

TRANSMITTAL PAGE

REVISED PROCEDURES FOR THE USE OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT PURCHASE CARD

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE.** This Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Handbook is issued to update and clarify procedures on the use of the Government Purchase Card for agency purchase cardholders and approving officials.
2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS.** This revision incorporates recommendations from the Office of the Inspector General as well as several other required changes to agency procedures. In an overall effort to improve oversight of NRC's Purchase Card Program, the following sections have been revised or added:
 - Instructions and examples for nominating prospective purchase cardholders and approving officials
 - Significant change in the procurement for offsite meeting space for agency sponsored meetings and conferences
 - Significant change in the procurement for electronic and information technology (EIT) products and services
 - FAIMIS and the NRC Purchase Card Program. Change in the processes required for commitment of funding, creating bankcard obligations, and reconciliation of cardholder accounts
 - Temporarily or permanently increasing cardholder spending limits
 - Closing cardholder accounts
 - Procedures for procuring accountable property
 - Additional examples are provided for Split Transactions
 - Update to convenience check policy procedures

ABOUT THE NRC's PURCHASE CARD PROGRAM

What Is The NRC's Purchase Card Program?

The purpose of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) Purchase Card Program is to implement the General Services Administration SmartPay®2 Program (hereafter simply referred to as Purchase Card Program or "purchase card") for Government-wide Commercial Purchase Cards within the NRC. The NRC's Purchase Card Program applies to NRC employees participating in the Government-wide purchase card program, including the agency program coordinator, approving officials, purchase cardholders and other associated personnel.

The NRC Purchase Card Program authorizes the approved cardholders, within an established delegated authority limit, to make purchases of goods and services for official Government business. The purchase card simplifies and expedites purchases of small dollar values. The program uses a specially designed VISA card (purchase card), streamlining the ordering and payment process by providing for telephone, internet, and over-the-counter ordering by authorized cardholders, as well as, monthly summary billing by Citibank issuing the purchase card. The program eliminates numerous small-value purchase orders, invoices, and payments, which normally incur with disproportionately high administrative expenses.

The purchase card can be used for the procurement of supplies, products and services for official government use, can be useful in emergencies, and with vendors who do not accept purchase orders.

What is the role of the Agency Program Coordinator (APC)?

The APC is the person responsible for the day-to-day management of the Agency's purchase card program, provides oversight of the program, and serves as the liaison between the cardholder and the contracting bank. Specifically, the APC:

- Establishes policies, procedures, and the training requirements for the Agency's purchase card program
- Sets up new cardholder accounts requested by authorized officials; maintains account hierarchies, re-issues expired cards; cancels inactive accounts, changes purchase card limits, makes administrative changes to accounts
- Provides on-going guidance and information to cardholders and approving officials on the appropriateness of proposed purchases under the purchase card program
- Conducts annual reviews on cardholder purchase card records
- Provides quarterly statistical reports on the Agency's purchase card program to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
- Reports suspected fraud, waste and abuse of the purchase card to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG)
- Performs oversight function

Questions about the use and administration of the purchase card can be directed to NRC's APC, Betty Freeman at 301-492-3631 or Betty.Freeman@nrc.gov.

Who may have a purchase card?

NRC employees can be designated as cardholders regardless of position or grade level. Contractor employees cannot be designated as cardholders. No minimum number of purchases is required to justify having a purchase card. Offices may designate as many cardholders as necessary to meet their needs.

Can I be held personally responsible for charges to the Purchase Card?

The purchase card is issued through the NRC for NRC employees, and is not connected to the cardholder's personal financial records. NRC is responsible for payment of all authorized charges made using a purchase card.

In addition to following purchase card procedures, the purchase cardholder (hereafter "cardholder") should always ensure that funds are available before making a purchase and that the funds can be legally used for the specific purchase.

Intentional use of the purchase card for unauthorized purposes may be considered an attempt to commit fraud against the U.S. Government and may result in immediate cancellation of the purchase card and disciplinary action against the cardholder. In accordance with Agency regulations, the cardholder may be held personally and financially liable for such purchases under 18 USC 287. The cardholder may be personally liable to the Government for the amount of the unauthorized purchases and may be subject to imprisonment for up to 5 years and a fine of either up to \$250,000 or twice the financial gain to the individual or loss to the government.

In cases of suspected fraud or inappropriate use of the purchase card, the APC shall refer incidents to the Agency's Office of the Inspector General for further review and investigation.

WHAT CAN BE PURCHASED?

What types of things can I buy with the Purchase Card?

The purchase card can be used to purchase commercially available required products and services, including, but not limited to:

- Rental of offsite meeting rooms for short-term meetings (*refer to Approvals Required Prior to Purchase for agency guidelines*)
- Agency approved software and IT services (*refer to Approvals Required Prior to Purchase for agency guidelines*)
- External training (**refer to Appendix 7**)
- Safety clothing
- Publications and public notices

Are there any restrictions on what I can buy?

The purchase card is subject to the same restrictions as purchase orders made with appropriated funds and as outlined in these procedures. The purchase of some items is strictly prohibited due to limitations on use of NRC appropriations. The purchase of some other items requires special authorization and/or coordination with the organization that has central management responsibility for the item, product, or service to be acquired.

Prohibited Purchases

The purchase card and convenience checks will not be used for:

- Cash advances
- Travel expenses (lodging, airline, bus, boat, train, or other travel-related tickets; i.e., Invitational Travel (refer to Management Directive 14, Part 8, "Pre-Employment Interview Travel") - The Government Travel Card should be used for these items or a purchase order should be issued if the travel expenses are for a contractor.
- Rental or lease of land or buildings
- Office supply items stocked in NRC's Supply Store (Headquarters only)
- General office equipment such as typewriters, microwaves, electric staplers, cameras, televisions and DVD players (For approval prior to purchase cardholders located at NRC Headquarters should contact the Administrative Services Branch (ASC); cardholders located at the regional offices should contact their designated property custodian.)

These prohibitions are not absolute. When special circumstances warrant exceptions to the policy, cardholders should contact the APC for approval prior to making the purchase. If the exception is approved, the cardholder must keep a copy of the approval as file documentation.

Approvals Required Prior to Purchase

The items outlined below require pre-approvals prior to purchase. The cardholder shall ensure that required approvals are received and copies of required documentation are maintained in the purchase card file.

Purchase Requirements	Approvals Required	Reference
Telephone Services	Contact: Computer Operations & Telecommunications Branch (OIS)	Management Directive 2.3, Parts 2 and 3, " Telephone Services "
Electronic and Information Technology (EIT) Products EIT includes such things as software applications, web-based information and applications, computer-based training, telecommunication products, video and multimedia products, desktop and portable computers, computer printers/multifunction machines, smartphones, etc.	Purchase of EIT requires approval by the requesting office's IT Coordinator or Office Director and the EIT must be authorized.	Appendix 1 - Supplementary Guidelines issued by the Chief Information Officer
Furniture (including decorations, and window treatments)	All furniture purchases must be coordinated and approved for compliance with agency's standards. Headquarters: Contact: Space Design Branch (ADM) Regions Contact the designated regional facility management coordinator	Management Directive 13.1 , Part V " Standard Supplies and Furniture "
Light Refreshments for Award Ceremonies	Exception: Prior approval of	Management

	the APC is not required for the cardholder to purchase light refreshments to be provided at Regional Office-wide and Headquarters Office-wide award ceremonies at which any combination of Performance Awards, High Quality Step Increases, and Special Act Awards are presented, when the purpose of refreshments is approved by the Office Director or Regional Office Administrator, provided that appropriated funds are available for this purpose. Evidence of the Office Director or Regional Office Administrator's approval must be kept with the cardholder's file.	Directive 10.72 , Part IV, " <i>Special Recognition Awards</i> ."
Other Food	Prior approval of the APC is required for use of the purchase card for other food purchases including other types of award ceremonies (meals, snacks, coffee breaks, receptions, banquets, bottled water etc., except emergency food for hurricane sites) even if it is part of a larger purchase (e.g., rental of conference / meeting space).	
Professional Membership Fees or Dues for Societies or Associations	It is allowable to use the purchase card for payment of professional membership fees providing that it is purchased in the name of the NRC, rather than that of an employee, and that the expenditure is justified as necessary to carry out the purposes of the Agency's appropriation.	
Short-term rental of meeting rooms	Requests for offsite meeting space must be submitted via <i>NRC's Checklist for Offsite Conferences and Meetings</i> to the ASC for approval prior to purchasing. ASC will determine if suitable space is not available within Agency.	Conferencing Guidance for the Checklist and criteria for procuring offsite meeting space

Office Supplies	<p>Headquarters Only Upgrades to stocked office supply items and special order office supplies require approval prior to purchasing from the Administrative Services Branch (ASC) Email: Supply</p> <p><i>Cardholders are required to utilize the FSSI Office Supply vendors to purchase office supplies and toner not available in the Supply Room</i></p>	FSSI BPA Vendors for office supplies and toner
External Training	External training is an allowable purchase under the Purchase Card Program. However, before purchasing training, the cardholder must have a copy of the approved training request (SF 182) submitted in iLearn in accordance with the agency procedures.	Management Directive 10.77 , "Employee Training and Development".
Business Cards	Business cards are an allowable purchase under the Purchase Card Program. The mandatory source for ordering business cards is the National Industries for the Blind (NIB).	Ability One Program (NIB/NISH)
Recruitment Advertising; Rental of Space for Recruitment; Temporary Office Personnel	Headquarters and Regional Human Resources personnel are allowed to make such purchases without prior approval of the APC.	

