



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

NOV 02 2007



FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION MEMORANDUM NO. 2007-016 (II.G.1.)

To: Solicitor
Inspector General
Assistant Secretaries
Heads of Bureaus
Departmental Offices
Director, National Business Center

From: Daniel L. Fletcher, Director 
Office of Financial Management

Subject: Temporary Duty (TDY) and/or Relocation Travel of Employees to Areas Impacted by the Wildfires in California

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance and procedures to Departmental personnel for temporary duty (TDY) and/or relocation travel to areas impacted by the wildfires in California. The General Services Administration (GSA) has released Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) Bulletin 08-02 informing agencies that certain provisions of the FTR are temporarily waived as a result of the Emergency Declaration signed by the President on October 23, 2007, in response to wildfires in parts of California.

All non-essential TDY and relocation to the areas in California affected by wildfires for the Department of the Interior is postponed until January 24, 2008.

If travel to the affected areas cannot be delayed due to mission critical requirements or personal hardship, then the following travel criteria apply:

TDY Travel

- Travelers are authorized actual subsistence expense reimbursement not to exceed 300 percent of the applicable per diem rate.
- Travelers are authorized per diem rate for the location where lodging is actually obtained.
- Travelers must complete a "trip-by-trip" travel authorization that includes approval of actual expenses during the travel period.

Travelers who will be on TDY or training-related travel for periods of 30 days or more are subject to the restrictions outlined in FAM 94-037, *Reduced Per Diem for Temporary Duty and*

Training Travel for Periods of 30 or More Days. FAM 94-037 stipulates the following for travel exceeding 30 days:

- Per diem rate will be reduced to 55 percent of the full per diem rate (lodging plus meals and incidental expenses) specified in the FTR for the location, unless a different rate is justified.
- Under unusual situations the reduced rate may be increased or decreased depending on the conditions and necessary cost that must be incurred by the traveler.
- The reduced rate should be established based on the conditions that exist when travel is performed.

Relocation Travel

- The requirement for temporary quarters to be in reasonable proximity to the new official station will be waived for areas affected by the wildfires. However, the 120-day maximum for temporary quarters subsistence expense (TQSE) cannot be extended due to statutory restrictions.
- TQSE in the affected areas will not be limited to the standard CONUS rate. Instead, authorization may be granted for the locality per diem rate or actual expense reimbursement allowance.
- House hunting trips may be paid as an actual expense allowance.

The policy contained in this memorandum expires on January 24, 2008, unless extended or rescinded by the Office of Financial Management.

As the policies governing travel/relocation change due to this recent disaster, we will make available the most current information possible. Should you have questions or require additional information, please contact Jacqueline Lynch, Office of Financial Management on (703) 648-7680, e-mail Jacqueline_lynch@ios.doi.gov.

Attachment: GSA Bulletin – FTR 08-02

Prior Financial Administration Memorandum on this Subject:
None

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
Washington, DC 20405

October 24, 2007

FEDERAL TRAVEL REGULATION
GSA Bulletin FTR 08-02

TO: Heads of Federal Agencies

SUBJECT: Reimbursement for actual subsistence expenses, and waivers of certain provisions of Chapters 301 and 302 of the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) (41 CFR Chapters 301 and 302) for temporary duty (TDY), or relocation travel of employees to areas impacted by the wildfires in California.

1. What is the purpose of this bulletin? This Bulletin informs agencies that certain provisions of the FTR governing the authorization of actual subsistence expenses for official travel (both TDY and relocation) are temporarily waived as a result of the Emergency Declaration signed by the President on October 23, 2007, in response to wildfires in parts of California. It is expected that finding lodging facilities and/or adequate meals in the affected areas may be difficult, and distances involved may be great resulting in increased costs for per diem expenses.

2. What are the effective dates of this bulletin? The provisions of this Bulletin are effective from the date of the Presidential Emergency Declaration affecting the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Ventura in the State of California. This Bulletin expires on January 24, 2008, unless extended or rescinded by this Office.

3. What is the background? As a result of the catastrophic destruction caused by wildfires in the above-referenced affected areas of California, agencies should consider delaying all non-essential TDY and relocation to these affected locations for a period of 90 days. This is especially important with relocation travel because the 120-day maximum for temporary quarters subsistence expense (TQSE) cannot be extended due to statutory restrictions. In addition, as we cannot effectively determine the extent to which the ability to secure lodgings will be compromised, we are stating that each agency may determine whether this Bulletin applies to travel which is impacted by wildfires.

4. What should I do as a result of this bulletin? If TDY and relocation travel to affected areas cannot be delayed due to mission requirements or personal hardships then the following applies:

a. For TDY travel:

FTR section 301-70.200, paragraph (f) (41 CFR 302-70.200(f)) requiring an agency determination in each individual case that reimbursement under the actual expense method is appropriate is hereby waived. Thus, agencies may authorize actual expense reimbursement for per diem expenses on a blanket basis for employees traveling to areas affected by the wildfires in California. Additionally, FTR section 301-11.7 states that the maximum per diem reimbursement rate is determined by the TDY location. For employees assigned to the affected areas where lodging is not available, the provisions of FTR section 301-11.8 state that the agency may authorize the per diem rate for the location where lodging is obtained. In all cases, the provisions of FTR section 301-11.303 limiting actual expenses not to exceed 300 percent (rounded to the next higher dollar) of the applicable maximum per diem rate for the locality concerned remain in effect.

b. For relocation travel:

For TQSE, FTR section 302-6.9 requiring that temporary quarters be in reasonable proximity to the new official station is hereby waived for the areas affected by wildfires in California. The maximum limit of 120 days that TQSE may be authorized remains in effect pursuant to FTR section 302-6.104 and underlying statute.

In addition, the following provisions of the FTR are waived:

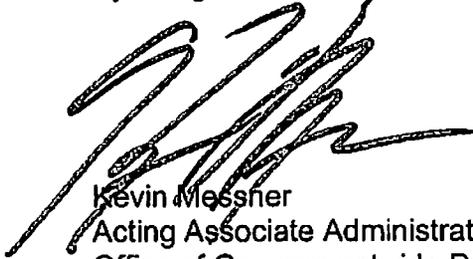
(1) Section 302-6.102 which limits the per diem reimbursement to the standard CONUS rate for TQSE. Agencies may authorize subsistence expenses at the locality per diem rate under the provisions of FTR section 301-11.101 or as an actual expense reimbursement allowance under FTR sections 301-11.300 through 301-11.306.

(2) For househunting trips, the portion of FTR section 302-5.13 which refers to the lodgings-plus method as a reimbursement method for subsistence expenses to allow for reimbursement under the actual expense allowances under FTR sections 301-11.300 through 301-11.306.

c. Maximum Rates. As a result of wildfires in California, agencies may approve actual subsistence expense reimbursement, not to exceed 300 percent of the applicable per diem rate, without further justification for employees performing official travel to the affected areas.

5. Who should I contact for further information? Contact Mr. Patrick McConnell, Acting Director for Travel Management Policy, at (202) 501-2362 or email at patrick.mcconnell@gsa.gov.

By delegation of the Administrator of General Services,



Kevin Messner
Acting Associate Administrator
Office of Governmentwide Policy