UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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COMPTROLLER

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
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DIRECTORS OF THE DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, DEFENSE TRAVEL SYSTEM

SUBJECT: Implementation of Changes to Policy in the Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation ("DoDFMR") Related to Mission Critical Travelers

In recent months, the number of Department of Defense (DoD) personnel placed in a mission critical travel category has increased dramatically and, in some cases, the mission critical travel category has been used inappropriately. As a result, effective with the March 2002 billing cycles, the travel charge card contractor began assessing a $29 late fee on delinquent accounts held by personnel in the mission critical travel category.

Supervisors should remind travelers that timely payment of the travel charge card bill is the responsibility of the individual traveler. Similarly, payment of any late fees associated with delinquencies is the individual traveler's responsibility, except in very limited circumstances as set forth below. To ensure that only appropriate personnel are placed in the mission critical travel category, and that late fees are reimbursed only where appropriate, Volume 9, Chapter 3, subparagraph 0300901.A of the "DoDFMR" is hereby revised, effective immediately:

> Mission Critical Travel. Mission critical travel is defined as travel performed by DoD personnel under competent orders and performing duty that, through no fault of their own, is reasonably expected to preclude the prompt payment of their outstanding travel charge card bills. In this regard, travelers shall be placed in this category only if they are expected to be unable to file travel claims through any means, including electronically or through facsimile, and to be unable to maintain timely travel card payments through split disbursement or other customary arrangements that members make to pay their bills during periods of absence. Travel orders or amended orders shall specify the period during which the mission critical travel category applies. An Agency Program Coordinator (APC) or Component Program Manager shall designate individuals

as being in the mission critical travel category on a case-by-case basis and only with the prior approval of the traveler's supervisor. The APC shall notify the travel card contractor when a cardholder is in the mission critical travel category. While in this category, individual travel charge cards shall not be suspended or cancelled. Should there be outstanding bills, they shall be settled within 45 days of removal from the mission critical travel category.

Late fees for delinquent payments involving the government-sponsored, contractor-issued travel charge card shall be reimbursed only for those personnel who provide a statement either in the remarks section of the travel voucher or a separate statement, signed by the traveler and the traveler's supervisor, demonstrating that the underlying travel expenses triggering the late fees were incurred while the traveler was in the mission critical travel category and that the traveler actually was unable to file a claim and pay the bill during the time of the delinquency because of the specific circumstances of the travel directed by the Department and through no fault of his or her own.

I have requested the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee to amend the Joint Federal Travel Regulations/Joint Travel Regulations consistent with this revision.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Mr. Ron Massengill. He may be reached by e-mail: massengr@osd.pentagon.mil or by telephone at (703) 602-0125.

Dov S. Zakheim