

<i>Title & Version</i>	Corporate Charge Card - Users Guide
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<i>Summary</i>	Guidance for use of the corporate charge card

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1. Introduction

For Police Officers and Police Staff who need to travel outside the Metropolitan Police District (MPD) Exchequer Services will issue charge cards to enable those staff to pay for their travel and subsistence costs.

2. Application

This guide sets out the way the corporate card may be used by those travelling outside the MPD.

3. Detailed Guidance

3.1 OVERVIEW OF THE CORPORATE CHARGE CARD

The corporate charge card will be issued to Police Officers and Staff who are required to travel outside the Metropolitan Police District on their official duties, to pay for necessary travel and subsistence cost in accordance with the relevant Police/Police Staff regulations.

The traveller may use the card to withdraw cash or to pay directly for travel and subsistence costs. Imprest Section, Exchequer Services, who are the Finance Services team responsible for administering the charge card scheme, will pay the monthly card bill centrally.

The officer/staff member travelling needs to account for their expenditure upon their return by completing a form 288 (detailing their expenditure and overseas allowances). The relevant charge card statement and original receipts must be attached to the form 288 which must be countersigned and submitted to Imprest Section, Exchequer Services through the appropriate F&RM.

3.2 ELIGIBILITY FOR CORPORATE CHARGE CARD

The corporate charge card scheme is exclusive to employees of the Metropolitan Police Service both Police Officers and Police Staff whose duties entail travel outside the Metropolitan Police District, either:

- To travel overseas,
- For any trips of longer than one week duration
- Or on more than three occasions in any 12 month period

Those not eligible for charge cards, but incurring £100 or more of travelling expenses outside the MPD, will remain able to obtain a temporary imprest from Imprest Section, 10th Floor Empress State Building by completing a form 374.

3.3 BENEFITS OF THE CORPORATE CHARGE CARD

The use of the card has a number of advantages for both those travelling and the MPS. For those travelling the advantages are:

- Improved safety and security through a reduced need to carry or handle cash
- Ability to withdraw additional funds whilst travelling to meet unexpected contingencies
- Ability to make travel arrangements by telephone or internet
- Travel insurance on travel booked with the card
- No delay in obtaining expenses due
- Insurance on purchases

- Replacement cards delivered anywhere in the world in the event of loss or theft
- Less time spent in administrative tasks to obtain funds

For the MPS the advantages are:

- Improved security through a reduced need to carry or handle cash
- Reduced administration through a reduction in the need to handle cash and the elimination of the need to handle foreign currency.
- Savings of operational officer/staff time spent on administration.
- More efficient and effective administration through automation upload of data and summary reports from the card supplier.
- Limitation of losses in the event of card loss or theft through card cancellation.

3.4 OVERVIEW OF THE CHARGE CARD PROCESS

The process is to:

- Apply for and receive a corporate charge card
- Incur expenditure on the card, either by directly using the card for payment or by using cash that you have purchased/withdrawn using the card.
- Account for all expenditure with original receipts on return or at next statement date
- Receive reimbursement for any travel and subsistence expenditure not met from official funds

3.5 ON OBTAINING A CORPORATE CHARGE CARD

By completing the application form the applicant is:

- Entering into a legally binding contract with American Express and the MPS for the provision of the charge card,
- Providing authority for deductions from salary should the need arise
- Allowing the MPS access to the applicants charge card account to manage it
- Agreeing to be bound by the relevant regulations and procedures.

3.6 SECURITY

The Card and PIN will be issued to you personally, thus you will be responsible for its safekeeping. No reference to the M.P.S. will appear on the card.

American Express fully recognise the need for effective security of information and therefore the reference to transferring information (referred to on the application form) has been revoked and will remain secure within American Express and the M.P.S.

3.7 USING A CORPORATE CHARGE CARD IN THE UK

The charge card is issued to the cardholder to meet all their personal travel and subsistence costs for travel outside the MPD. It should not be used to:

- Meet the expenses of others (who may claim reimbursement independently for their own costs),
- Pay for commuting journeys even on bank holidays,
- Purchase equipment or clothing,
- Informant related expenditure,
- CHIS rewards or lifestyle payments,
- Pay salary, overtime, nor allowances of any kind including mileage,
- Corporate entertainment,
- Welfare payments,
- Gifts, flowers, wreaths, memorabilia, gift vouchers etc.
- Local purchases such as postage (must still be met through permanent imprests),
- Purchase fuel for personal vehicles,
- Purchase alcohol (see Police Regulations),
- To guarantee or support personal finance, loans, purchase of insurance or financial instruments bonds or securities of any kind,

The charge card may be used to pay for items, such as hotel and restaurant bills, directly. However, where charge card payments are not usually accepted, such as taxi to airport or station or at fast food outlets, then cash can be withdrawn from cash machines.

