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# TRAVEL GUIDELINES

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SUNY Maritime College

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The purpose of this Traveler's Guide is to help SUNY Maritime College employees understand travel rules and regulations and to provide instructions on how to be reimbursed for their expenses. As an employee traveling on business for the SUNY Maritime College you are performing a valuable service. At the same time, it is your responsibility to spend this travel money as efficiently and economically as possible. The basic rule to remember is that only *actual, necessary, and reasonable* business expenses will be reimbursed.

When making travel arrangements, you should check to see if there is an OGS Contract for the type of travel related services that you need. Currently OGS has contracts for car rentals, airfare, and centralized travel agent services, both statewide and regional. More information may be obtained from the accounts payable manager in the Business Office.

### ***TRAVELER'S RESPONSIBILITY***

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- Know State travel rules and regulations
- Know SUNY Maritime College's policies and procedures
- Complete and submit your travel voucher accurately and timely
- Know your official station and its effect on your eligibility for travel reimbursement
- Obtain necessary approvals for travel
- Obtain all necessary travel documents, voucher, tax exempt certificate etc.
- Maintain an accurate record of expenses including departure and return times, and mileage
- Obtain required receipts or documentation
- Claim reimbursement only for actual allowed expenses within reimbursement rates

### ***SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITY***

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- Know State travel rules and regulations
- Know SUNY Maritime College's specific travel policies and procedures
- Know your staff's official stations and its effect on their travel reimbursement
- Approve requests for staff to be in travel status only when necessary
- Review traveler's itinerary to make sure travel is done in the most effective manner
- Verify that voucher is within allowable rates and all required documentation is attached
- Review and certify traveler's vouchers completely
- Forward vouchers to the Accounts Payable Office in a timely manner

### ***OFFICE OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE RESPONSIBILITY***

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- Ensure that all expenses comply with travel rules and regulations
- Verify that all charges are actual, reasonable, and necessary
- Designate an employee's official station which is in the best interest of the State
- Provide and control all travel related documents (vouchers, tax exempt certificates, etc.)
- Ensure compliance with IRS regulations
- Review and approve travel vouchers completely and in a timely manner
- Ensure that exceptions or waivers are justified and necessary

## ***TRAVEL STATUS***

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When you are on assignment at a work location more than 35 miles from both home and official station you are considered to be in travel status. This determines that you are eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses such as meals and lodging.

When travel is to a work location within 35 miles of your residence or official station, you are not considered to be in travel status and not covered by travel reimbursement policy.

## ***OFFICIAL STATION***

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Your Official Station is your usual work location. The purpose of an official station is to establish when you are in travel status and eligible for travel expenses. Travel between your home and official station is considered commuting and is not reimbursed.

## ***TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES***

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When choosing the method of transportation you should consider several factors, such as distance traveled, time to travel this distance, number of travelers, numbers of locations to be visited, and what type of transportation may be available. NYS Contracts should be used whenever possible. If a more expensive method is used, you are required to obtain approval from the Business Officer and justification should be submitted with your voucher.

Many airlines offer lower fares for travel on weekends. Employees should take advantage of super saver rates whenever possible, if a savings is realized. To obtain the lower airfare, there may be additional lodging and meal expenses. A cost comparison should be done to determine cost effectiveness (show airfare savings exceeds extra costs incurred).

## ***COMMON CARRIER***

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A common carrier (train, bus, plane) usually results in the most economical method of transportation. The most economical method should be used unless there are circumstances that would make this unreasonable.

