



# Government Purchase Card Newsletter

February 2016

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*"I cannot say whether things will get better if we change; what I can say is they must change if they are to get better."*

- Georg C. Lichtenberg



## GPC ACCOUNT MANAGERS

Over the past several months, the GPC Team has taken significant steps to streamline processes and create efficiencies in how we provide oversight to a very large GPC program with a diverse customer base. *In the very near future--*

- ❖ ALL customers will receive a "dedicated" primary Account Manager to work with them.
- ❖ The day-to-day specifics of your GPC work will not be affected. We will continue to strive to provide you with the fastest and best customer service possible.
- ❖ What WILL be different is that customers will be assigned an A/OPC to call/email first.
- ❖ Within the next 30 days, you will be receiving an email notifying you who your primary Account Manager is.

## GPC Training – A Never Ending Duty

- ◆ Thank you to all of our customers that have made the transition to a calendar year cycle for refresher training a success!
- ◆ If you took CLM 003 or HBS 415 **at any time** during 2015, you will be required to take CLM 003 or HBS 415 no later than 28 February 2016.
- ◆ If you took CLG 001 or CLG 004 in 2015, you will NOT need to take CLG 001 or CLG 004 until 28 February 2017.
- ◆ If you took CLG 001 or CLG 004 prior to 2015, you WILL need to take CLG 001 or CLG 004 by February 28, 2016.
- ◆ There is still time to get your refresher training in. Send training certificates to: [usarmy.ria.acc.mbx.gpc-training-certs@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.ria.acc.mbx.gpc-training-certs@mail.mil)

## FAST FACT

Did you know that in 2003, an Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) memorandum determined that EVERY Personnel Departure Checklist shall include the requirement to turn in all Government Charge Cards? *Source: Undersecretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness, June 23, 2003, SUBJECT: Inclusion on Personnel Departure Checklists of the Requirement to Turn in Government Charge Cards*



## GPC GUIDANCE TO VENDORS:

The GPC Team has found several instances where Vendors are repeatedly swiping cards that have declined. In one instance, the Vendor swiped or automatically swiped the declining card 72 times!

All CHs need to let the Vendor know BEFORE the card is swiped to swipe the card ONE TIME. IF the purchase is declined, the Vendor should immediately contact the cardholder notifying them of the decline. The cardholder then contacts the GPC A/OPC and coordinates resolution of the decline. Declines are tracked at Program Levels and are one of the elements used to assess program risk. It is important to attempt to keep declines at a minimum. Repeated declines cause scarce resources and time to be wasted.

## WRITTEN & INITIAL PURCHASE REQUESTS:

To GPC Participants: GPC rules require a **written and "up-front"** request for Supplies and Services for ALL purchases. The request must come from an individual other than the billing official or cardholder. Written requests should include:

- (1) Evidence of a bona-fide Government need which explains why the purchase is required and related to the mission.
- (2) Complete & accurate description of the supply or service. Include quantities, estimated cost, manufacturer part or stock number, and other required specifics. Service requirements should include the "who, what, where, when, why, and how".
- (3) "Nice to have", "fancy" items may not be purchased. This is called "gold-plating" of requirements and is prohibited.
- (4) The Requirements office (customer) may suggest potential sources. However, the CH makes the final determination as to the Vendor selected. Cost effectiveness must always be considered.
- (5) Refer to AFARS Appendix EE or a GPC A/OPC for guidance regarding "special" items.
- (6) **Before** the CH can make any purchase from a written request, the Billing Official must 1) pre-approve the purchase as being a bona-fide Government need and 2) must also verify that funds are available and sees evidence of that in the purchase request file.

## MAINTAINING GPC RECORDS:

Keep all necessary information on each purchase charge card transaction. General filing guidance can be found in FAR 4.805. At a minimum, you must have the following information for which copies must be kept by the Approving Official for **6 years and 3 months** after final payment action:

- (1) Initial Request – to include justification/need for the buy
- (2) Billing Official Pre-Approval
- (3) Funding Document – Source / Type of Funds
- (4) Independent Signature of Receipt (Cardholders may not receive items they purchased or services they ordered)
- (5) Supporting Documentation for Unusual/Unique Purchases
- (6) If you leave the GPC Program, transfer your files to your replacement.

## RECURRING SERVICES

- ❖ GPC rules prevent recurring services from being purchased if they exceed \$2,500 in a 12-month period.
- ❖ There are many advantages to combining recurring services:
  - Reduce the number of GPC transactions
  - Reduce CH/BO time
  - Take advantage of bulk pricing (economies of scale)
  - Increase overall efficiencies
- ❖ Billing Officials and Cardholders should be looking at ways to combine recurring services
- ❖ A/OPCS have a responsibility to examine transactions to ensure that when recurring services exceed the dollar/frequency levels, to advise the CH/BO that a contract should be contemplated.
- ❖ Please contact your A/OPC for guidance on how to proceed with initiating a contract.

## The GPC Says Goodbye to Ms. Gretchen Gitchel:



Since May 2013, Ms. Gretchen Gitchel has been a member of the Rock Island Army Agency Organization Program Coordinator (AOPC) Team. The entire ACC-RI GPC Team thanks her for her dedication and work and we wish her well in her new position with the ACC-RI Policy Office.

## **AbilityOne** Purchases – “Essentially the Same”

Please use these questions when there are times that a decision has to be made to buy either an **AbilityOne** item or a cheaper non-**AbilityOne** item:

- ◆ **FIT:** Are the two products the same size and does the size affect the use or performance?
- ◆ **FORM:** If an **AbilityOne** item has the same purpose as a commercial product, then the two products are considered to be essentially the same.
- ◆ **FUNCTION:** What are the two products used for and can they be used for the same purpose?

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

The Government is **required** to purchase the **AbilityOne** item in place of the commercial equivalent if the above applies.