The Ledger

A Newsletter of the University Controller's Organization

New Email Address and Phone Line for Travel Questions

To provide better customer service, the Controller's Office has established a new email address and a new phone line for inquiries regarding the status of travel reimbursement vouchers that have been submitted for processing. Please forward your questions to travelvt@vt.edu or call 231-0944. This email and phone line will be monitored by our travel staff daily to ensure a quick response and to avoid delays when individual staff members are out of the office or on vacation.

GE/Mastercard Travel Card Training

In order to comply with state regulations for the GE/Mastercard Travel card, all cardholders are required to annually complete a training program related to the travel card.

If you have a GE/Mastercard Travel card, please access our travel card training at: http://www.co.vt.edu/

Click on "GE Travel Card Training" on the left hand side. Once the training program opens, you can click on "slide show" at the bottom right hand corner to see the full presentation. After you have completed the training, submit the certification form at the end.

Please submit your training certification by October 31st, 2006.

You must have Acrobat Reader 7.0 in order for the certification to work. You can download Acrobat Reader 7.0 at:
http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html

If you have technical difficulties with the training program, please contact Michelle Pochick (mpochick@vt.edu) at 231-9308.

If you have questions related to the travel card, please contact Wilda Lay (wlay@vt.edu) at 231-8613.

Travel Reimbursement Tidbits

To avoid delays in the processing of travel reimbursement vouchers, please review the guidelines listed below. These are areas where we have recurring problems that delay the reimbursement process. The following is not a complete listing of travel procedures.

For a complete listing, please refer to our website at:
http://www.co.vt.edu/accounting_operations/accounting_services/travel/index.html

Daily Commuting Mileage (DCM): Business mileage is reimbursable only to the extent it exceeds the employee's normal daily roundtrip commuting mileage. Travelers cannot be reimbursed for mileage until they have exceeded their normal commute. For more detail, please reference:
http://www.co.vt.edu/procedures/p20335d.htm

Mileage Reimbursement: If a car from Fleet Services is not available, this information must be indicated on the travel reimbursement voucher and the certification from Fleet Services must be attached. For more detail, please reference:
http://www.co.vt.edu/procedures/p20335d.htm

Boarding Passes: Boarding passes are required for all air and rail reimbursements to individuals. For more detail, please reference:
http://www.co.vt.edu/procedures/p20335e.html

Lodging: The travel estimate and approval form must be completed **PRIOR** to overnight travel when the total cost of the trip is expected to exceed $500 OR when the lodging exceeds the allowable rate for the area. Departments have authority to approve lodging rates up to 50% above the allowable rate on the travel estimate and approval form. For lodging rates exceeding 50% above the allowable rate, an exception request must be submitted **PRIOR** to the travel occurring to the Supervisor of Travel Disbursements (Roger Thomas). If a travel estimate and approval form is not required, please indicate on the travel reimbursement voucher the city and state where the lodging occurred. For more detail, please reference: http://www.co.vt.edu/procedures/p20335b.html.

Meals and Incidental Expenses: Travelers can only receive reimbursement for 75% of the M&IE on departure and return days. Also, the M&IE rate is based on the city or town where the lodging is located. For more detail, please reference:
http://www.co.vt.edu/procedures/p20335c.html

Official Business Meals: Business meals cannot consist entirely of university employees from one department and they normally include non-Virginia Tech employees. All business meals require an itemized receipt. For more detail, please reference: http://www.co.vt.edu/procedures/p20335c.html

International Travel: Conversion rates and the source of the conversion rates should be indicated on the travel reimbursement voucher or included as an attachment. When OSP funds are being charged for the reimbursement and it involves international travel, the travel estimate and approval form must have OSP approval.

Business phone calls, faxes & internet charges: The business purpose, name of parties involved and points between which the calls are made must be stated to document the necessity of the expense. For more detail, please reference:
http://www.co.vt.edu/procedures/p20335a.html

Car Rental: It is the traveler's responsibility to refuel a rental car prior to returning it to the rental car agency. Rental agencies charge excessive amounts to refuel a vehicle and travelers will not be reimbursed for amounts paid to rental agencies

for this service. The "up front fuel option charge" where rental companies charge for a full tank of gas at a lower rate should also be declined because the traveler, by definition, cannot return a car "empty". Virginia Tech employees traveling within the United States should decline car rental insurance because the university provides a self-insured automobile plan for employees. For more detail, please reference: http://www.co.vt.edu/procedures/p20335d.html

  Receipts: Please be sure that all receipts attached to the travel reimbursement voucher are legible and clear.

  Travel loans: If the traveler has a travel loan, please remember to indicate this on the travel reimbursement voucher by making the voucher payable to the "Traveler or Treasurer of Virginia Tech".

We appreciate everyone's attention and cooperation regarding these matters. As a reminder, the Controller's Office offers monthly training sessions on travel procedures and forms. If you have never attended one of these sessions or would like to attend for a review, please contact Tammy Quesenberry (tqberry@vt.edu) at 231-8612.

Virginia Correctional Enterprises (VCE)

The Purchasing Department is making some changes and is implementing some new procedures that have been allowed by the restructuring process. One thing that has **NOT** changed are the rules regarding state law requiring us to purchase furniture from VCE on a right of first-refusal basis (meaning that we are obliged to consider their product line first). There was a strong attempt made during the restructuring negotiations to obtain some relief from this process, but it was unsuccessful.

In short, the same rules that have been in place remain so. You must obtain a release from VCE **before** purchasing furniture items from commercial sources. Our view is that in recent years VCE has been rather obliging in granting releases, however, obtaining a release is a step that we must follow in accordance with The Code of Virginia.

Release forms and instructions are provided on the Purchasing website: http://www.purch.vt.edu/html.docs/furniture.html

Completed release forms should be maintained on file in the department. For those now using the HokieMart electronic procurement system, we recommend that you scan the authorized VCE release and attach it as an internal note to your HokieMart requisition. That way, all the documentation will be together in one electronic file.

The future: we are working with VCE to have their punch-out catalog enabled in the HokieMart. This will make access to their product lines and ordering from them an easier process.

Revised Procedures for Sole Source Procurements

University senior management has approved a recommendation to raise the threshold for sole source or proprietary procurement from $5,000 to $10,000. The sole source/proprietary justification form must now be completed and submitted to the Purchasing Department or Information Technology Acquisitions only if the value of the procurement is greater than $10,000.

This change will reduce the amount of administrative workload required for many lower valued procurements and will allow for faster processing in the Purchasing and ITA Departments.

Purchasing and ITA Buyers have the latitude to process transactions valued at $10,000 and below in several ways. The Buyer can place the order against a term contract. They can elect to obtain informal competition (quotes). They can seek to locate a SWAM supplier and place the order with them. Or, the Buyer can elect to place the order with the source suggested by the Department if they anticipate that other options will not be viable.

If you have questions, please contact the Purchasing or ITA departments.