

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 This Bulletin expires on January 24, 2008, unless extended or rescinded by this Office.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](mailto:patrick.mcconnell@gsa.gov).

By delegation of the Administrator of General Services,

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