



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Business Center  
Aviation Management Directorate**



## **Information Bulletin**

**Number:** 09-01 Revision 1 (07-08-09)

**Distribution:** U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau Representatives

**Subject:** **Guidelines for Requesting Approval from the Office of the Solicitor for Senior Executive Service (SES) / Senior Federal Official Travel on Government Aircraft**

This Information Bulletin (IB) is to provide information to all Bureau representatives within the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) on basic guidelines for requesting approval of SES/senior official travel through the Office of the Solicitor (SOL).

Prior written SOL approval is necessary when an SES or senior federal official or a non-federal traveler (even if an official traveler) is flying on DOI owned or operated (chartered by DOI) aircraft between two or more different points.

**Key items to remember:**

- Official travel, as defined in OMB Circular A-126, includes point-to-point transportation: (a) to conduct agency business; (b) to meet mission requirements; and (c) for required use travel (rare).
- "Mission travel" is narrowly defined; mission requirements do NOT include official travel to give speeches, to attend conferences or meetings, or to make routine site visits.
- Generally all Departmental travel at SES level and above is non mission official travel. SES and senior federal officials are typically on oversight visits, not performing the actual mission.
- Use of a DOI aircraft is permitted if it is the most cost effective means of travel.
- Travelers should not schedule meetings and then claim that only DOI aircraft will accommodate that schedule.
- If an SES/senior federal official boards an aircraft at Point A, overflies a site, and returns to Point A without ANY other stop\*, there is no point-to-point transportation, and SOL approval is not required.

**\*Stops solely for refuel/bathroom breaks, with no official business conducted and no passengers picked up or dropped off, are authorized. Trips with such stops do not require SOL approval.**

- All information about flights is publically available and reported to GSA twice a year.
- If unsure, or have any questions about the trip, call the SOL in advance.

**How/When/Where to Submit SES/Senior Travel Request:**

1. All SES/senior official travel requests should be sent to the SOL - Division of General Law (DGL).
2. All requests should be sent to SOL – DGL at least a week in advance. A shorter lead time is acceptable only during emergencies.
3. Calls can be placed in advanced to the SOL – DGL to determine if an approval by the Solicitor based upon what information is required.
4. All requests should include a full and complete description of the trip purpose.
5. Requests can be faxed to 202-219-1790 FAX or emailed to [Katherine.Aldrich@sol.doi.gov](mailto:Katherine.Aldrich@sol.doi.gov) or [Timothy.e.murphy@sol.doi.gov](mailto:Timothy.e.murphy@sol.doi.gov)
6. Once the request is approved, the process listed below occurs:
  - a. DGL reviews the request
  - b. Surnamed memorandum to the Solicitor
  - c. Solicitor will approve / disapprove
7. Generally this process takes up to 3-4 days to work through the system.
8. Fire and other emergency flights can be approved same day.

**SOL – Division of General Law Contacts:**

Katherine Aldrich, Attorney-Advisor 202-208-5007  
Tim Murphy, Asst. Solicitor, General Legal Services 202-208-5216

**Additional information or assistance can be obtained through NBC-AMD's Flight Coordination Centers. Points of contact are:**

Jan Bennett / Lark Wuerth – Alaska Regional Office (907) 271-3935 / 6032  
Vicki Johnston – Boise Regional Office (208) 334-9314  
Shari Moultrie – Atlanta Regional Office (770) 458-2055

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