

# FYI – For Your Information

## Government Purchases Exemptions

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Colorado statute exempts from state and state-collected sales tax all sales to the United States government and the State of Colorado, its departments and institutions, and its political subdivisions (county and local governments, school districts and special districts) in their governmental capacities only. [§39-26-704.1, C.R.S.]. Home-rule jurisdictions may have different rules regarding government tax exemptions, and should be contacted individually. A listing of home-rule city sales tax rates may be obtained from the Department of Revenue's, Web site at: [www.taxcolorado.com](http://www.taxcolorado.com) and download "Colorado Sales/Use Tax Rates" (DRP 1002). This publication is updated each January and July.

(NOTE: The term "state and state-collected" sales tax, for the purpose of this FYI, refers to: state sales tax; state-collected local sales tax; state-collected county lodging tax; and state-collected special district sales tax. For further information on state-collected sales taxes, request FYI Sales 62 "Guidelines for Determining When to Collect State-Collected Local Sales Taxes.")

In order for a government entity to take advantage of the tax exemption, the purchase **must** be made with a prescribed government form or purchase order, and

paid for **directly** to the seller by warrant or check drawn on governmental funds, or via credit card in the name of the exempt governmental agency. [Reg. 39-26-704.1] When using a credit card, verification that the purchase is for governmental purposes and will be paid for by the governmental agency may be required. A letter on the governmental entity's letterhead is acceptable for this purpose. In cases where the seller invoices on a delayed basis for a purchase, the billing must be made directly to the governmental agency, **not** to the individual making the purchase.

Some governmental entities have a Colorado-issued tax-exemption number, although they are not required to have one (tax-exemption numbers all begin with "98"). It is not necessary for governmental entities to present a tax-exemption number in order to make a tax-exempt purchase. A purchase by a governmental agent who is making the purchase with personal funds — even if the employee presents a tax-exemption number and plans to be reimbursed — is **not** tax-exempt.

Construction contractors making purchases on behalf of governmental entities have certain exemptions from the above guidelines. For details on contractors' exemptions, please consult the following



Colorado Department  
of Revenue  
Taxpayer Service Division  
1375 Sherman St.  
Denver, Colorado 80261

Forms and other services:  
(303) 238-FAST (3278)  
Assistance:  
(303) 238-SERV (7378)

[www.taxcolorado.com](http://www.taxcolorado.com)

sources: FYI Sales 6 "Contractors;" the special regulation for contractors found in the sales and use tax regulations; and C.R.S. 39-26-708.1) (The first two are available from the Department of Revenue. Copies of Colorado statutes may be obtained from the Colorado Office of Legislative Legal Services or your local library or on the state homepage at [www.state.co.us](http://www.state.co.us).)

### **GOVERNMENT CREDIT CARDS**

State government and federal government use a variety of credit cards to facilitate government purchases and travel by their employees. Credit card companies now prohibit retailers from making copies of the card, so exempt purchases paid by credit card must be documented with the DR 1367, Affidavit of Sales Paid by Government Credit Card. Below are descriptions of the various state and federal cards, and the instances they might be used to make an exempt purchase.

#### ***State of Colorado Credit Cards***

The **Procurement Card**, intended for official state business only, allows qualifying and authorized purchases of general merchandise and services to be exempt from tax. All state of Colorado procurement cards are Mastercard.

The procurement card displays the words "Commercial" or "Purchasing." State agencies and institutions of higher education also have the option of placing their respective logo on their cards or have the State seal. The procurement card includes the agency's tax exemption number that begins with "98" followed by five digits. The bottom of the card displays the name of the authorized cardholder to whom the card is issued (authorized to purchase on behalf of the state).

There is also a **State Travel Card** issued by the State. The Statewide Travel Management Program ([www.colorado.gov/travel](http://www.colorado.gov/travel)) oversees the State Travel Payment Program. There are three types of travel card products used by the State which currently are US Bank VISA products: Individual Card, Event Card and CTS Ghost Card.

