



UPCOMING ENROLLMENT DEADLINES:



Next:
Wednesday, December 17, 2014
(for February benefit)

Future:
Wednesday, January 21, 2015
Friday, February 20, 2015

QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

My debit card is about to expire, will I get a new one?

Yes, JP Morgan Chase will automatically send a new debit card to any active participant whose card is about to expire. Cards will be mailed to the participant's local reviewing official one to two months before the current card expires.

HILL STALLS ON CHANGES TO 2015 MAXIMUM BENEFIT



Right before Thanksgiving it looked like the tax-extender bill that was being drafted in the Senate would permanently provide parity between the transit and parking fringe benefits increasing the maximum benefit for the Transportation Incentive Program (TIP) for 2015 and beyond. But

unfortunately the complicated politics of other tax provisions derailed the bill before it was even introduced in the Senate.¹ The House is now working on language to deal with the tax extenders that expired on 31 December 2013, but the current language does not include an increase in the TIP maximum benefit for 2015.² The Office of Financial Operations will continue to monitor the legislation. Be sure to check out the January 2015 newsletter to find out if any legislation passed during the final days of 2014 will impact transit benefits.

¹<http://thehill.com/policy/finance/225318-congress-closes-in-on-tax-break-agreement>

²<http://thehill.com/policy/finance/domestic-taxes/225778-congress-closes-in-on-tax-break-extension>

WARNING: RECURRING PAYMENTS POSE RISKS

Some transit authorities and vanpool companies allow customers to set-up an automatic recurring payment to either purchase a bus or rail pass for the upcoming month or pay a vanpool invoice automatically. While these features are convenient, they do come with some risk. Participants are responsible for any benefits loaded onto their transit benefit card. If benefits are pulled off a participant's card after a participant stops using mass transit, the participant is responsible to repay the Federal government for the benefits that were incorrectly charged.

How could this happen? Transit benefits are loaded on the TRANServe debit card on the 10th of the month prior to the commuting month. For example, January benefits are loaded on 10 December. If a participant decides to stop riding mass transit at the end of December and

withdraws on 20 December from the Transportation Incentive Program System, his or her TRANServe debit card will not be loaded with any additional funds. However, the January funds that were loaded on 10 December remain on the card until the midnight on 9 January. If the participant has authorized a recurring payment with his or her transit authority or vanpool company, the participant must also cancel that recurring payment before the January invoice payment is processed. If not, the participant will be responsible to repay the Federal government for the transit benefits used if he or she does not ride mass transit in January. Withdrawing from the Transportation Incentive Program will NOT cancel any recurring payment that the participant has set-up with his or her transit authority or vanpool company.



Some participants have encountered issues when they transition from one vanpool company to another due to recurring payments. In several cases, a participant's former vanpool company charged the participant's TRANServe debit card in accordance with the participant's automatic recurring payment that the participant set-up. As a result, the transit benefits that the participant intended to use to pay the new vanpool company were no longer available.

To avoid these risks, the Office of Financial Operations recommends that participants do not set-up their TRANServe debit card for any automatic recurring payment. If a participant does set-up an automatic payment, they should manage it carefully to avoid any incorrect payments.

CAN I SERVE PERSONNEL FROM ANOTHER UIC?

Transportation Incentive Program (TIP) reviewing officials typically serve one or two unit identification codes (UICs) that are associated with his or her command. However, in some locations, reviewing officials serve multiple UICs from multiple commands. Reviewing officials can help reduce the administrative cost associated with running the program by facilitating the program for DON personnel from other commands. For example, if there is a small detachment from one command working on an installation alongside a command with a larger presence, and one or two members of the detachment would like to receive transit benefits, the reviewing official for the larger command can serve the detachment personnel even though he or she may have a different UIC. Participants should complete the application with their UIC and funding information so the correct command is charged for the benefit, but otherwise reviewing officials can review applications and distribute the transit benefits for participants who do not share their UIC. Similarly, if two or more commands are co-located at the same installation, one reviewing official can serve all personnel at that installation regardless of command affiliation. Depending on the number and breakdown of the participants, commanding officers may decide to formalize the scope of the reviewing officials, but Department of the Navy policy does allow reviewing officials to serve multiple UICs from multiple commands. This type of cooperation across commands demonstrates the "one team, one fight" mentality that unites us as the Department of the Navy.

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**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
TRANSERVE CONTACT INFORMATION**

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