Who approves Purchase Card purchases?

A cardholder cannot serve as their own approving official. The approving official must be an NRC employee. Approving officials should be at a higher grade level with respect to the cardholders under their purview. The approving official is designated for the oversight of the cardholder's purchase card activities; ensuring that all purchases made by the cardholder(s) were appropriate and for official government use. At the end of the billing cycle, the approving official is responsible for the review and approval for payment of the cardholder's transactions. Cardholders who use the purchase card to buy supplies or services for their own work-related use are required to obtain prior written approval from their approving official that the items represent an office need. The written approval must be filed as part of the documentation for the transaction.

OBTAINING A PURCHASE CARD

How can I get a Purchase Card?

Starting the Paperwork

Branch Chiefs or above are responsible for recommending prospective cardholders and approving officials for the purchase card program. Each prospective purchase cardholder and/or purchase card approving official must complete the agency's online purchase card training prior to nomination. Nominations can be written or sent electronically to the APC and shall include the following:

- Applicable training certificate(s) of completion
- Identify cardholder's 30-day spending limit
- Identify the 30-day approving authority dollar limit for each purchase card approving official

(Refer to [Appendix 2_Templates for Cardholder/Approving Officials .doc](#) for a sample memorandum)

Training

All prospective new cardholders and/or approving officials must complete the NRC's training course, "*NRC's Procedures for Use of the U.S. Government Purchase Card*." The course provides the cardholder and approving official basic information needed to make purchases. It includes a review of cardholder responsibilities along with a quiz. The training is available online through NRC's Learning Management System (iLearn). Upon completion of the course, the cardholder and/or approving official shall provide the APC a copy of the training certificate of completion.

Refresher Training

Cardholders and purchase card approving officials shall complete annual refresher training every 3 years. Refresher training is currently being provided periodically by the APC. Online training is being developed and will replace the in-person sessions once it is available NRC-wide. Failure to complete required refresher training will lead to suspension of the cardholder and the approving official's purchase card privileges until training is successfully completed.

Delegation of Authority

The APC is responsible for setting up cardholder and approving official accounts with Citibank. The prospective cardholder and/or approving official will receive a delegation of authority memorandum, showing the cardholder's official spending limits. The APC determines the method of delivery of the purchase card to the cardholder. (Refer to **Appendix 3** and **Appendix 4** for sample delegations)

Activating the Purchase Card

After receiving the purchase card, the cardholder must activate the purchase card for use before making purchases. The customer service number is provided by Citibank on a sticker on the front of the card. Citibank is available to assist the cardholder through the process of activating the purchase card.

Administrative Changes

Cardholders and approving officials shall notify the APC of any administrative changes such as name change, position change, phone/mail change. The APC shall make the appropriate change in Citibank's system. The preferred method is via email.

FUNDING

Where and when do I get funding for Purchase Card purchases?

Prior to making the purchase, the cardholder must ensure that adequate funds have been certified available by the Funds Certifying Official (FCO). A purchase made without sufficient funds is an unauthorized commitment. (Refer to [Federal Acquisition Regulation \(FAR\) 1.602-3](#) for further information on ratifications for unauthorized commitments).

The FCO may make a blanket commitment of funds for a category of purchases falling under a unique combination of the accounting appropriation numbers. The FCO makes such a commitment by entering a specific amount of funding for cardholder transactions in the Financial Accounting and Integrated Management Integrated System (FAIMIS), which is the Agency's core financial system. The cardholder must keep a record of all transactions made against blanket commitment funding to ensure that purchases do not exceed the commitment amount. If a purchase is permissible but falls under different accounting classifications than those used for a blanket commitment, the cardholder must obtain a separate certification of funds under the appropriate accounting classifications.

FAIMIS Training Aid for FCO Obligation of Commitments (BCC) (hyperlink): [BCC Process](#)

SPENDING LIMITS

What limits are placed on my purchasing power?

Single-Purchase Limit: A single-purchase threshold is established to limit the maximum amount that a cardholder may spend in a single transaction. The single purchase may consist of multiple items, but the total purchase amount, including freight, cannot exceed \$3,000 (\$2,000 for construction / \$2,500 for services). The single-purchase limit for cardholders who are not in an acquisition position is \$3,000 (the micro-purchase threshold). This amount is specified in the delegation of authority memorandum issued to the cardholder. Convenience checks issued under the Purchase Card Program are subject to all of the regulations and restrictions of the purchase card.

Thirty-Day Cardholder Limit: A 30-day cardholder limit is also established for each cardholder's combined purchases in a given 30-day billing cycle. The cardholder's approving official will establish this limit based on budget considerations and anticipated usage.

Thirty-Day Approving Official Limit: A 30-day authority approval limit is the combined total of each cardholders' 30-day limit assigned to the approving official. The amount will vary depending on the number of cardholders assigned.

Transactions should not be split into separate requirements to circumvent a cardholder's single purchase limit. (Refer to Appendix 8, *Guidance On Avoidance Of Split Purchase Card Transactions*)

What if I need to purchase more of an item or service than my single-purchase level will permit?

Use of the purchase card is not intended to replace effective procurement planning, which promotes volume discounts. Cardholders are required to stay within their assigned dollar limits and may not split requirements to circumvent their assigned single-purchase limits. Therefore, if an office needs to purchase multiple items or services (e.g., 100 software licenses) at a given time and the total dollar amount exceeds the micro-purchase threshold of \$3,000, the purchase cannot be broken down into several orders to stay below the micro-purchase threshold. Purchase cardholders at Headquarters are required to submit **NRC Form 400 Request for Procurement Action** to DC at **RFPAS.Resource@nrc.gov**, along with other associated requirements documentation for processing. Purchase cardholders at the regional offices must obtain **Standard Form 30 Request for Administrative Services** before issuance of a purchase order.

How does a merchant know my spending limits?

When the merchant obtains authorization for the purchase, the bank verifies the cardholder's single-purchase and 30-day limits. If the purchase exceeds either of the limits, the bank will not authorize the purchase card purchase.

How do I get the spending limits temporarily changed?

A request to change a cardholder's monthly purchase limit should be directed to the APC for action by the cardholder's approving official. The APC will modify the cardholder's account temporarily and confirm approval of the increase through an e-mail to the approving official and cardholder. The cardholder should ensure that adequate funds are available for the temporary increase.

Should the approving official require a permanent increase to the cardholder's monthly limit, the APC will make the change to the cardholder's account and modify the purchase card delegations for the cardholder and the approving official.

Request to increase single purchase limits above the micro-purchase threshold can only temporarily be increased for training registrations, supported by a SF-182 for the required training.

SOURCES

Can I buy from any source?

Cardholders shall follow the required source of supplies and services as outlined in **FAR, Part 8**, Required Sources of Supplies and Services; which sets forth statutory requirements to acquire supplies and services from priority sources. Other sources should be considered for use only after the priority sources have been considered for fulfilling requirements.

Cardholders shall satisfy requirements for supplies from the following sources, in descending order or priority:

Supplies

- Agency inventories (Contact Supply Store or Administrative Services Center located at NRC Headquarters)
- Excess from other agencies -- **Excess**
- Federal Prison Industries, Inc. -- www.unicor.gov
- AbilityOne Program --- www.abilityone.com
- GSA Stock Program on GSA Advantage -- **GSA Advantage**

- GSA Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative (FSSI) BPAs – mandatory for office supplies/toner
FSSI BPA Vendors
- GSA Advantage Federal Supply Schedules (FSS) – [GSA Advantage](#) (website)
- Commercial sources (including educational and nonprofit institutions)

Services

- Ability One Program -- www.abilityone.com (website)
- GSA Federal Supply Schedules (FSS) – [GSA Advantage](#) (website)
- Federal Prison Industries, Inc. -- www.unicor.gov (website)
- Commercial sources (including educational and nonprofit institutions)

How do I buy green?