## ***AIR TRAVEL/BUSINESS TRAVEL ACCOUNT***

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When making travel arrangements involving air travel, all employees are required to use the Business Travel Account (BTA) set up with the designated state authorized travel agencies. The Business Travel Account is a central billing for all air travel for SUNY Maritime College

The following process should be followed when using the BTA:

## **AIRLINE TICKET PURCHASES**

For airline ticket purchases, it is currently necessary to utilize the Business Travel Account (BTA) for securing airline tickets through the State Contract Air Travel Services Travel Agents. The travel agents are:

Advantage Travel                   (888) 444-4240  
  (518) 426-0052  
  (877) 659-6930 *after hours*  
[www.advantagetravelinc.com](http://www.advantagetravelinc.com)

Euro Lloyd Travel Group       (800) 334-0284  
  (212) 629-5470  
  (888) 694-5665 *after hours*  
[www.eurolloyd.com](http://www.eurolloyd.com)

Occasionally, travelers are able to secure better pricing for airfare on their own than the contract agent can provide. In these cases, reimbursement for the airfare can take place provided a justification can be provided showing that there is a cost savings over using the State Contract Agent. Generally the amount should be in excess of \$200.00. This justification must include a written price quote from the contract vendor on the flight showing the price they would charge for a similar ticket as well as the dollar amount of savings.

To ensure that they are getting the best price for their airfare, travelers should research different methods of securing airline tickets to have an idea of what is a reasonable price before contacting one of the contract travel agents. Travelers should also ensure that the pricing that they are getting is for a similar ticket including same departure and return times, same travel routes, refund ability, etc.

### **THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES MUST BE FOLLOWED FOR AIRLINE TICKET PROCEDURES UTILIZING THE BTA ACCOUNT AND THE STATE CONTRACT TRAVEL AGENT:**

The traveler completes a Travel Authorization Request Form for the trip and forwards the form for appropriate signatures, account authorizations and funding approvals. The completed form must be on file with Accounts Payable before authorization will be given for airline ticket purchase.

The traveler contacts one of the state contract travel agents listed above, identifies oneself as a SUNY Maritime employee, and proceeds with the flight information. The agency will offer schedule and fare options. The fares offered will include the least expensive flight, the most direct routing, etc., and the traveler should select the least expensive option that is consistent with traveler's time schedule. Make a written record of the destinations, airlines, flight numbers, dates, departure and arrival times and the cost of the ticket. This call is only to obtain information. DO NOT make a commitment during this call.

Immediately after calling the contract travel agent, contact Accounts Payable who will assign a trip authorization number (provided a properly completed Travel Authorization is on file for

the trip). The traveler will advise the Accounts Payable Office of the flight chosen and the amount of the airline ticket and they will keep a written log of the information for reconciliation purposes to the BTA Account.

The traveler will then call the contract travel agent back to confirm the flight giving the trip authorization number assigned by Accounts Payable. By giving this number, the travel agent is authorized to issue the airline ticket to the traveler and to bill the campus BTA Account. **WITHOUT THIS TRIP AUTHORIZATION NUMBER, THE TRAVEL AGENT WILL NOT ISSUE THE TICKET.**

The contract travel agent will then issue an electronic ticket and fax or e-mail confirmation of the ticket to the traveler and to Accounts Payable.

If the airline ticket needs to be changed or canceled for any reason the traveler must immediately notify the travel agent and Accounts Payable. Any unused airline ticket must be turned in to Accounts Payable for resolution with the state contract travel agency.

SUNY Maritime will be centrally billed monthly for all airline tickets charged on the BTA Account. Account coding for this monthly payment will reflect the account assigned on each completed Travel Authorization. Accounts Payable has the responsibility for maintaining the trip authorization number log and for reconciling the BTA account to that log.

Non-official companion travel may be arranged through the contract travel agent for an additional fee and with personal credit card payment.

### ***SITUATIONS OF PARTIAL REIMBURSEMENT***

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When New York State funding supports only a portion of the travel, there should be a first attempt to isolate the airline ticket cost to a single funding source (if N.Y.S., follow these procedures). If the airline ticket reimbursement must unavoidably be split between N.Y.S. and other, the total ticket must be purchased accordingly to these procedures. The College departmental account will be initially charged the total cost.

The other source (including personal) must reimburse via deposit to a special IFR account for subsequent expenditure journal transfer crediting. Failure to reimburse results in the college account absorbing the cost. Special attention and cooperation between Accounts Payable and the traveler is essential for success.

