇒ Do they offer quality products?
- ⇒ Do they provide good customer service?

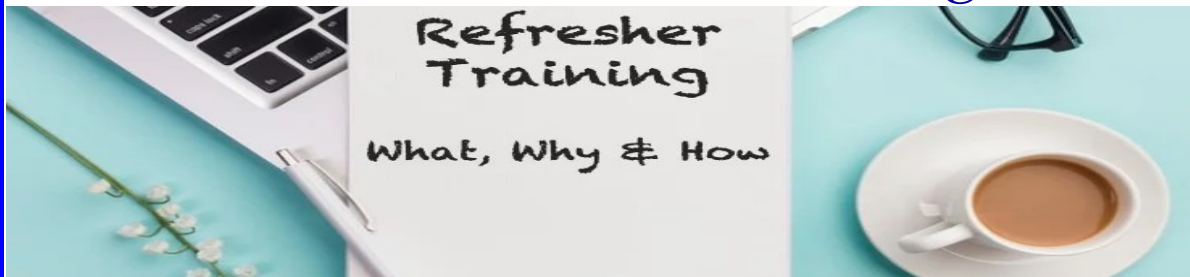
The purchase should represent the best value that meets the government's minimum requirement.

Before making a purchase, cardholders must determine that the proposed price is fair and reasonable. Whenever possible, cardholders should base price reasonableness on competitive quotes or offers from multiple vendors (e.g., obtain at least two prices from two different vendors).

Cardholders should include a statement of price reasonableness in the transaction file. The cardholder may base the statement on:

- Market research;
- Comparison of the proposed price with prices found reasonable on previous purchases;
- Current price lists, catalogs, or advertisements;
- A comparison with similar items in a related industry;
- The cardholder's personal knowledge of the item being purchased;
- Comparison to an independent Government estimate; or

## Annual Refresher Training



- Any other reasonable basis.

Mandatory annual refresher training for Cardholders, Approving Officials and Agency Program Coordinators is required by July 31, 2023.

Refresher training in the Commerce Learning Center: <https://doc.csod.com> can be found by searching for:

### **FY 2023 DOC Purchase Card Refresher Training**

(all 7 modules must be completed in order to obtain a certificate)

Approving Officials have the option of completing:

### **FY23 Purchase Card Approving Official Course** for refresher training.

If you have any questions regarding this requirement, please contact your bureau agency

# Save THE Date

## Big A Conference

The Office of Acquisition Management (OAM) is hosting its twelfth annual Big “A” Conference. This year’s theme is “Executing Change”. The conference will be hosted virtually online May 8—10th between 9AM—4PM ET each day.

For the second year, the conference will host a **purchase card track** where all purchase card stakeholders—cardholders, approving officials, agency program coordinators, budget officials etc. are wel-

comed to register and participate.

This year, the purchase card track consists of three sessions that will be held on **Tuesday, May 9, 2023 from 1—4PM ET**. The schedule is as follows:

**1PM ET GSA: SmartPay Purchase Card Essentials:** Presentation will be presented by the General Services Administration (GSA) SmartPay Team to provide an overview of the SmartPay Program as well as leading best practices in management and participation in the purchase card program.

**2PM ET: Auditing Purchase Cards—A GAO Perspective:** Presentation will be presented by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) on GAO’s framework for managing fraud risks in federal programs and best practices for oversight and risk management relative to the federal purchase card program.

**3PM ET: GSA: Commercial Platforms Program:** Presentation will be presented by the General Services Administration (GSA) eMarketPlace team to provides an overview of the eMarketPlace commercial platform programs.

## Robotic Process Automation (RPA)/ BOTS



The SmartPay Program Management Office (PMO) worked with the ServiceNow RPA Team to develop a Robotic Process Automation BOT (Build Operate Transfer-Robot) to enhance program processes and oversight. The BOT was developed to identify special characters (i.e., dollar signs \$, commas, etc.) in the servicing bank’s accounting code field that threaten to disrupt the monthly mapper file payment invoice process. A Reconciliation Report is generated from the servicing bank’s tool. If special characters are identified in the report, the BOT generates an automated email to the bureau agency program coordinator (APC) , with error records attached. The APC can then work with cardholders and approving official to remove the incorrect characters from the system.



# APC SPOTLIGHT



Eulene started her career at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in the former “NIST Comptroller’s Office” as a Group Secretary in July 1998. She has held many hats working in different divisions at NIST throughout the years, such as, Backup Secretary to the NIST CFO Office, Division Secretary to the Grants Management Division and Grants Technical Assistant, and on detail as Division Secretary to the Acquisition Management Division.

Eulene was a purchase card-holder for these divisions and gave up the purchase card to become NIST Agency Program Coordinator (APC) in August 2015.

Eulene is also known for her “World Class Act” in customer service to the ACE Bureaus, NTIA, NTIS, and NIST purchase card customers.

Eulene enjoys imparting her extensive purchase card knowledge to government purchase card program participants through training, reviewing monthly transactions and providing feedback/advice with a smile. Eulene often goes above and beyond customer expectations to help resolve issues.

In her spare time, she spends time cruising the Caribbean with her husband of 43 years and cooking jerk chicken and sweet coconut bread for her church family and NIST coworkers.