NRC's green purchasing involves the selection and acquisition of products and services that most effectively minimize negative environmental impacts over their life cycle of manufacturing, transportation, use and recycling or disposal. The agency is committed to reducing the adverse environmental impact and carbon footprint caused by harmful substances by purchasing goods and services from vendors who share NRC's mission to protect public health, safety, and the environment. Green purchasing requirements apply to all Federal agencies and their contractors. The requirements pertain to simplified acquisitions and large purchases, as well as to both direct purchases of products and to support services contracts. These requirements also apply to Federal purchase cardholders and to micro-purchases.

Federal regulations require that green products be purchased to the maximum extent practicable and fulfill the applicable affirmative procurement requirements of Section 6002 of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), Section 104 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPAct), Section 9002 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (FSRIA), Executive Order 13423 ("Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management"), Executive Order 13514 ("Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance") and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR).

Green purchasing involves procuring the following: use of designated recycled content, Energy Star®, energy-efficient products, biobased/biopreferred products, alternative fuel/vehicles/ SNAP/Non-Ozone depleting substances, EPA priority chemicals, environmentally preferable products, and EPEAT-registered products.

Additional information for "Green" products and services can be found in Appendix 10, and at Office of Administration's website <http://www.internal.nrc.gov/ADM/greening/buyinggreen.html>.

508 Compliance

The requirements of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act apply to all purchases of **electronic and information technology (EIT)**. EIT includes such things as software applications, web-based information and applications, computer-based training, telecommunication products, video and multimedia products, desktop and portable computers, computer printers/multifunction machines, smartphones, etc. See the definitions of EIT and information technology listed under Approvals Prior to Purchase. Also supplementary guidelines provided by the Chief Information Officer can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

How do I handle accountable property?

When “accountable” property is acquired using the purchase card, the cardholder has the primary responsibility to ensure that the information regarding that property acquisition is reported to their designated Office Property Custodian (OPC). It’s important to note that while the Cardholder has the primary responsibility for providing their Office Property Custodian (OPC) with appropriate purchase information to accurately document the acquisition (such as the transaction date, item cost, quantity and type of items purchased), their Approving Official is also held responsible for the OPC receiving this information.

The OPC must receive that purchase information in a timely manner in order to perform their important role of coordinating both the update of the official property records to reflect the purchase, and installation of NRC property tracking tags on the new items to identify them as government property. To perform their role, the OPC will complete a tagging data sheet (NRC Form 747), attach the purchase documentation and forward to the Property & Labor Services Branch (PLSB) located at mail stop OWF-4D15.

A copy of the tagging sheet must be retained in the cardholder’s purchase card file.

A list of Property Custodians can be found on the ADM internal website at:
<http://www.internal.nrc.gov/ADM/spaceplanning/propmgmt.html>.

Please refer to the following link for the definition for “accountable” property:
<http://www.internal.nrc.gov/policy/directives/catalog/md13.1.pdf#H-I.E>

Can I keep going back to the same source?

If an office needs to make repeated buys or purchases of the same item and the item is available from several vendors, the cardholder should get quotes from among three or more vendors and verify price reasonableness (consider competitive quotes or price comparison of catalog prices). Application of this process may result in award to the same vendor if price is lower than the competitors’, and is documented in the file.

Can I purchase overseas?

The purchase card may be used for official U.S. Government purchases overseas if no additional fees are charged. The cardholder must verify that no additional fees will be charged before using the card. Cardholders are required to give priority to U.S. companies over foreign companies.

Will all vendors accept the Purchase Card for payment?

Since the purchase card is a VISA card, all vendors that accept VISA should accept the purchase card. Occasionally a vendor may not accept the purchase card as a method of payment. In such cases, the cardholder should first ensure that the vendor understands that the purchase card is a VISA card. If the vendor still does not accept the purchase card, the cardholder can get a convenience check from OCFO, select another vendor, or submit a **NRC Form 400** (Request for Procurement Action) to DC via RFPAS.Resource@nrc.gov along with other associated requirements. Refer to **Appendix 6** for *Convenience Checking Guidelines*.

Taxes

Charges for all purchases that are billed to the Federal Government are exempt from sales tax. The cardholder is responsible to inform the vendor that the purchase is for official U.S. Government purposes

and therefore not subject to State or local taxes. The agency's Maryland Sales Tax Exempt Certificate is found in **Appendix 9**. Further information and copies of State Tax Letters can be accessed at website <https://smartpay.gsa.gov/about-gsa-smartpay/tax-information/state-response-letter>.

PLACING ORDERS

Now I am ready to buy. What do I do?

The three methods of buying with the purchase card are by over-the-phone, over-the-counter, or online via the internet. Cardholders who purchase online via the internet shall take appropriate measures to safeguard their account numbers at all time. Cardholders shall ensure that they are purchasing on a secure website. Secure websites are identified by a closed padlock icon in the Address Bar. They can also be identified by the URL prefix https://. In either case, the process is very similar to a personal credit card order:

- Determine if the purchase is permissible and the price is fair and reasonable. (Is it consistent with current catalog or price lists, advertisements, or any other reasonable basis? Would you pay the price with your own money?)
- Ask whether a Government discount is available. Ensure that the shipping cost, if applicable, is a fixed cost, not an estimate, and that it is included in the total price. Inform the vendor that the purchase is tax exempt before agreeing to or signing and dating the receipt. See Appendix 9 for NRC's tax exempt certificate.

The cardholder is required to retain copies of the charge slips and receipts.

What if the supplies or products need to be delivered?

Headquarters

Small orders (1 or 2 items) can be delivered directly to offices. Larger orders should always be shipped directly to the NRC Warehouse (HQ only). Orders shipped by mail or package services (e.g., UPS) are delivered by the NRC Mail Room staff. Cardholders must provide the full name of the recipient with their mail stop and the building address to the vendor for inclusion on the package shipping label. Large orders that require temporary storage and packages that weigh more than 70 pounds are to be identified for delivery to the NRC Warehouse.

To ensure that orders being shipped to the NRC Warehouse (HQ only) are processed smoothly, the cardholder must take the following actions:

1. Instruct the vendor to mark the shipping label or packing slip as follows:
Cardholder's Full Name
U . S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Warehouse
5008 Boiling Brook Parkway
Rockville, MD 20852-2738
2. Inform the vendor of the NRC Warehouse receiving hours --- Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
3. Notify the Warehouse in advance of the upcoming delivery via e-mail to WHSE. Make sure you include the following minimum information in that e-mail:
 - Name of vendor
 - Description of item
 - Quantity

- NRC contact name and telephone number
- Expected delivery date
- 4. Instruct the vendor to send the customer copy of the sales draft to the cardholder's NRC office address.
- 5. Ask the vendor to put the cardholder name, room number, and telephone number on the shipping report so that receipt of the supplies can be reconciled with the monthly statement of account.

Should you need additional assistance regarding the procedures for shipments to be delivered to the NRC Warehouse, please contact the NRC Warehouse at (301) 492-0051.

Region Offices

Orders shipped by mail or package services are shipped to the physical addresses as stated on the purchase order for the Region Offices and Resident Sites.

Delivery and Acceptance

If an item is found to be defective or if the repair or other service is unsatisfactory, or the charge is otherwise disputed, the cardholder is responsible for returning the item to the vendor for replacement, correction of the defective item, or credit to the Purchase Card account.

If the vendor refuses any of the above, the item is considered to be in dispute. The cardholder should complete Citibank's [Cardholder Dispute Form](#) and fax it to Citibank, keep a copy of the dispute form with the transaction file, and attached the form in FAIMIS to the transaction credit voucher for reconciling. (Refer to "[How do I handle billing errors and disputes](#)").

What if the supplier wants to defer shipment to a later date?

The general rule is that the NRC will only pay for what is received. If the supplier wants to fill an order at a later date or partial shipment is necessary, the cardholder must advise the vendor that a charge to the purchase Card account may only be made for the items which have been shipped.

Subscriptions and external training are the exceptions. Subscriptions are not considered partial shipments, and full payment may be authorized although the materials have not been received. See [Appendix 7](#) for more information on purchasing external training with the Purchase Card.

What are my responsibilities for documenting my Purchase Card order?