The US Bank VISA Individual Card includes the employee name and displays the state seal in the upper right corner. Beneath the cardholder name will be the state agency. However, this card does not show a "98" tax-exempt number and does **not** allow for tax-exempt purchases.

The US Bank VISA Event card, primarily used for meetings, displays the employee name, the state seal in the upper right corner and reads "Tax Exempt" followed by the state agency's tax exemption number (which begins with "98" followed by five digits) allowing qualified purchases to be exempt from state tax.

The CTS Ghost Card is a "card less account" which is for airfare purchases only. The Ghost Card is not tax-exempt.

This information serves as a confirmation to vendors that purchases made on the Procurement Card and the US Bank VISA Event card should be accepted and considered exempt from state and state-collected sales tax. The billing for tax-exempt government credit card purchases is sent directly to the state agency which then makes the payment directly to the credit card company.

#### ***Local Government Credit Cards***

Some local governments issue credit cards in both the government employee's and agency's name. In many instances the bill is directly paid by the local government agency in which case purchases are then tax-exempt. Local government Procurement Cards must have the city or county name on it and the words "Purchasing Card" to be considered exempt.

Some local governments also participate in the State Travel Payment Program which can be confirmed at : [www.colorado.gov/travel](http://www.colorado.gov/travel), go to: "Political Subdivisions." As such, the US Bank VISA Individual Travel cards display the state seal in the upper right corner, individual's name and does not allow for tax-exempt purchases. However, the US Bank VISA Event card displays the employee name, the state seal in the upper right corner and reads "Tax Exempt" followed by the political subdivision's tax exemption number (which begins with "98" followed by five

digits) allowing qualified purchases to be exempt from state tax. The CTS Ghost Card is a “card less account” used for airfare purchases only and is not tax-exempt.

It can be difficult for vendors to determine the tax-exempt status of these cards. The government agency can present a letter on government letterhead to the vendor as a way to verify that the purchase is for government purposes and will be paid by the government agency. This would help vendors determine the taxability of the transaction.

Any vendor with questions regarding local government credit cards should contact that particular county or municipality.

### ***Federal Government Credit Cards***

The federal government’s credit card program is called “GSA SmartPay” (General Services Administration).

### ***Nontaxable Purchases***

Purchases made with cards billed directly to the government agency are **not** taxable. These cards are the **Fleet Card** (which has a picture of cars on it) and the **Purchasing Card** (which has a picture of the U.S. Capitol on it). Purchase cards issued by the Department of Commerce will list an eight-digit exemption number below the cardholders name.

### ***Taxable Purchases***

Cards that may be billed **both** directly to the agency or to individuals are the **Integrated Card** (which has the U.S. flag in the background) and the **Travel Card** (which has a picture of an airplane on it).

The **sixth** digit of these cards indicates whether the purchase should be taxed.

- If the sixth digit is 0,6,7,8 or 9, the purchase should not be taxed (billed directly to the government agency).
- If the sixth digit is 1,2,3 or 4, the purchase is taxable (billed to individual).

Refer to the chart provided in this publication.

## ***DIPLOMATIC TAX EXEMPTION***

Foreign diplomats and agents of foreign governments are exempt from paying state and state-collected sales tax **if** they present special sales tax exemption cards. These cards, issued by the U.S. Department of State, are color coded. The color coding represents varying degrees of tax exemption. The cards bear the name and photograph of the authorized bearer, and are nontransferable. If the vendor has any questions regarding the identity of the bearer, the vendor may ask for additional forms of identification, such as a diplomatic ID, drivers license, etc. There are two types of diplomatic tax exemption cards:

### ***1) Individual Cards***

Cards with a **blue** band across the bottom exempt the bearer from **all** state and state-collected sales taxes, including taxes on hotel rooms. Cards with a **yellow** band list all restrictions on tax exemption. A card with a stripe other than blue should always be examined carefully.

### ***2) Mission Cards***

These tax-exemption cards are to be used for official purposes **only**, and **not** for individual, personal purchases. Mission cards, like the individual cards, carry the name and photograph of the authorized bearer, are nontransferable, are issued with the same blue and yellow bands across the bottom. Expiration dates are printed on the cards. All cards are subject to the same restrictions as the individual cards (see above). Purchases made with mission cards must be paid by mission check or mission credit card.

