



UPCOMING ENROLLMENT DEADLINES:

Next:
Thursday, October 18, 2012

Future:
Friday, November 16, 2012
Thursday, December 13, 2012



QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

What do I do if my TRANServe Debit Card is lost or stolen?

Call JP Morgan Chase at 866-891-6951 to report the card lost or stolen immediately. JP Morgan Chase will then send your reviewing official a replacement card.

HOW CAN I TRANSITION TO THE DEBIT CARD SMOOTHLY?

Soon the days of standing in a line to pick up paper fare media will be a thing of the past. With the TRANServe Debit Card, transit benefits will be loaded electronically each month, so there will no longer be a need for participants to stand in line to pick up their benefits. Do you need a debit card? The Transportation Incentive Program (TIP) Office of Financial Operations (FMO) needs your help in making a smooth transition to the new TRANServe Debit Card. In May 2011, FMO posted a new application and a new Alphabetical Listing of New Enrollees (alpha listing) to our website: http://www.fmo.navy.mil/Divisions/FMO3/tip_doclinks.html. The new application and alpha listing contain all the fields necessary to request and activate a TRANServe Debit Card. Participants can help prevent a delay in benefits by using an updated application that includes fields for their home zip code, their work zip code and their work phone number. It is also important that the application be typed (not hand written) signed by both the applicant and the reviewing official, and submitted before the application cut-off date.

As we transition to debit cards, reviewing officials will need to go the extra mile to ensure that the proper applications are being used and that they are correctly entered onto a new alpha listing, which contains fields for the home zip code, work zip code, and work phone number. These three pieces of information are necessary for participants to activate their TRANServe Debit cards once they arrive. FMO receives around 600 new enrollee applications per month as well as hundreds of requests for a change in benefit status and program withdrawals. Completing the correct application and alpha listing ensures that all applications can be processed before the Department of Transportation deadline and helps prevent a delay in getting a TRANServe



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Debit Card. For more information on when the TRANServe Debit Card will be available in your area, check out the August 2012 Newsletter: http://www.fmo.navy.mil/documents/Divisions/FMO3/TIP/TIP_Update_New_sletter_2012_08.pdf

WILL SEQUESTRATION IMPACT MY TRANSIT BENEFITS?

On August 2, 2011, the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011 became law requiring Congress to pass a deficit reduction bill that would reduce the Federal budget deficit by \$1.2 trillion. The BCA outlined sequestration as the consequence if Congress failed to achieve this goal. Including sequestration in the BCA was intended to encourage Congress to work together to reduce the budget deficit. Sequestration was to serve as a strong deterrent for both parties. When the Budget Control Act was passed, neither party expected that sequestration would actually be implemented. That brings us to October 2012. More than a year has passed and we still do not have a deficit reduction bill signed into law. Our country is now only a few months away from sequestration should Congress fail to act this Fall.

So what is sequestration? Sequestration is an automatic across the board cut to budgetary resources. The President has exempted military personnel accounts from these cuts, but most other discretionary Defense accounts are subject to these across the board cuts. Unlike targeted spending cuts passed by Congress, sequestration is a blunt budget tool that is applied across most accounts. In a July 2012 memo from the Office of Management Budget (OMB), the Administration has made it clear that "the Congress should act to avoid such a sequestration. If allowed to occur, the sequestration would be highly destructive to national security and domestic priorities, as well as to core government functions." So what does this mean for transit benefits?

Transit benefits are considered a part of Department of Defense discretionary spending. Some benefit programs are required by Congress through legislation or by the President through an Executive Order. In contrast, transit benefits offered through the Transportation Incentive Program for Outside the National Capital Region are only required under Department of Defense Instruction 1000.27. This means that the Secretary of Defense could cancel this Instruction and the benefit program at any time. While this is unlikely, sequestration may require such an action. Under sequestration the Secretary will be forced to make many difficult decisions, a reduction or cancellation of transit benefit may be among them.

The good news is that Congress never intended for sequestration to happen and both political parties will work very hard after the election to prevent these broad based budget cuts. The New York Times, in their recent article, "Leaders at Work on Plan to Avert Mandatory Cuts" reports that a group of bi-partisan Senators are currently working to resolve the issue by voting on a three-step process to reduce the deficit and cancel the sequestration. If these Senators are successful in canceling the sequestration, then transit benefits will likely continue under DoDI 1000.27 as before.



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