The agency's official records for capturing and maintaining financial reporting of purchase card activities are contain in FAIMIS. The processes involved in documenting purchase card orders include bank card commitments; bank card obligations; reconciliation and acceptance of transactions; and approval for payment of transactions.

Reconciliation files shall include all associated transaction documents:

- Citibank's statement of account
- funding certification document
- vendor invoice/sales receipt
- property tagging sheet
- requester document; i.e., requisition, email
- special approval document, i.e., OIS, APC approvals
- dispute form

The cardholder must retain all file documentation for a period of 3 years. After the 3 year retention period has expired, destroy purchase card statements and records by placing them in a classified/sensitive-waste disposal unit, or shredding them. Do not place them in an ordinary trash can or recycling box. Should a cardholder leave their current position, the approving official is responsible for recordkeeping of the cardholders purchase card statements and records up to the required 3 year retention period.

How Is My Purchase Card Charge Paid?

The NRC pays for purchase card charges, using Citibank's Credit Card Interface (CCI) system, which was implemented in December 2008 to ensure the timely/accurate payment of purchase card charges, simplify payment processing for NRC employees, and increase Citibank financial rebates to the Government. Daily Citibank will electronically send a consolidated list of new purchases made by NRC cardholders. Payment is not made until purchases are '**reconciled**' and '**accepted**' by the cardholder and "**approved**" by the approving official in FAIMIS.

RECONCILIATION OF ACCOUNTS

NRC's Financial Accounting and Integrated Management Integrated System (FAIMIS) was implemented in 2010 as the agency's core financial management system. The Purchase Card Module is an electronic end-to-end processes for purchase card transactions comprising of funding, obligations, reconciliation and approval authority. On a daily basis, transaction detail is received from Citibank in electronic format and uploaded in FAIMIS under the cardholder's account number. Cardholders and approving officials receive email notifications when posted transactions are available for reconciliation.

The agency's billing cycle extends from the 14th of the month through the 13th of the following month. All transactions that appear on the cardholder's statement of account must be reconciled, accepted, and approved before payment is made.

Cardholder Responsibilities

- ◇ Create record of bankcard obligation (BCO) for the purchase in FAIMIS
- ◇ Upon receipt of email notification for a pending transaction, validate for accuracy with the itemized statement of account; attach vendor invoice/receipt as documentation, and accept transaction in FAIMIS
- ◇ If accountable property (property designated sensitive or any equipment item costing \$1,000 or more) is purchased, notate the date the tagging sheet was sent to ASC (the original sheet should be sent to ASC on completion of tagging) and attach as documentation in FAIMIS
- ◇ If an item has been charged but does not appear on the bill, retain the customer copy of the Purchase Card charge slip and the vendor invoice until the item appears on the statement of account
- ◇ Each transaction must be validated for accuracy and accepted separately in FAIMIS. Once approved, the transaction will be routed electronically to the Approving Official for approval to pay

FAIMIS Training Aids for Cardholders:

- [BCO Process](#)
- [Reconciliation Process](#)
- [NAICS Guidance](#)
- [Product and Service Codes Guidance](#)

Approving Official Responsibilities

The approving official is responsible for ensuring that purchases made by cardholders under their purview were appropriate, charges were accurate, purchases were for official Government use, and reviewing and approving cardholder transactions at the end of the billing cycle. The reconciliation process follows:

- ◇ Upon receipt of email notification, review all purchases including documentation of invoices that are attached to each transaction
- ◇ Ensure that accountable property purchased has been tagged and that the tagging data sheet has been sent to ASC by the cardholder before approving the transaction
- ◇ Each transaction must be validated and approved for payment
- ◇ Ensure that all of the cardholder's transactions are reconciled by the end of the billing cycle

FAIMIS Training Aid for Approving Officials (hyperlink): [Approval Process](#):

How Do I Handle Billing Errors And Disputes?

First, contact the vendor and try to solve the problem at the vendor level. For example, if you have been billed for an item that has not yet been delivered, ask the vendor whether the item has been shipped.

You can return an item to the vendor for a variety of reasons within **60 days** after the date on the statement of account where the item appears as a charge. By accepting the Purchase Card for payment, vendors accept this requirement of the contract between the Government and the Purchase Card contractor. If an item is damaged in shipment, is not what you ordered, or if you are dissatisfied in any way, return the purchase to the vendor and request either a replacement item or a credit to your account.

If the merchant refuses to resolve the problem, the cardholder has **60 days** from the date the transaction was processed to notify Citibank of a disputed transaction.

The cardholder cannot dispute shipping charges, tax, exchange rates, or convenience check purchases with Citibank. These items must be resolved directly with the merchant.

When a dispute exists, the cardholder must:

- Complete the [dispute form](#) and fax the form to Citibank
- Email a copy to Payroll and Payments Branch, OCFO
- Attach a copy to the transaction in FAIMIS as part of the file documentation

When the cardholder's statement includes credits issued from Citibank, in FAIMIS the transaction type name is a credit voucher. All credit vouchers in FAIMIS will have to be manually reconciled, following the procedures for handling [Disputes in FAIMIS](#).

REBATES

What If The Vendor Offers A Rebate?

From time to time, manufacturers offer rebates. Cardholders are encouraged to accept and process rebate offers. Rebate checks must be sent in a sealed envelope to OCFO along with the commitment number, the job code, and a copy of the bill with the purchase highlighted. Rebates deposited in the same fiscal year as the purchase will be credited to the office's account against the job code used for the purchase. Cardholders are not permitted to accept rebates for personal use.

PROTECTING YOUR PURCHASE CARD

May I share my card if I won't be available to make a purchase?

The purchase card may not be shared with another individual. If an authorized cardholder is not available in the requesting office for making credit card purchases, the program office must submit **Form 400** to the Division of Contracts (DC) for processing.

How should I secure my card?

When not being used, the purchase card should be safeguarded like cash or a personal credit card. It is the responsibility of the cardholder to ensure that the purchase card not be accessible to others for unauthorized use. When not being used, the purchase card may be stored in a locked file cabinet or a GSA-approved security container or cabinet with a locking bar and combination lock. If a filing cabinet is used, appropriate precautions regarding the availability of keys should be taken and the security of the purchase card routinely checked.

What if I lose my card?

If a purchase card is lost or stolen, the cardholder should immediately notify the bank and the APC. This notification will exempt the cardholder from any personal liability as a result of unauthorized use of the Purchase Card. The APC will contact a representative of the Assistant Inspector General for Investigations within 24 hours of a loss, theft, or fraudulent use of a Purchase Card. The bank can be reached 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at the telephone number the APC provides during training.

The cardholder should give the following information to the APC:

1. complete name
2. card number
3. in case of loss, date and location of loss
4. in case of theft, date theft was reported to police
5. date and time contractor bank was notified
6. any purchase made on the day the card was lost or stolen

The bank will mail a new card within 2 workdays after a loss or theft is reported.

Reporting of Purchase Card irregularities to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG)

Purchase card irregularities or abuse should be referred to the OIG either in writing or through the OIG Hotline. Written statements should be addressed in a sealed envelope to OIG Hotline Program, Mail Stop T5-D28. The OIG Hotline number is 1-800-233-3497.

CHANGES IN CARDHOLDER STATUS

What should I do about my Purchase Card if I leave NRC or change jobs within NRC?

Upon a change in cardholder status such as transfer, retirement, resignation, or termination, cardholders shall stop using the card far enough in advance of the separation date to allow for a reasonable transfer of cardholder duties. Cardholders shall destroy their card in a secured container; notify the APC via email to close the account; advise the approving official of any unreconciled transactions.

What if I change my name or other data provided to obtain the Purchase Card?

Notify the APC if your name or other data provided to obtain the purchase card changes, so that NRC's and Citibank's records can be updated. The cardholder does not need to contact the bank.

CHANGES IN APPROVING OFFICIAL STATUS

Upon a change in approving official status such as transfer, retirement, resignation, or termination, Branch Chiefs or above shall immediately notify the APC of a new approving official to be nominated and that cardholder accounts will be transferred to the new approving official. If it is not possible to establish a new approving official at the time, the cardholder accounts will be temporarily suspended until an approving official is delegated.

REVIEWS OF PURCHASE CARD RECORDS

The APC performs an annual review of the cardholder's file documentation to ensure that cardholders and approving officials are adhering to applicable requirements. The APC reviews the cardholder's transactions and records to determine compliance with purchase card buying policies, regulations, and procedures.