*[Articles provided by the Office of Acquisition Management]*

# DOC Travel News



## FY 2023 DOC Travel A/OPC Quarterly Meeting Schedule

Travel Management Division (TMD) will host the FY 2023 Quarterly A/OPC meeting at **1 PM ET** on the below dates:

- Thursday, June 1, 2023
- Thursday, September 7, 2023
- Thursday, December 7, 2023

The A/OPC meeting provides a venue for bringing forward challenges, asking questions, and gaining valuable feedback from Bureau colleagues. This A/OPC meeting will also bring the travel community together for critical updates and discussion on the latest activities regarding government travel charge cards. If you have any questions, please contact the Travel Management Division (TMD) office at: [OFMDOCTravelCardProgram@doc.gov](mailto:OFMDOCTravelCardProgram@doc.gov).

## Travel Advisory Group (TAG)

Travel Management Division (TMD) and Office of Reporting Internal Controls and Travel (OFRICT) Leadership have established a Travel Advisory Group (TAG) for the primary and alternate travel bureau points of contact. The primary goal of this group is to offer bureau stakeholders the opportunity to discuss concerns relative to the Department's travel policies and hot topics. One notable topic is the General Service Administration (GSA) and the federal government's move to utilize the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations (eCFR).

The advisory group would like to thank all those who participated in the March 22nd meeting. Please contact TMD for more information on upcoming meetings and agendas.

# Car Maintenance Tips for the Summer



## 1. Test the Air Conditioner

Summer heat pairs well with air conditioning. When higher temperatures hit, you will want a working air conditioner system in your car. You may not have used your air conditioner during winter or spring, so make sure you test it ahead of the summer season.

## 2. Check your tires' air pressure

Most passenger cars have a recommended tire pressure between 30 and 35 PSI (pounds per square inch). When in doubt reference your car owner's manual to learn the specifics on what your tire pressure range should be.

Optimal tire pressure can prevent a flat tire or tire blowout. While you're at it, it's also a good idea to check the air pressure of your spare tire to make sure it will serve as a reliable alternative in case of an emergency.

## 3. Top off engine fluids

Seasonal weather shifts can often lead to low engine fluids as they tend to thin or even evaporate in warm temperatures. When summer comes around, you'll want to top off your transmission fluid, power steering fluid, coolant and windshield wiper fluid. Coolant fluid is particularly important to check during the summer months, as its job is to keep your car's engine from overheating.

## 4. Get your oil & filter changed

Getting your oil and filter changed is one of the simplest ways to increase the longevity of your vehicle. Oil lubricants keep your engine safe from wear and tear, and the oil filter helps remove contaminants from your car's engine oil. A good rule of thumb is to change your oil every 5,000 miles or follow your car manufacturer's oil maintenance guidelines. GSA is 7500mi!

## 5. Test your brakes

Other than the obvious red flag of poor stopping performance, you'll want to listen for squealing or growling sounds when testing your brakes. You'll also want to check for brake pulling, or if your vehicle pulls to one side when you press the brake pedal. If you notice any of these poor performance signs, it's time for an inspection and potentially a repair.

# Car Maintenance Tips for the Summer (Continued)

## 6. Replace windshield wipers

Maintaining visibility is an essential requirement while you're behind the wheel. In summer, dust and pollen particles or even the sun's glare can impair your ability to clearly see out of your windshield. Make sure to check your windshield wipers' effectiveness to remove anything that could minimize visibility. It's a good idea to check or replace your windshield wipers at the end of each season.

Additionally, make sure pollen and other particles aren't covering your light beams. If your headlights seem dim or weak, immediately change them to ensure you're able to see clearly at night, in the rain or in any other conditions that may impact your sight from the driver's seat.

## 7. Clean your car

Keeping both the exterior and interior of your car clean doesn't just make you feel good; it makes financial sense long-term. Hot temperatures can melt plastics, food or other rubbish left inside your car and could damage your car's interior — which could require a costly repair. Additionally, keeping your exterior clean can protect the paintwork from the sun's rays, as well as damage caused by any birds or insects.

## 8. Park your car in the shade

On hot days, try to park your car in the shade or garage whenever possible. Parking your car in a shaded spot not only keeps you cool but can keep your car cool and prolong its life. The sun's rays could damage the exterior and paint of your car which could be costly to fix. Extreme heat could also heat up the interior of your car, like the steering wheel and leather seats, making it difficult to drive.

## 9. Keep your engine cool

Every car has a cooling system with the job of removing heat from the engine to maintain proper temperatures. The cooling system is made up of coolant, hoses, a thermostat, radiator and water pump. The temperature gauge, designed to measure the coolant levels in your car, will indicate if your engine's coolant is cold, normal or overheating. If the temperature gauge is indicating high levels, this could mean your vehicle is overheating. If this happens, pull over and wait for your engine to cool down. As this is a serious problem, it's best to contact your local mechanic right away to fix the problem.

## 10. Stay hydrated

Just like your car, you need to top yourself off with fluids to operate properly. Dehydration and heat exhaustion can impact your ability to drive. Summertime also brings on more road traffic, pedestrians and bikers, so staying hydrated can keep you alert and avoid an accident.

## Contributions

*APC Digest* is a distribution to keep the DOC Charge Card community connected with program enhancements, policy updates, and best practices. If you have information that you would like to have incorporated in the newsletter, please send an email to:

[PurchaseCardOversight@doc.gov](mailto:PurchaseCardOversight@doc.gov).