### ***USE OF STATE VEHICLES***

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The College maintains a fleet of State-owned (College-owned) passenger cars and vans for official business travel. Whenever practicable, State-owned vehicles are to be used, based upon economy, availability and requirements. State University of New York and SUNY Maritime College set forth the following requirements for use of State-owned vehicles:

## **ELIGIBILITY**

- Must be used only for official University business
- The driver must be a New York State employee
- The driver must be enrolled in the LENS program
- The driver must hold a valid N.Y.S. driver's license and accept responsibility for adherence to all vehicle and traffic laws
- All passengers must be on official University business
- Personal or unrelated travel may not be combined with official business travel
- Duration of travel normally should not exceed three days and cost of extended parking (airport, etc.) should not be excessive

With regards to the use of cars please see [State Vehicle Policies and Use Guidelines](#).

## ***TAXICABS***

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SUNY Maritime College's policy is to ensure that only actual, necessary and reasonable expenses are reimbursed for official travel and the most economical transportation method is used. Taxis and limousines should only be used when established public bus and train services are not readily available. Reasonable tipping will be allowed and should be included in the taxi/limo receipt."

## ***PARKING AND TOLL CHARGES***

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All reasonable and necessary parking and toll charges will be reimbursed. Tolls that you have paid by the EZ pass method will be reimbursed.

## ***MEALS AND LODGING***

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You have a choice of two different methods to be reimbursed for lodging and meals. Only breakfast and dinner are reimbursed, lunch is not. Tips and incidental expenses are included in the reimbursement amounts. See [New York State Travel Guidelines](#).

### **Method I:**

This allows for a fixed per diem reimbursement without receipts. This method may be used even when lodging is obtained with a relative or friend. To be entitled to the full per diem, you must be in overnight travel status and eligible for both breakfast and dinners see [Method I Reimbursement Rates](#).

### **Method II:**

This allows for reimbursement of actual lodging costs up to a specific amount, plus an allowance for meals. The per diem amount is based on the area of your work assignment. Receipts are required for lodging. No receipts are required for meals. The reimbursement amounts are based on rates established by the Federal government. These rates are established by county, so the county must be indicated on your travel voucher as well as the city. No taxes should be paid within New York State. For travel within New York State, a Tax

Exemption Certificate (ST-129) should be used. For out-of-state travel please check with the accounts payable department for the appropriate form.

**Exceeding Lodging Rates:** When using the receipted Method II travelers are reimbursed actual lodging expenses up to the US General Service Administration see [Per Diem Rates](#) When a traveler is unable to find a hotel within the maximum federal lodging per diem rate, the traveler must obtain prior approval to exceed the federal rate. This approval must be from the financial officer for the agency and must be documented as requested and approved in advance unless unforeseen circumstances prevent this from happening. Lodging expense should be reimbursed up to the maximum GSA rate in effect if documented prior approval is not obtained.

**Meal allowances:** Travelers with meal receipts are reimbursed up to the maximum amount of the meal per diem allowance specified for the particular area of travel. The meal per diem allowance is apportioned for breakfast and dinner. See [Meal allowance](#) for the per diem amounts.

Note: Incidental expenses such as tips to bellmen, porters, hotel maids, etc., continue to be included in the allowances.

#### ***TIME LIMITS ON MEAL ALLOWANCES***

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In order to receive the full per diem it must be necessary for the traveler to be in an overnight status and be eligible for both breakfast and dinner. You may be eligible for breakfast on the day of departure or dinner on the day of return, if you meet the following time limits:

**Breakfast:** You will be allowed reimbursement for breakfast if you have to leave before 7:00 a.m.

**Dinner:** You will be allowed reimbursement for dinner on the day the trip ends if you return after 7:00 p.m.

#### ***MEALS FOR DAY TRIPS***

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You may be eligible for meals if your departure and return meet the time limits for meals. You can get reimbursed up to the maximum Federal amount with a receipt, or you may claim the unreceipted meal allowances see [Method I Reimbursement Rates Unreceipted Meal Allowance for Day Trips](#).