APPENDIX 1 -- ACQUISITION OF EIT RESOURCES USING PURCHASE CARDS

The following rules, standards, and procedures apply to the use of Government wide Purchase Cards by NRC offices for the acquisition of electronic and information technology (EIT) resources. Information technology (IT) and EIT are defined in the Purchase Card Handbook (as stated in FAR Subpart 2.101 at https://www.acquisition.gov/far/current/html/Subpart%202_1.html#wp1145507.)

- a) Single purchase limits for EIT acquisitions is the micropurchase threshold (currently \$3,000). Single purchase limits above the micropurchase threshold shall be limited to cardholders who meet the contracting officer warrant requirements.
- b) All purchases of EIT must comply with the requirements of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. See below for more information about Section 508.
- c) All acquisitions of EIT resources using purchase cards must be approved by the cardholder's Office IT Coordinator or Office Director prior to purchase.
- d) All EIT products and services must have Enterprise Change Control Board (ECCB) authorization for testing, installation, or use. Therefore, only authorized products may be purchased. See the ECCB SharePoint site at <http://portal.nrc.gov/edo/ois/bpiad/easb/eccb>.

How do I find out if an EIT resource is authorized?

This can be determined by searching the NRC Technical Reference Model (TRM), at <http://portal.nrc.gov/edo/ois/bpiad/EASB/TRM/default.aspx>). An item in the TRM is authorized if either

- The *Lifecycle Status* field says "Approved" or
- The *Lifecycle Status* field says "Limited Approval" and the limitations/conditions described in the *Approval Details* field are met.

How do I request authorization from the ECCB?

Submit a request to the ECCB by completing an Environment Change Request (ECR) form (see http://www.internal.nrc.gov/pmm/#PMM%20Methodology/workproducts/Enterprise_Change_Request_BF29C828.html) and sending it to ECCB.Resource@nrc.gov.

- e) All EIT resources that are available through the IT Infrastructure Services and Support (ITISS) contract should be obtained from that source.

Starting in 2nd Qtr FY2012, the OIS Customer Service Catalog (see <http://www.internal.nrc.gov/ois/CScatalog/catalog.html>) will contain a list of the hardware and services that are available via the contract. Items obtained through the ITISS contract will be supported by OIS.

- f) IT support services that duplicate services provided by OIS may not be acquired. Support services provided by OIS that may not be duplicated through office purchase card purchases include any applications system software development and maintenance, hardware installation and maintenance, and network and telecommunications services.

- g) Network-related software and equipment other than network printers may not be acquired. This means that network hardware (other than printers), including network interface cards, and any software that must be installed on a LAN server (including network versions of applications software, network operating systems, and communications software) may not be acquired.

The roles and responsibilities of OIS and the other offices when using purchase cards for the acquisition of EIT resources are as follows:

- a) Offices are responsible for assessing the need for equipment and software purchased through the Purchase Card program. OIS reviews and authorizes EIT acquisitions, but does not make acquisitions for other offices.
- b) Offices are responsible for acquiring EIT resources and controlling their location and use, including marking software -- "FOR OFFICIAL GOVERNMENTWIDE USE ONLY." Placements of hardware and software, especially handling data of sensitive nature, should always follow the NRC security guidelines and procedures. Any acquisitions that affect the established system security boundary (FISMA) should be addressed with the ECCB (by indicating the boundary on the ECR form) as part of the ECCB review and approval process and are the responsibility of the purchaser's office.
- c) Offices are responsible for providing support and keeping up with the latest security patches and fixes for EIT unless procured through the ITISS contract. The OIS Customer Support Center installs all EIT resources, for headquarters only.

Compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as Amended

In 1998, Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794d) as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P.L. 105 - 220), August 7, 1998 to require Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology (EIT) accessible to people with disabilities.

Specifically, Section 508 of that act requires that when Federal agencies develop, procure, maintain, or use EIT, Federal employees with disabilities have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to the access and use by Federal employees who are not individuals with disabilities.

EIT resources acquired on the open market should follow the Section 508 requirements to the maximum extent possible. Acquisitions of these products under another agency's contract (e.g., Federal Supply Schedule, UNICOR, or Government wide Acquisition Contracts), must conform to Section 508 functional performance criteria.

Section 508 market research is the responsibility of the requiring official, and Section 508 market research documentation must be included in the purchase card file. See <http://www.BuyAccessible.gov> for additional information and tools for Section 508 market research.

For more information on Section 508 see:

- Electronic and Information Technology (EIT) Accessibility Standards (36 CFR Part 1194)
 - Overview (<http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/summary.htm>)
 - Standards (<http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/standards.htm>)
 - Published discussion of the standards (in 65 FR 80500) (<http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/preamble.htm>)
 - Guides to the standards:

- Guide to the Section 508 Standards for Electronic and Information Technology (<http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/>)
- Accessibility Forum Quick Reference Guide to Section 508 Resource Documents (<https://app.buyaccessible.gov/baw/QuickReferenceGuide.jsp>)
- Accessibility Market Research Process (http://www.section508.gov/docs/GuidanceOnConductingMarketResearch_v2.docx)
- Additional Section 508 information resources (<http://www.section508.gov>)



APPENDIX 2

NOMINATION OF CARDHOLDER/APPROVING OFFICIAL FOR THE PURCHASE CARD PROGRAM

CARDHOLDER

The following individual is nominated to be a purchase cardholder for *[Office]*

Name: *[Nominated Cardholder]*

Approving Official and/or Alternate:

Single Purchase Limit: \$3,000 *[Micro-purchase Threshold]*

30-Day Dollar Limit: *[Amount is based on budget considerations and anticipated usage]*

30-Day Approving Official Dollar Limit: *[Amount is the combined authorized 30-day limits of all cardholders that report to the Approving Official]*

Attachment:

Completed training certificate for nominated cardholder

APPROVING OFFICIAL

The following individual is nominated to be an approving official for *[Office]*

Name: *[Nominated Approving Official]*

Cardholders: *[List all existing cardholders that will report the nominated approving official]*

30-Day Approving Official Dollar Limit: *[Amount is the combined total of the 30-day limits for all cardholders that report to the nominated Approving Official]*

Attachment:

Completed training certificate for nominated approving official



APPENDIX 3 -- DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY --- CARDHOLDER

MEMORANDUM TO: _____

[Cardholder Name]

FROM: _____

[Director, Division of Contracts]

SUBJECT:

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY FOR USE OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT
PURCHASE CARD

You are hereby delegated authority to make purchases with the use of a purchase card issued through a General Services Administration administered contract with Citibank, or its successor. You will be issued a purchase card with your name and account number embossed on it.

This delegation of authority is issued in accordance with *The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Procedures for Use of the U.S. Government Purchase Card Handbook*. By providing your training certificate, you certify that you have successfully completed the required purchase card training and that you will abide by the policies and procedures that govern the use of the Government purchase card.

As a cardholder, you will be responsible to use the card for official government purchases, within the dollar limitations designated on your purchase card, and only when sufficient funds are available. All purchases must be in compliance with established federal regulations and procedures. Misuse of the card may result in immediate cancellation.

During the reconciliation process, you are responsible to review and approve your transactions in accordance with the monthly billing statement of account. You will receive an email notification alerting you that transactions are ready for approval. Transactions must be reconciled and approved electronically in the agency's core financial system (FAIMIS) by the date specified.

Instructions to guide you through reconciling transactions are available on the FAIMIS SharePoint site under FAIMIS Training Materials: [New Purchase Card Processes](#) and [Purchase Card Training Materials](#). Original purchase card documentation is required to be maintained for three years.

Your Approving Official listed below will be responsible for the review and approval of all purchases made by you under this delegation. Identified below are your dollar limits for single purchases and for total purchases over a 30-day period, as determined by your office.

Approving Official/Alternate 30-Day Limit

Cardholder(s) – Single Purchase Limit/30-day Limit

We expect the credit card to simplify the way you make small purchases. We will continue to welcome any comments and suggestions that you think will enhance your use of the credit card.

For additional guidance, refer to the NRC Purchase Card Handbook found at website <http://www.internal.nrc.gov/ADM/contracts/purchasecard.html>.

This delegation is effective upon receipt of your personal purchase card. This delegation of authority shall not be re-delegated or transferred to another person. This delegation of authority shall remain in effect until you are transferred or terminate your employment, or until the delegation is suspended, modified, or canceled. This delegation of authority will be subject to periodic review.

Should your duties as a purchase cardholder be discontinued, the cardholder is responsible to notify the Agency Program Coordinator, Betty Freeman, Mail Stop TWB-01-B-10M, to cancel your delegation of authority.