When withdrawing cash the cardholder should withdraw only enough to cover their anticipated expenditure to avoid carrying unnecessarily large amounts of cash on their person while travelling. Cash machines are located in all the UK's major towns and cities and should unplanned expenditure be necessary more cash can be withdrawn 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

3.8 TRAVELLING OVERSEAS WITH THE CORPORATE CHARGE CARD

Police Officers and staff travelling overseas on business will need to apply for an American Express Corporate Charge Card in accordance with Item 3 of Notices 20-03. The card must be used to fund all your expenses whilst overseas.

The AMEX Corporate Card can also be used for the withdrawal of cash from AMEX Travel Offices and selected foreign exchange bureaux. A full list of global locations and contacts can be found at www.americanexpress.co.uk

Currency and travellers cheques can be delivered to any UK location prior to travel, through the Imprest Section (the authority of the F&RM responsible for the travellers budget is required to use this service as an additional charge is incurred).

It is intended that you use the Card to meet expenses such as hotel accommodation, meals, car hire (where Travel Services are unable to arrange pre-paid vouchers), fuel, registration fees, official phone calls and the like. The actual spend on the Card is unlimited.

The Card also permits withdrawal of cash from any American Express Foreign Exchange and other selected exchange bureaux and associated ATM machines.

There is a cash withdrawal limit of £500 per seven days that may be withdrawn per individual cardholder. If there are extenuating circumstances and the need arises for a cardholders cash limit to be increased, then this can be done upon consultation with the Imprest Manager, Imprest Section who will then instruct AMEX accordingly. Officers should note that this process could take up to 48hrs before the new card limit is activated.

In emergencies Imprest Section can arrange for currency to be sent via Weston Union to card holders but additional details will need to be supplied to American Express in this eventuality depending on the amount required. The

Imprest Manager, Imprest Section should be contacted for this facility.

3.9 COMPLETING CORPORATE CHARGE CARD EXPENDITURE RETURNS

All expenditure incurred on a trip where the charge card has been used must be accounted for on form 288 and submitted with original receipts to Imprest Section together with the relevant American Express monthly statement as soon as possible after the card holders return from travel.

When completing the form 288 remember to record all your transactions and overseas allowance claims in the currency in which they occurred and convert only unreturned change to GB Pounds at the rate it was purchased. If you have used the American Express corporate charge card to meet all your expenses and to pay all the overseas allowances due while you are away this will be all that is necessary to account for your trip.

Frequent travellers may wish to await the arrival of their monthly statement before accounting for all trips made that month. Charge card holders should bear in mind that if returns are not received in Imprest Section within 3 months of the date of expenditure outstanding amounts may be deducted from salary.

Salary deduction is a last resort for recovery of imprests and cardholders will be advised in writing in advance of any impending deduction.

All the travel and subsistence expenditure incurred on a trip should be included on the form 288 to avoid duplicate claims being submitted through separate routes. The only allowance that may be paid using the card is the overseas travel allowance.

If the cardholder has used their own funds to supplement their use of the American Express card whilst away this expenditure will be reimbursed to them through the payroll when the form 288 is submitted. This should be the exception however as the card should meet all the cardholders travel requirements.

Exceptionally if a traveller uses their own credit card at a location where the American Express is not accepted and have not withdrawn sufficient cash to cover payment then a copy of the credit card statement must accompany the claim that will be reimbursed through the payroll.

If all the funds withdrawn on the card have not been used then a cheque

made payable to the Metropolitan Police Authority for the unused amount must be forwarded with the claim. Amounts due not settled by cheque will also be deducted from salary after notification.

Amounts of foreign currency can be returned to the Amex Bureau shown below and Amex will buy back at the rate the cardholder purchased it from American Express.

American Express
78 Brompton Road
Knightsbridge
London
SW3 1ER

American Express
30 – 31 Haymarket
London
SW1Y 4EX

If travelling overseas and returning with small amount of change in a foreign currency (valued at less than £2.50) then you may enter this as change on your expenditure return.

Please note that reimbursements and deductions will not be made for amounts less than £1 as the processing costs far exceed the benefit.

4. Associated Documents

The regulations for Police allowances and expenses are contained in *A Guide To Police Regulations For Full Time Working* available through the Human Resources intranet site.

The regulations for Police Staff allowances and Expenses are contained in *Police Staff Pay And Allowances Manual* available through the Human Resources intranet site.

Withdrawal of the foreign travel temporary imprest facility and extension of the corporate charge card facility Item 3 of Notices 20-03

American Express Internet site www.americanexpress.co.uk.

Travel Services Intranet site [Travel Services](#)

Additional Information on Pay and Allowances [HR Pay and Allowances](#)