Volume No. 3 - Automated System Applications	TOPIC NO.	**70205**
Function No. 70200 - CARS	TOPIC	**INTRODUCTION TO CARS**
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PAGE

OVERVIEW

The Commonwealth Accounting and Reporting System (CARS) provides an online, interactive capability. This online capability eases the entry and retrieval of agency financial data and provides for more timely information. The system helps to reduce errors through a series of online edits. It also enhances an agency's ability to monitor cash, appropriation and allotment balances. Finally, it provides a mechanism by which agencies can quickly determine the status of transactional processing. Agencies access the system using video display terminals through the CARS teleprocessing monitor on the IBM mainframe computer maintained by the Department of Information Technology.

Online CARS provides the following capabilities:

- **Table Maintenance/Inquiry:** Provides a timely means of updating or inquiring CARS tables. Updating of the tables occurs in an online, real-time mode, which allows for the immediate use of the information entered in the table.

- **Financial Data Entry:** Improves the timeliness of financial information by allowing agencies to enter accounting transactions in an online environment. Transactions are partially edited and batch balanced at the time of online data entry, but are not posted until the CARS nightly batch processing.

- **Error Correction:** DOA USE ONLY. Provides online correction of transactions in error because of failing to pass edits. Error transactions are placed on the Error Suspense file, while the corrections are placed on the Error Correction file. The nightly batch process matches the corrections to the errors and then re-edits the corrected transaction.

- **Batch Tracking:** Allows the timely, online determination of the status of a batch of financial transactions from the time the transactions are entered into CARS to when the batch is posted to the CARS history file.

- **Financial Inquiry:** Provides online inquiry to CARS system master files; provides timely financial information that has been successfully posted in CARS as of the last CARS batch edit/update cycle. Master files available for inquiry are: Appropriation File, Cash Control File, Document File, and Vendor Payment File.

- **Standard Report Request:** DOA USE ONLY. Provides online request of reports and specification of report options on a statewide or selected agency basis. Used to request financial reports required on a cyclic or special request basis and to specify the reporting period and detail level.

- **News Broadcast:** Allows online inquiry to Department of Accounts' messages displayed for CARS users.

PURPOSE OF FUNCTION NO. 70200

Function No. 70200 of the Commonwealth Accounting Policies and Procedures (CAPP) Manual is intended to assist agencies in the use of the online features of CARS. Familiarity with this Topic will assist you in using online CARS more easily and effectively. In addition, you will find it a valuable reference when problems or questions arise.

The following topics are covered:

- logging on and off the online CARS system;

- description of the keys to depress to perform specified tasks within the online screens;

- description of the online CARS Master Menu where functions are selected;

- detailed operating instructions for each function identified on the Master Menu;

- reference guide for terminal use;

- listing of error codes and messages that the online CARS system generates;

- sources for help when problems arise for which there is no error message;

- list of the individual data elements contained in CARS and their definitions;

- security features of the system; and

- reports produced by the system.