APPENDIX 4 -- DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY --- APPROVING OFFICIAL

MEMORANDUM TO: _____

[Approving Official Name]

FROM: _____

[Director, Division of Contracts]

SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF APPROVING OFFICIAL

You are hereby designated as an approving official in the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, for the individual listed below who has been issued a U.S. Government Purchase Card. This delegation of authority is in accordance with *The U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Procedures for Use of the U.S. Government Purchase Card Handbook*. By providing your training certificate, you certify that you have successfully completed the required purchase card training and that you will abide by the policies and procedures that govern the use of the Government purchase card.

As an approving official, you have assumed the oversight and approval responsibility for purchase card activity of the cardholder(s) under your purview; ensuring that purchases be in compliance with established regulations and procedures and that the purchases are for official government use. Ensure that each cardholder has properly tagged accountable property and a copy of the purchase documentation is sent to the Property & Labor Services Branch.

During the reconciliation process, you are responsible to review and approve your cardholder's monthly billing statement of account. You will receive an email notification alerting you that transactions are ready for approval. Transactions must be reconciled and approved electronically in the agency's core financial system (FAIMIS) by the date specified.

Instructions to guide you through reconciling transactions are available on the FAIMIS SharePoint site under FAIMIS Training Materials. [Purchase Card Training Materials](#).

The designated purchase cardholders under your delegated authority are listed below.

Approving Official/Alternate 30-day Limit

Cardholder(s) – Single Purchase Limit/30-day Limit

Additional information on NRC's Purchase Card Program is found in NRC's Purchase Card Handbook located at website <http://www.internal.nrc.gov/ADM/contracts/purchasecard.html>.

APPENDIX 5 -- GSA FSSI BPA VENDORS FOR OFFICE SUPPLIES AND TONER

Background

In June 2010, GSA awarded fifteen (15) Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative (FSSI) Office Supply Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs). The BPAs are the result of a collaborative effort of agencies (led by GSA) to provide office supply ordering vehicles for use by Federal Agencies as a means of leveraging the Government's buying power per the Office of Management and Budget. The BPAs are available nationwide, so all NRC facilities can take advantage of the discounts available.

For items not available in the Supply Room, NRC is committed to using the BPAs because prices have been discounted for government purchase card holders. Savings are expected to range from 5% to 20%, with discounts averaging 19%. The greatest discounts will be for the top 1,000 core office supply items purchased across the Federal Government. Discounts will increase as the collective purchases increase across the Federal Government. Once a tiered discount threshold is reached on collective purchases against a BPA, the next tiered discount will apply to all orders for the life of the BPA or until the next discounted tier is reached.

Policy

Effective immediately, all NRC purchase card holders shall utilize the FSSI Office Supply BPAs to purchase office supplies and toner not available in the Supply Room. While there is no preference as to what pool to purchase from, price comparisons between vendors can be done on GSA Advantage (see below) in order to ensure the best value for the government. Cardholders should select the vendor that provides the needed item, in the amount of time needed, at the best price. If a small business and a large business are the same with regard to the above, the small business should be selected.

There are three BPA pools from which to choose. Pool 1 consists of nine (9) vendors with BPAs that provide full office supply catalogs. The vendors in Pool 1 are:

Vendor Name	BPA Number	Socio-Economic Status**	Vendor Website
Capitol Supply Inc.	GS-02F-XA001	S	www.capitolsupply.com/gov
Document Imaging Dimensions	GS-02F-XA002	S/W	www.fssibpa.com
Independent Stationers Inc.	GS-02F-XA003	S	www.isgroup.org
Metro Office Products LLC	GS-02F-XA004	S/D	www.mymetroofficeproducts.net/fssi
New York Inkjet LLC	GS-02F-XA012	S/W	www.newyorkinkjet.com/government
Shelby Distribution Inc.	GS-02F-XA005	SDVOSB	www.expressop.com
Sita Business Systems Inc.	GS-02F-XA006	S/D/W	www.sitabs.com
The Office Group dba Stephens Office Supply	GS-02F-XA014	S/W	www.theofficestore.com
Wecsys LLC	GS-02F-XA007	S/D	www.wecsysllc.com

Pool 2 consists of three (3) vendors with BPAs that provide full office supply catalogs, along with next day delivery and international shipping. The vendors in Pool 2 are:

Vendor Name	BPA Number	Socio-Economic Status**	Vendor Website
EZ Print Supplies Inc.	GS-02F-XA008	S/W	www.ezprintsupplies.com
* Office Depot	GS-02F-XA009	L	www.business.officedepot.com
* Staples Inc.	GS-02F-XA013	L	www.staples4government.com

* Note that you cannot obtain the discounts through the Office Depot or Staples commercial websites (www.officedepot.com and www.staples.com)

Pool 3 consists of three (3) vendors with BPAs for toner products and toner cartridges. The vendors in Pool 3 are:

Vendor Name	BPA Number	Socio-Economic Status**	Vendor Website
ASE Direct Inc.	GS-02F-XA010	SDVOSB	www.govtoner.com
Cartridge Savers Inc.	GS-02F-XA011	S/D	www.cartridgesavers.com
Imaging Systems dba Access Products	GS-02F-XA015	SDVOSB	www.fssitoner.com

** Codes and an explanation of Socio-Economic Status are outlined in Attachment 1

Purchase card holders can use GSA Advantage to make purchases from these vendors, and can also obtain the discounts by presenting their purchase card in the store. GSA Advantage is an online shopping site offered by GSA which allows purchase card holders to place orders against the FSSI Office Supply BPAs as well as other GSA Schedule contracts.

The GSA FSSI BPAs can be accessed on GSA Advantage by:

- Accessing the GSA Advantage Website at https://www.gsaadvantage.gov/advgsa/advantage/main/start_page.do;
- Logging in with your name and password. For new users, register on the site by clicking the “Register” link in the upper right hand corner of the screen;
- Clicking on “Office Solutions - FSSI” on the left side of the screen under the heading “Products;”
- Selecting the category of items to purchase, or searching for a specific item;
- All items appearing in the selected category or as a result of a search on this screen will be available only through the FSSI BPA holders.

Use of the BPAs by purchase card holders will be monitored to ensure compliance. If the item being purchased is not available from one of the vendors in the three pools above, a memo should be prepared by the cardholder and signed by the approving official documenting why the BPA was not used. This memo should be kept with the purchase card receipts for that month.

Further Information

For questions regarding this requirement, please contact Betty Freeman at (301) 492-3631 or betty.freeman@nrc.gov or Jill Daly at (301) 492-3607 or jill.daly@nrc.gov.

APPENDIX 6 -- CONVENIENCE CHECK POLICY

Convenience checks are a payment and/or procurement tool intended only for use with merchants that do not accept purchase cards and for authorized purposes where charge cards are not accepted. Convenience checks should be used as a payment method of last resort, only when no reasonable alternative merchant is available who accepts the charge card.

Public Law 104-134, The Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 requires that, with limited exceptions, Federal payments be made through electronic means. The Department of the Treasury has ruled that checks are not electronic funds transfer (EFT) compliant.

Convenience checks are subject to the same regulations and restrictions as the purchase card. The requirements for training, nomination, account setup, use of required sources and delegation procedures for the purchase card apply to convenience checks.

Convenience checks may not be written to:

- Vendors who accept the purchase card;
- Vendor transactions already under another method of acquisition, e.g., purchase orders, contracts, etc. (see FAR 31.1103 for permissible exceptions,);
- Employee reimbursements;
- Cash advances;
- Salary payments, cash awards, or any transaction processed through the payroll system;
- Travel-related transportation tickets;
- Meals or lodging related to employee travel except as related to emergency incident response.

Convenience checks must not be written above the micropurchase threshold as defined in the Federal Acquisition Regulation, Section 2.2 Definitions, unless the cardholder is a warranted Contracting Officer. For those cardholders who are not a warranted Contracting Officer, a written waiver must be obtained. At the time of issuance of this document, those micropurchase amounts are as follows:

- Supplies - \$3,000
- Services - \$2,500
- Construction - \$2,000

Using more than one check to pay for a single product or service, or splitting the requirement so that it falls below the micro-purchase threshold, is prohibited.

The only person authorized to sign a convenience check is the individual to whom it was issued. This signature requirement may not be delegated or transferred to another person. Checkwriters must not predate or pre-sign checks.

Checks must be written in US dollars only and for the exact amount of the purchase. Purchases made with convenience checks are tax exempt.

The checkwriter must adhere to their single purchase and monthly purchase limits when using convenience checks. Checking accounts are issued under the same account as the purchase card; therefore any suspension, cancellation or deactivation of the purchase card would result in the same action on the checking account.