#### ***WEEKEND ALLOWANCE***

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You are allowed lodging and meals for weekends when it is necessary for you to be in travel status.

## ***CONFERENCES, SEMINARS, CONVENTIONS***

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### **State Sponsored**

State-sponsored conferences or seminars must be in accordance with the maximum Federal per diem amounts for meals and lodging. The cost of extra items, such as meeting room rentals, equipment, luncheons and breaks will be considered separately. In selecting the conference site, the agency should consider cost, location and any other special requirements. No alcoholic beverages will be reimbursed. Standard procurement procedures should be followed.

### **Non State sponsored**

When employees attend conferences sponsored by other than a state agency, there is no control over the location of the conference. If the lodging rate exceeds the maximum per diem rates, the traveler should receive prior approval from the VP for Operations. The traveler should consider the following when submitting an over-the-maximum request:

- If there is available lodging within the rate at a nearby location
- Transportation cost saved by staying at the conference site
- Late evening or early morning conference functions
- The attendee is an officer of the sponsoring organization
- The attendee is a lecturer or performing other functions essential to the conference
- If the conference agenda indicates that meals will be provided as part of the conference registration fee, then a reduction to the per diem amounts must be made on the travel voucher submitted.
- Social activities such as sightseeing, golf outings etc. are considered personal expenses and will not be reimbursed.
- When travelers stay at the conference site, it is usually not necessary to incur transportation expenses to attend conference events. Also, many conferences offer direct transfers from transportation terminals to the conference site. If a traveler rents a vehicle, the expense must be justified.

## ***IRS REPORTING***

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The Internal Revenue Service requires withholding and reporting on the following types of travel reimbursements.

- Per diem amounts paid in excess of the per diem rate and not substantiated with receipts
- Meals for non-overnight travel - with or without receipts
- Mileage reimbursement in excess of the maximum rate allowed by the IRS
- Reimbursement for expenses at a single location in excess of one year

## ***FRAUDULENT CLAIMS - SECTION 175.35 PENAL LAW***

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Offering a false instrument for filing is a Class 'E' felony. Employees, including supervisors, who knowingly misrepresent the facts concerning travel for official business or who file or sign any travel form which contains deliberate false statements given with intent to defraud



the State may be subject both to administrative and/or disciplinary action, including the possibility of termination and criminal action.

### ***FOREIGN TRAVEL***

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Travel outside the continental United States is reimbursed based on the maximum per diem allowance established by the U.S. Department of State. The rates are published monthly and are available from the Federal Superintendent of Documents. The rates are posted on their foreign per diem rates. Expenses should be converted to American dollars, based on the exchange rate in effect during the period of travel.

### ***PER DIEM RATES***

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The foreign travel rates provide for lodging costs up to a maximum amount, and an allowance for meals and incidental expenses. If a traveler is not entitled to the full meal per diem, the allowance is divided into 80% for dinner and 20% for breakfast. [Foreign Travel Per Diem Rates](#).

### ***INCIDENTAL EXPENSES***

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Expenses directly related to lodging and meals are included in the per diem allowance and are not reimbursed. However, some expenses unique to foreign travel may be reimbursed.

Examples of some of these expenses include:

- Passports
- Visa fees
- Cost to convert currency
- Travelers' checks
- Laundry charges for extended stays
- Departure taxes

### ***MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES***

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#### **Expenses for Promotional Exams or Interviews**

Travel expenses for State employees traveling more than 50 miles from their home or official station to report for promotional exams or interviews may be reimbursed at the discretion of the appointing agency. Non state personnel reporting for interviews for difficult to fill positions may be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with the same rules as state employees. Eligible positions in the competitive class must be determined by the Department of Civil Service. For positions outside of the competitive class, the eligibility must be approved by the head of the agency.

#### **Telephone Charges**

Only telephone charges for official State business may be reimbursed.

## **Baggage Transfer Charges**

Reasonable baggage transfer and storage charges will be allowed.

## **Personal Expenses Not Reimbursable**

Personal expenses, such as laundry, valet service; movie rentals, theater or banquet tickets, entertainment, and transportation to and from meals are not reimbursable.