Questions regarding these diplomatic tax-exemption cards may be directed to:

Office of Foreign Missions  
U.S. Department of State  
10920 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite  
1820  
Los Angeles, CA 90024

(310)235-6292

### ***WHEN IN DOUBT, COLLECT THE TAX***

If a vendor and a purchaser disagree on the application of a tax, the vendor must collect the tax. [§39-26-102(22), C.R.S.]. The vendor should give the purchaser a receipt for the purchase showing how much sales tax was collected. Advise the purchaser to file a Form DR 0137 "Claim For Refund" which is available from the Department of Revenue. The vendor is ultimately responsible for the collection of sales taxes.

### ***AUTOMATED BUSINESS INFORMATION***

The department also provides automated sales tax information for and about businesses at [www.taxview.state.co.us](http://www.taxview.state.co.us) This system includes:

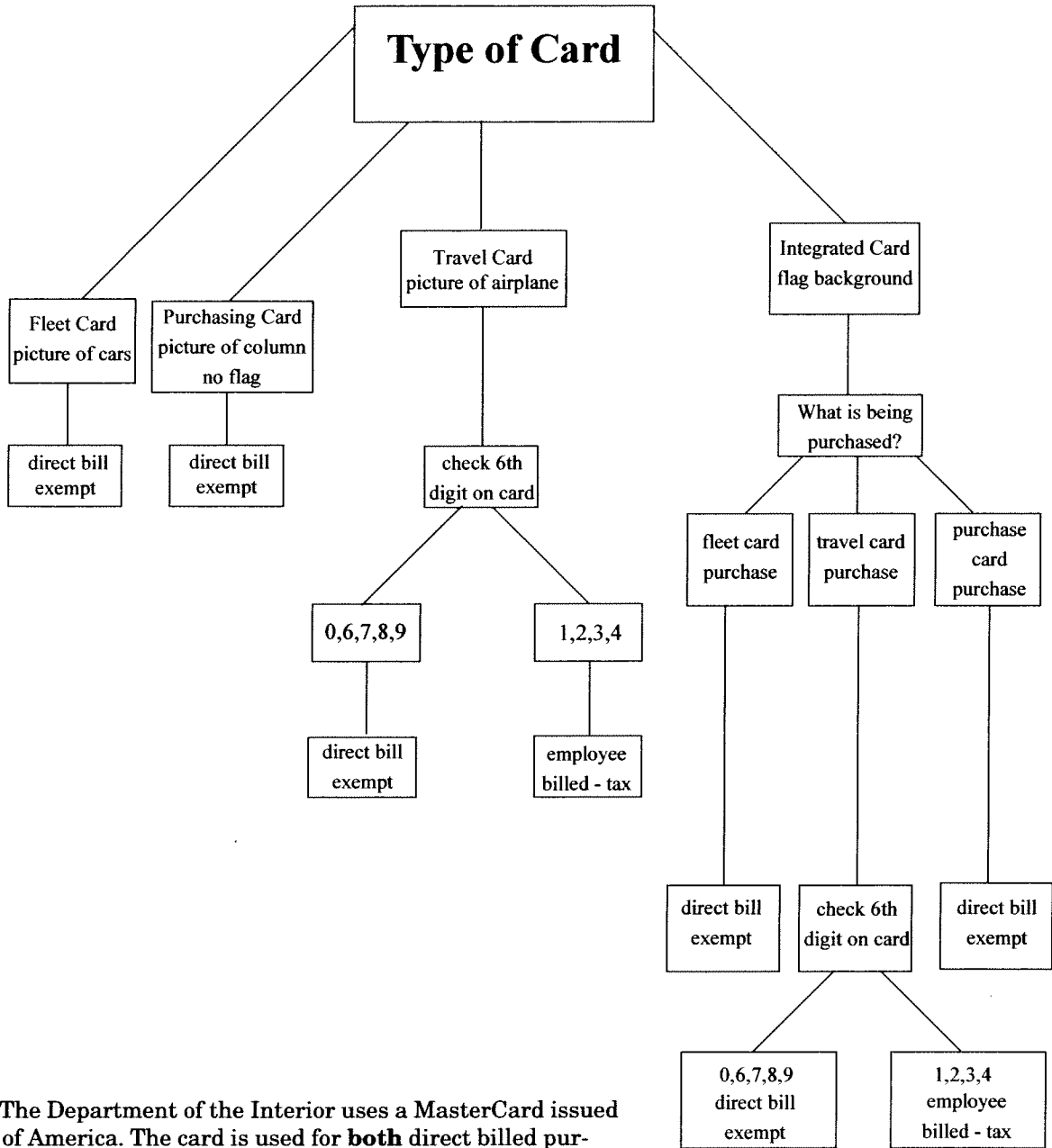
- Colorado Sales Tax Rates - finds specific city, county and special district rates.
- Verification of Sales Tax License - Exemption Numbers - determines whether a Colorado sales tax license or exemption certificate is valid.
- Tax Rates by Account Number - finds sales tax rates and locations for specific sales tax accounts.