The bank dispute procedures do not apply to convenience checks. Any disputes involving convenience checks must be resolved directly with the merchant. A “stop payment” order may be issued on a convenience check by contacting the APC immediately.

Convenience checks must be kept in a secure location and protected against theft, loss, and forgery. The checkwriter will be held personally responsible for any loss incurred as a result of failure to safeguard the checks.

A properly completed [NRC Form 30](#) or equivalent document must be submitted to the convenience check issuer. The vendor’s name, address, telephone number, and taxpayer identification number (TIN) must be clearly written on the form. For location of the agency checkwriters, the purchase cardholder should contact the APC.

The processes in FAIMIS for transactions issued with convenience checks are performed in the same way as using the purchase card. The servicing bank will receive reimbursement after the cardholder **reconciles** and **accepts** a transaction, and the approving official **approves** that transaction in FAIMIS.

The following links provide assistance with the FAIMIS processes:

FAIMIS Training Aids for Cardholders (hyperlinks):

- [BCO Process](#)
- [Reconciliation Process](#)
- [NAICS Guidance](#)
- [Product and Service Codes Guidance](#)

FAIMIS Training Aid for Approving Officials (hyperlink): [Approval Process](#):

APPENDIX 7 – ACQUISITION OF EXTERNAL TRAINING USING THE PURCHASE CARD

The purchase card may be used to purchase external training courses for individual or group training for NRC employee. **iLearn** is the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) Learning Management System in which NRC employees are requested to submit an approved Standard Form 182 (SF-182) prior to purchasing training.

SF-182 - Request, Authorization, Agreement & Certification of Training

- The employee submits through **iLearn**, a completed SF-182 to his/her supervisor for approval.
- The supervisor approves electronically and the request is then submitted to next level of approval in accordance with office procedures.
- The third level of electronic approval is the training coordinator.
- The fourth level approval is the Office Funds Certifying Official (FCO). The FCO prints the SF-182 and certifies the funding (this is the only hard-copy signature required). The FCO submits a signed copy of the SF-182 to the office training contact. If the training contact is not the cardholder, the training contact should forward a copy of the signed SF-182 to the cardholder.

The cardholder authorizes the training with the vendor and indicates on the SF-182 that payment will be made with the purchase card. (Cardholders should only give out the purchase card number or documents containing the number to the training vendor. If the purchase card number is written on the vendor's copy of the SF-182, care should be taken to ensure that other file and distributed copies do not include the number.) If the vendor does not accept the purchase card, the training provider may continue to bill the NRC using the SF-182.

If the training request exceeds \$3,000, the cardholder must contact the Agency Purchase Card Program Coordinator to request a temporary increase for the single purchase limit to cover the cost of the training registration.

The purchase card may be used if a vendor requires advance payment. Purchase Card procedures allow the cardholder 60 calendar days from receipt of the statement of account from the bank to dispute a charge. For this reason, cardholders encouraged not to pay for training more than 60 days before the end of the training. If payment must be made more than 60 days in advance, the cardholder may use the purchase card, and should resolve any disputes directly with the vendor. This authority applies to the use of the purchase card only.

Employees are not authorized to charge external training costs to their travel cards (i.e., Government-sponsored charge cards issued for payment of official travel expenses). The travel card may be used to pay registration fees for professional meetings and conferences that are not considered a developmental or training activity only when the employee will be in a temporary-duty travel status for the event registered.

that the training has been completed. The verification process is done through iLearn and forwarded to the supervisor to approve.

The processes in FAIMIS for external training are performed in the same way as other purchase card transactions. The servicing bank will receive reimbursement after the cardholder **reconciles** and **accepts** a transaction, and the approving official **approves** that transaction in FAIMIS.

The following links provide assistance with the FAIMIS processes:

FAIMIS Training Aids for Cardholders (hyperlinks):

- [BCO Process](#)
- [Reconciliation Process](#)
- [NAICS Guidance](#)
- [Product and Service Codes Guidance](#)

FAIMIS Training Aid for Approving Officials (hyperlink): [Approval Process](#):

APPENDIX 8 - AVOIDANCE OF SPLIT PURCHASE CARD TRANSACTIONS

► WHAT IS A SPLIT REQUIREMENT?

The term “splitting requirements” occurs when the cardholder intentionally divides the requirement into separate purchases to circumvent their single purchase limit of \$ 3,000. Requirements exceeding the micro-purchase limit are required to be processed competitively under Simplified Acquisition Procedures. The practice is prohibited by [FAR 13.003\(c\)\(1\)](#).

► EXAMPLES

- Cardholder receives one request to purchase 2 computer monitors at \$2,000 each. In order to have the charges go through, the cardholder tells the vendor to charge for each monitor separately.

This is a split transaction!

The cardholder split the purchase requirement solely for the purpose of allowing the purchases to be made under the cardholder's purchase limit

- Cardholder receives a requirement for an item costing \$2,500 today and makes the purchase. Later in the day, the cardholder receives another requirement for the same item. The cardholder was not aware of the second requirement at the time the first purchase was made.

This is not a split purchase

Had the cardholder received both requisitions at the same time, the proper action would have been to consolidate the requirements and forward to DC for processing on a purchase order.

- Cardholder receives a request for multiple items. The total exceeds \$3,000, but not all items are available from a single vendor. When making the purchases from each vendor, the individual purchases will not exceed \$3,000. The cardholder makes the purchases from different vendors

This is not a split transaction

Although the single requirement exceeded the cardholder's limit, the cardholder could not obtain all of the items from the same vendor. There was no intent on the part of the cardholder to split the purchase just to avoid the single purchase limit.

- Cardholder had a requirement to have three office areas painted. Each area will cost \$2,000. The cardholder decides to issue three separate purchases for the work.

This is a split transaction!

The cardholder split the purchase requirement, which totaled \$6,000, into three smaller purchases solely for the purpose of allowing the purchases to be made under the cardholder's purchase limit.

- Cardholder has a requirement for two products, each of which is available from the same vendor. The total cost will be \$4,000. However, the cardholder knows that one of the item can be obtained from another vendor at substantially less cost. If the cardholder purchases from two vendors, the total cost will be \$3,000.

This is not a split purchase

The cardholder made a good business decision by pursuing two vendors instead of one, saving \$1,000. Because the cardholder had no intent to split the purchase just to avoid the single purchase limit, this is not considered a split transaction.

- Cardholder orders five software packages, values in total at \$2,000 on Day 1. On Day 28, five software packages, valued at \$2,000 are ordered from the same vendor. The same thing occurs on Day 45. The packages are ordered five at a time in order to maximize responsiveness to software installation needs for office staff.

This is not a split transaction

These orders are not split transactions, if the requests were received on separate days and submitted by different organizational units. However, if these are recurring requests, it may be more efficient if the cardholder submits a consolidated request to DC to have a contracting specialists who has authority to place a single purchase for greater than \$3,000.

APPENDIX 9 -- NRC'S MARYLAND TAX EXEMPT CERTIFICATE

Notice to exempt organizations holding previously-issued exemption certificates

The Maryland Revenue Administration Division is re-issuing sales tax exemption certificates to all organizations which continue to qualify. Your organization's new certificate is attached and is valid effective immediately. Previously issued exemption certificates become invalid on October 1, 1997. Vendors are required to charge tax on sales made on or after October 1, 1997, to any organization which does not present a new certificate at the time of sale.

If your organization deals regularly with certain vendors, we suggest that you contact them before October 1, 1997, so that they can verify that your organization has been issued a new certificate.

The re-issuance of these certificates does not change current procedures for claiming resale exclusions by exempt organizations engaged in purchasing tangible personal property for sale. The sales and use tax registration numbers of licensed vendors have not been changed and the validity of blanket resale certificates bearing these numbers is unaffected.

Additional copies of the exemption certificate may be obtained by organizations with more than one location or chapter, or for other demonstrated cause, by contacting the Legal Section by mail at Revenue Administration Center, Annapolis, Maryland 21411-0001.

State of Maryland
Comptroller of the Treasury
Revenue Administration Division
301 W. Preston Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2383

The attached card is your new exemption certificate which is valid upon receipt. Effective October 1, 1997, exemption certificates issued to governmental entities no longer have an expiration date, thus eliminating the need to renew the certificate. Please read the enclosed Tax Tip and the instructions on the back of the card for the proper use of the exemption certificate. If you have any questions regarding the use of this card, please call the Taxpayer Service Section at (410) 767-1300 in Baltimore, toll free 1-800-492-1751 from elsewhere in Maryland, or e-mail at taxhelp@comp.state.md.us.