## ***STATE CORPORATE TRAVEL CARD PROGRAM***

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The State of New York has a Corporate Travel Card Program to provide employees with a mechanism to pay for travel expenses. The card is generally available to all employees who are expected to travel at least once a year as part of their job. Applications should be made through the travel coordinator. Only appropriate travel expenses may be charged to the card.

Advantages to using the corporate travel card include:

- Charges are billed directly to the State.
- The need for travel advances will be reduced.
- Costs in processing vendors' vouchers will be reduced.
- The agency and State will be able to capture a true picture of travel expenses to the State.
- Travelers using the card will not need to carry large amounts of cash or use personal credit cards.
- The program provides automatic business travel accident insurance when transportation is charged to the card.

A travel voucher must be submitted detailing all expenses including both corporate card charges and out-of-pocket expenses. Accounts Payable will reimburse out-of-pocket expenses and pay the corporate card directly. Vouchers must be submitted timely since they provide information necessary to reconcile the corporate card bill. Revocation of the traveler's card may occur upon repeated delays in the submission of vouchers. Vouchers must be submitted for all charges whether or not out-of-pocket expenses were incurred.

Improper or unauthorized charges may result in mandated reimbursement to the agency by the employee, suspension or loss of privileges related to the card, or disciplinary action.

SUNY Maritime College is responsible for recovering any overpayments or improper charges as well as ensuring the bill is reconciled correctly. Improper charges may be recovered from an employee's reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses, paychecks or any other monies owed to the employee.

Employees leaving the agency must turn in their travel card prior to leaving. Agency finance offices are responsible for verifying any outstanding charges and canceling an employee's travel card before the employee's final paycheck is issued.

## ***INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC TRAVEL***

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The following forms are necessary for teams to receive money for Travel in advance of a sporting event.

- Application for Travel Advance
- The Associate Athletic Director for Administration will submit a request for one check to cover all sporting events. The amount will be replenished on a monthly basis.
- A Travel voucher signed by Director of Athletics and the coach. Must be submitted by the Associate Athletic Director for Administration within 2 wks of each Sport Event.
- An original meal roster of students and coaches signed by each in attendance.
- All original receipts for charges such as tolls, parking and fuel must also be included.

The required times for the team travel departures and returns to the official station is 7:00am to 7:00pm, to justify the full per diem reimbursement, as follows:

### **Method I Reimbursement Rates Unreceipted Meal Allowance for Day Trips**

Lunch is not reimbursed. If the team leaves by 11:00 am, a box lunch should be requested from Chartwells.

New York State Method II for meals and lodging allows for reimbursement of actual costs in accordance to the area's per diem allowance. Receipts are required for lodging, but not for the meals. Reimbursements are based on rates established by the Federal Government. No taxes should be paid within the State of New York. Taxes for lodging will be reimbursed for out-of-state travel.

State vehicles are required for transportation. The coaches are encouraged to drive, but if a student must drive, a coach or designated individual must be in the car. All drivers must be signed on to the LENS Program, provided University Police. A vehicle safety course must be completed by anyone driving the 15 passenger vans, which students are not allowed to operate.

Vendor billings or invoices and receipts for entry fees must be submitted with a purchase requisition to the Purchasing Department.

## ***ADMISSIONS TRAVEL***

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The State Travel Card cannot be used within a 35 mile radius of the employees official work station or home and OSC will not allow any exceptions.

Although the State travel policy does not allow reimbursement for breakfast and dinner for employees who travel less than 35 miles, we will justify in writing an exception to this policy.

The Admissions Counselors who travel in the New York City and Long Island areas (less than 35 miles away from their official work station or home) during the busy recruiting seasons in the fall and spring, start their traveling to schools and fairs early in the morning and return

late in the evening. When the Counselors leave their home one hour or more before their normal work start time to visit a destination other than the Maritime College campus, they are entitled to \$5 reimbursement for breakfast. Counselors who return home two hours or more later than their normal work ending time are entitled to \$12 reimbursement for dinner.

