

TRAVERSING THE GLOBE

Volume 2, Issue 6

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November 2005

Checks & Balances...

Organization is the key to success.

Within individual departments, some type of auditing system should be in place to expedite the timely processing of Travel Vouchers. Beyond the required pre-travel authorization, departments need to know where their travelers are located in case of an emergency that may arise. A department can assist the traveler in processing and reporting their travel and travel expenses by being organized. At the top of the priority list is having a well defined system and informing travelers of travel reimbursement requirements.

Air Travel...

Direct Bill Reporting Requirements

Because direct billing of airfare is a payment mechanism by which travel is purchased and paid for by Michigan State University, a Travel Voucher is required for each purchase. If your trip is taken, changed, refunded, or canceled, a Travel Voucher is still required. These should be completed and submitted to Voucher Processing. When the traveler is only reporting Direct Billed airfare and no reimbursement is being claimed, only sections A, D, and G (including signatures) need to be completed. When a trip is changed, refunded or canceled, documentation to this effect should be noted on the Travel Voucher.

Voucher Processing...

Would like to remind you to...

Please attach conference/meeting agendas to Travel Vouchers so that meal per diems may be verified.

If the MSU Purchasing Card was utilized to pay for your conference registration, please check the appropriate box on the Travel Voucher. According to the Manual of Business Procedures, Michigan State University policy states "Conference registration fees must be paid in advance using the MSU MasterCard Purchasing Card whenever possible."

Airfare Direct Bill...

A place to start

Direct Billing of airfare is one place you can begin organizing your travel program. For departments, I suggest one of two scenarios. First, I would recommend that each department have one person receive all passenger receipts and invoices mailed from the Cluster Travel Agencies (CTAs). This would establish a file of pending trips which can be used as a reminder that of travel voucher due dates. It also facilitates submission of original passenger receipts and invoices because they are under the control of one person. Each traveler who uses direct bill is sent an email confirmation from the CTA that can be utilized to check flight status, print boarding passes, coordinate other travel services, etc. By establishing this procedure within the department, a mechanism to remind travelers to complete their travel voucher has been established. Further, it creates a tracking system for the department and assists in fiscal management.

Second, if a department wanted greater control of the direct billing mechanism, the travelers could be given direct bill "profile" status only. "Profile" status would allow them to book their reservations through the Cluster Travel Agencies, but not purchase the ticket. The department would then need at least one person with Direct Bill "Authorization". These "Authorizers" would approve the purchase of the airline tickets reserved by the traveler.

Travel agents from the Cluster Travel Agencies would call the "Authorizer" for approval to issue the ticket. Once issued, the passenger receipt and invoice would be mailed to the "Authorizer". By utilizing this method, you would have a means of verifying that your travelers are authorized to travel, know where your travelers are, know when travelers are using direct bill, and have control over their spending.

Both of these options would take some organization to get started. I would be happy to assist with this. For example, I could provide a list of those in your department that are "authorized" for direct billing. Together we could put some procedures in place and do training within your department.

More Travel News on Page 2

TRAVERSING THE GLOBE

Airline Ticket Clearing...

A service to assist you

When a nonrefundable airline ticket has not been used and the reservation has been canceled in advance of the departure date/time, most airlines allow you to apply the value of the ticket toward the purchase of a new ticket. It is important that when you do cancel an airline ticket, you submit it, along with a Travel Voucher, to Voucher Processing so that the ticket may be entered into the Ticket Clearing database, a warehouse of unused airline tickets.

Once entered into the Ticket Clearing Database, a notice is sent to the contact person or traveler noted on the Travel Voucher. An updated listing of these tickets is sent to both Anderson Travel and Spartan Travel on a weekly basis. Vouchers issued by either of these agencies are delivered to me. These, too, are added to the Ticket Clearing Database and a notice is sent to the traveler.

The notices are sent as a reminder that the ticket needs to be used toward the purchase of a new ticket. The purchase and travel deadlines are documented for you. As a side note, most airline tickets are not transferable.

National Car Rental...

An update to our Current Contract.

National Car Rental has changed their policy for one way rentals so that the renter is charged a base rate of no more than \$74/day. Prior to this change, renters were charged 30 cents per mile in addition to the daily rental rate. This should dramatically decrease the amount paid for one-way rentals. Our \$41/day rate for one way "shuttle" rentals between Lansing and Detroit, and Lansing and Grand Rapids is unaffected.

Outstanding Travel Vouchers...

Reports will no longer be sent out.

The Outstanding Travel Voucher Report for Direct Billing will no longer be produced. Because date stamping of Travel Vouchers is no longer being done, the Outstanding Travel Voucher Report does not accurately reflect any submission of Travel Vouchers. Submission of Travel Vouchers, with the appropriate documentation attached, is still required for every airfare purchase direct billed to Michigan State University. For domestic travel, the original passenger receipt is required. For international travel, both the original invoice and original passenger receipt are required. This applies to all tickets whether the travel is taken, refunded, or canceled.

Per IRS guidelines, an accounting of reimbursed business travel must be reported within 30 days of the return date of the business trip.

Local Hotels...

This from the East Lansing Marriott

The East Lansing Marriott is delighted to offer an exclusive, high-value Michigan State University rate, with direct invoicing, to all University departments.

In addition to our ideal location, one block North of campus, the East Lansing Marriott offers a full variety of amenities and conveniences to your guests, like complimentary airport shuttle service, complimentary parking for overnight guests, dining in Bistro 43, and 24-hour fitness center. Visit our website at www.marriott.com/lanea in order to view the full array of our services.

To make reservations please contact Stacy Drake at 517-337-4440, extension 556, or e-mail your request to Diane Armour in our Sales department at darmour@marriottsales.com.