State of Maryland Comptroller of the Treasury Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certificate

Account Number
30005004
Name

Expiration Date
Governmental
No Expiration Date

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
on
MN8811-104
Washington, DC 20555

This exemption certificate authorizes the organization listed on the face of this card to purchase tax-free tangible personal property and services which will be used in carrying out its work. This certificate is not transferable and may not be used to make exempt purchases of items used primarily to conduct an unrelated trade or business or items for the personal use of officials, members or employees of the organization. Misuse of this certificate shall be cause for revocation and possible legal action.

Notice to vendors: The name and certificate number of the organization must be entered on your record of each sale. If you have any questions regarding the use of this certificate, please contact the Taxpayer Service Section at (410) 767-1300 in Baltimore, or toll-free 1-800-492-1751 from elsewhere in Maryland, or write to the Revenue Administration Division, 301 W. Preston Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2383.

GOV-1 (REV 6/97)

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APPENDIX 10 ----- BUYING GREEN

How do I buy green?

"Green" products and services have a reduced negative effect on human health and the environment.

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) helps the federal government "buy green," and in doing so, uses the federal government's enormous buying power to stimulate market demand for green products and services. Geared first to help federal purchasers, this site can help green vendors, businesses large and small -- and consumers. <http://www.epa.gov/epp/>

Prominent Executive Orders issued relating to green purchasing and the environment include EO 13423 (signed on January 24, 2007) and 13514 (signed October 5, 2009).

Executive Order (EO) 13423, "Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management," was signed by President Bush on January 24, 2007. EO 13423 instructs Federal agencies to conduct their environmental, transportation, and energy-related activities under the law in support of their respective missions in an environmentally, economically and fiscally sound, integrated, continuously improving, efficient, and sustainable manner. The Order sets goals in the following areas:

- energy efficiency
- acquisition
- renewable energy
- toxic chemical reduction
- recycling
- sustainable buildings
- electronic stewardship
- fleets
- water conservation

Executive Order (E.O.) 13514, "Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance," was signed on October 5, 2009. EO 13514 introduces new greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions management requirements, expands water reduction requirements for federal agencies, and addresses waste diversion, local planning, sustainable buildings, environmental management, and electronics stewardship.

E.O. 13514 enhances (but does not replace) **E.O. 13423**, which requires agencies to reduce energy and water intensity and achieve other sustainability goals.

These Orders emphasize the significance of Federal purchasing of environmentally preferable products. These products can be viable alternatives to products containing hazardous materials, toxic chemicals, or have other harmful effects on our environment. Certain purchases of paper or paper products, binders, toner cartridges, paperboard, and packaging must contain recycled content, if it is available, meets your performance needs, and is cost-competitive (including life cycle costs). OMB Circular 123, Appendix B, mandates that federal agencies account for the environmental quality of products procured with purchase cards and implement policies and practices related to the environmental quality of products procured with the government purchase card in accordance with the following requirements:

- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Section 6002, requires the purchase of recycled content (recovered materials) products designated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

- Farm Security and Rural Investment Act, Section 9002, and E.O. 13101 (replaced by [E.O. 13423](#)) require purchase bio-based products. Refer to websites www.ofee.gov and <http://www.biopreferred.gov>
- Energy Policy Act (EPA) and E.O. 13123 require agencies to purchase Energy Star products or those products in the upper 25 percent of energy efficiency, as designated by the Department of Energy's Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP).
- E.O. 13221 (replaced by [E.O. 13423](#)) requires agencies to purchase products that use minimal amounts of power when in standby mode. Refer to the following websites:
 - www.energystar.gov
 - http://www1.eere.energy.gov/femp/technologies/procuring_eeproducts.html
 - <http://www.epa.gov/greeningepa/practices/supplies.htm>
- E.O. 13148 requires agencies to purchase non-ozone depleting substances. Refer to the following website: <http://www.epa.gov/ozone/snap/lists>

NRC's Office of Administration has provided additional information on purchasing "Green" products and services at website <http://www.internal.nrc.gov/ADM/greening/buyinggreen.html>.

Buying Green

The NRC's goal is to reduce the adverse environmental impact and carbon footprint of our purchasing decisions by buying goods and services from manufacturers and vendors who share our commitment to protect human health and the environment. By including environmental considerations into purchasing decisions, along with the traditional focus on price, quality, performance, and availability, the agency will remain fiscally responsible while promoting practices that improve public health and safety reduce pollution, conserve natural resources, and support manufacturers and vendors that reduce the adverse environmental impact of their production and distribution systems.

To meet this goal, the NRC will procure, to the greatest extent possible, environmentally preferred products and services consistent with the following standards:

A. Recycled Content Products

Recycled content products are products that are made from or contain recovered materials. That means replacing virgin materials with recycled materials, including post-consumer materials. Designated products in eight categories include: paper and paper products, vehicular, construction, landscaping, park and recreation, transportation, non-paper office, and miscellaneous products. Examples of designated products include structural fiberboard, printing and writing papers. The current list of designated products, EPA's guidance, and related technical information can be found on EPA's web site at <http://www.epa.gov> using advanced search engine.

B. Energy-Efficient Products: Energy Star®, FEMP-Designated, and Low Standby Power Devices

EPA of 2005, Section 104 and FAR 23.203 require federal agencies to purchase Energy Star® qualified or Department of Energy's (DOE's) Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP)-designated products when procuring energy-consuming products. The technical requirements that each product must meet to become Energy Star® qualified are available at [ENERGY STAR Qualified Products : ENERGY STAR](http://www.eere.energy.gov/). Information on FEMP-designated products can be found at <http://www.eere.energy.gov/>. Information on low standby power products can be found on FEMP's web site at: <http://www.eere.energy.gov/>.

C. Biobased Products

Biobased products are products determined by the Secretary of Agriculture to be commercial or industrial products (other than food or feed) that are composed in whole, or in significant part, of biological products or renewable domestic agricultural materials (including plant, animal, and marine materials) or forestry materials. Examples of USDA-designated biobased products include mobile equipment, hydraulic fluids, roof coatings, diesel fuel additives, and towels. USDA is responsible for implementing the BioPreferredSM procurement preference program. Information on these designated products, USDA's guidance, and related documentation can be found at USDA's web site at www.biopreferred.gov/.

D. Environmentally Preferable Products and Services (excluding EPEAT)

Environmentally Preferable Products (EPP) are products or services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose. This comparison may consider raw materials acquisition, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance, or disposal of the products or services. Examples of environmentally preferable products include cleaning products that are non-toxic, non-volatile, and biodegradable; and paint with no or low volatile organic compounds. This program is managed by EPA which maintains a database of products and specifications defined by federal, state, and local agencies, and other nations. The database can be found at www.epa.gov/epp along with EPA's **Guidance on the Acquisition of Environmentally Preferable Products** and Services located at <http://www.epa.gov/epp/pubs/index.htm>.

E. Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) Products

EPEAT is a tool for evaluating the environmental performance of electronic products throughout their life cycle. EPEAT is intended to help purchasers in the public and private sectors evaluate, compare and select desktop computers, notebooks and monitors based on their environmental attributes. EPEAT also provides a clear and consistent set of performance criteria for the design of products, and provides an opportunity for manufacturers to secure market recognition for efforts to reduce the environmental impact of its products. Available at: <http://www.epeat.net/>

F. Water-Efficient Products

A water-efficient product is in the upper 25% of water efficiency for all similar products, or is at least 10% more efficient than the minimum level meeting U.S. Federal Government standards. Examples of products that have met the EPA WaterSense label include: high efficiency toilets, sink faucets, showerheads, urinals, and landscape irrigation systems. Information about the WaterSense Program is available at www.epa.gov/watersense.

G. SNAP/Non-Ozone Depleting Substances

E.O. 13423 and the CEQ Implementing Instructions require that each agency give preference to the purchase of non-ozone depleting substances, as identified in EPA's Significant New Alternatives Policy (SNAP) program. **FAR 23.803** states that agencies shall give preference to the procurement of alternative products that reduce overall risks to human health and the environment by lessening the depletion of ozone in the upper stratosphere. It further requires that in preparing specifications and purchase

descriptions, and the acquisition of supplies and services, agencies shall comply with the requirements of the Clean Air Act and substitute safe alternatives to ozone-depleting substances.

SNAP provides lists of acceptable and unacceptable substitutes in the following sectors: fire suppressants, aerosol solvents and propellants, refrigeration and air conditioning equipments, and adhesives and coatings. SNAP is managed by EPA. Information about the SNAP Program is available on <http://www.epa.gov/ozone/strathome.html>