According to the State travel policy, these meal reimbursements are reportable as income to the IRS. The IRS requires withholding and W-2 reporting for meal allowances paid for non-overnight travel or day trips. These employees should be notified of this requirement.

Since the travel card cannot be used to buy breakfast or dinner within a 35 mile radius, these employees will be given \$300 travel advances.

These employees will document the times they leave home and travel directly to recruiting locations, the times they return home in the evening and the locations visited. For those instances where they are entitled to meal reimbursement they will include those trips in a travel reimbursement claim. Receipts for these meals do not have to and should not be submitted with the travel reimbursement claim. Every two or three weeks, the employees will submit a travel reimbursement claim so their travel advance can be replenished. At the end of the heavy recruiting season in spring. The employees will file a final reimbursement claim and return the full travel advance amount of \$300.00

Accounts Payable will report these day trip meal reimbursements to Payroll.

Employees are not reimbursed for lunch, whether they are in official travel status (35 miles or more from official station or home) or not.

**OSC NYS TRAVEL GUIDELINES:**

<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/agencies/travel/travel.htm>

**NYS OFFICE OF GENERAL SERVICES**

<http://www.ogs.ny.gov/bu/ss/trav/>

**FOREIGN TRAVEL-US DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

[http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per\\_diem.asp](http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp)

**FORMS:**

**EXEMPTION CERTIFICATE FOR HOTEL**

<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/agencies/travel/taxexempt.pdf>

**TRAVEL VOUCHER**

<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/agencies/travel/ac132-a.pdf>

## **TRAVEL CARD PROCEDURES**

The following procedures should be followed when you use the travel Citibank credit card:

1. Follow all the state rules and regulations with regard to travel
2. Fill out a travel voucher and have your supervisor sign it.

The travel voucher should contain the same information that is required when you submit for a State check. However, include all receipts from all your charges. This should also include meals even though you would be following Per Diem amounts

3. The travel voucher must be submitted timely to reconcile your charge account. This means that at the end of each month all your travel vouchers for each month must be submitted promptly.

I acknowledge the above rules:

Print Name of Card Holder \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Card Holder \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# New York State Citibank Travel Card For Other Authorized Users

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM – to be completed by card recipient

Your use of a Citibank Travel under the NYS contract is subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. You are being entrusted with a valuable tool – a NYS Citibank Travel - which is to be used for official business travel expenses or the purchase of services and commodities for Authorized User Entity. Because you will be making a financial commitment on behalf of the Authorized User, you must strive to obtain best value for the Authorized User by following established travel or purchasing policies as appropriate.

2. All charges made to your credit card will be posted to a central bill by Citibank and sent to your agency's Card Program Administrator or other designee for payment. You will **not** receive a bill from Citibank (although you may view your monthly statement of charges on line). If you have a travel card, it is important that you submit any required travel documentation promptly in order for all charges to be reconciled. Failure to submit documentation in a timely manner may result in revocation of your travel card.

3. **You may use the travel card to pay for travel expenses when you are on official business. You may not use this credit card for personal charges.** SUNY Maritime College will audit the use of your card and take appropriate action on any discrepancies or unauthorized charges. Any evidence that your card has been used fraudulently will require an investigation, after which disciplinary action may result. Fraudulent use may also result in criminal prosecution.

4. You must follow the policies and procedures established by the Authorized User for the use of this credit card. Failure to do so may result in revocation of your user privileges or other disciplinary action.

5. Citibank Travel under the NYS contract is the property of the Authorized User Entity. You must return your card immediately upon request or upon termination of employment or retirement. Should there be any change in your employment status you must return this card and arrange to have a new card issued, if necessary.

6. If this credit card is lost or stolen, you must notify SUNY Maritime College's Card Program Administrator and Citibank immediately.

7. You must comply with any changes to the terms and conditions or policies and procedures concerning use of this credit card.

**I have been issued a \_\_\_ travel card**

**As the employee receiving this card, I have read and understand these terms and conditions.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last 4 digits of SS#: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_