### ***FURTHER INFORMATION***

FYIs and commonly used forms are available on the Web at:  
[www.taxcolorado.com](http://www.taxcolorado.com)

FYIs provide general information concerning a variety of Colorado tax topics in simple and straightforward language. Although the FYIs represent a good faith effort to provide accurate and complete tax information, the information is not binding on the Colorado Department of Revenue, nor does it replace, alter, or supersede Colorado law and regulation. The Executive Director, who by statute is the only person having authority to bind the Department, has not formally reviewed and/or approved these FYIs.

# Federal Government “GSA SmartPay” Card Program



**NOTE:** The Department of the Interior uses a MasterCard issued by Bank of America. The card is used for **both** direct billed purchases and individual billed purchases. The bank sorts the purchases during the billing process. The account numbers begin with “5568-16.” Purchases of office supplies and other goods will be directly billed to the agency (tax-exempt). Purchases for lodging will be directly billed to the agency (tax-exempt). Restaurant food for all Department of Interior employees will be individually billed (taxable). These cards have the Department of Interior federal tax exempt identification number (14-0001849) on the card.

## AFFIDAVIT OF SALE PAID BY GOVERNMENT CREDIT CARD

I affirm that this purchase qualifies for the Colorado sales tax exemption for sales to the United States government, the State of Colorado, its departments and institutions, and its political subdivisions (county and local governments, school districts and special districts); is a government purchase used only in an official governmental capacity; and will be paid directly by a government agency.

I have checked the applicable boxes below regarding information about payment for this purchase.

I accept that I remain directly liable for the sales or use tax assessment, and any applicable penalty or interest, if my purchase is found to not qualify for the exemption.

I understand that the vendor may request this affidavit for every purchase.

**Please Print or Type**

Customer Name		Driver License State and Last 4 Digits
Agency Name		Colorado Tax ID Number or FEIN
Customer Address		Agency Phone
City	State	ZIP Code

**Check All that Apply** For further information visit the Department of Revenue website [taxcolorado.com](http://taxcolorado.com).

- The agency exemption number is printed on the card. The number is 98-\_\_\_\_\_ .
- The card is a State Central Travel Card.  
The State card has the State seal and the words "Tax Exempt" on it.
- The card is a Purchasing Card. The federal version has a picture of the U.S. Capitol.  
The state card has "Commercial" or "Purchasing" printed on it.
- The card is a Fleet Card and has a picture of cars.
- The card has an 8 digit exemption number below the cardholders name. The number is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- The card is an Integrated Card(w/picture of the U.S. flag) or a Travel Card(w/picture of an airplane) AND the sixth digit of the card is 0,6,7,8 or 9.
- The card is a Department of the Interior Mastercard issued by Bank of America w/acct beginning 5568-16.
- The card is State Department issued with the name/photo of the bearer and a blue or yellow band across the bottom.

Signature of Customer \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

FEDERAL SMART PAY CREDIT CARD PROGRAM  
S A M P L E S

