United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

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FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT MEMORANDUM 2009-043 (Vol. X.J)

To: Bureau Chief Finance Officers
Bureau Assistant Directors for Administration
Director, National Business Center

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

Subject: Revised Procedures for Authorizing and Processing Travel Vouchers of Senior Officials

Attached is revised policy and guidance for authorizing and processing travel vouchers for Senior Officials. This procedure modification will assist in preparing Interior to move forward to an automated end-to-end E-Gov Travel system.

If you have any questions regarding this information or if you require additional information, please contact Robert Smith (Robert_Smith @ios.doi.gov) on 202-208-5684.

Attachment

Replaces: FAM 2006-005

United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
Washington, DC 20240

APR 2 4 2006

Memorandum

To: Solicitor
Inspector General
Assistant Secretaries
Heads of Bureaus
Departmental Offices

From: R. Thomas Weimer R. Thomas Weimer
Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget

Subject: Revised Procedures for Authorizing and Processing Travel Vouchers of Senior Officials

The Department is preparing to move forward to an automated E-Gov Travel System (eTS). eTS is one of the President's Management Agenda E-Government projects. The eTS initiative is a government wide, web-based, end-to-end travel management system. eTS will automate and consolidate the travel processes through self-service functions including travel planning, authorizations, reservations, payment of travel claims, and voucher reimbursement and reconciliation. Users will be able to prepare and submit travel information electronically through a PC, laptop, or handheld electronic device—putting an end to the paper trail and saving the Government time and money.

To assist in facilitating a seamless eTS migration and help mitigate the inherent risks associated with technology-driven change, the Department is implementing a change management approach to achieve a more effective and efficient travel process. Current guidelines governing the travel of senior officials require submission of travel authorizations and vouchers through the Office of Financial Management (PFM) for review and approval. When the Department implements eTS, the travel approver (supervisor or other designated official) will electronically authorize, revise, or reject senior official travel requests, and authorize, modify, or reject senior official travel vouchers. PFM will no longer be involved in the review and approval process. Considering these factors, the following new procedures will be implemented immediately for Senior Official travel:

- Travel authorizations for senior officials will be approved by their travel approver (supervisor or other designated official). The travel authorization must include: (a) The name of the employee; (b) The signature of the proper authorizing official; (c) Purpose of travel; (d) Any conditions of or limitations on that authorization; and, (e) A statement that the employee is authorized to travel.

- Vouchers for senior officials will also be approved by their supervisors or other designated officials. The reviewing official must have full knowledge of the employee's activities and must ensure: (a) The claim is properly prepared in accordance with the pertinent regulations and agency procedures; (b) A copy of authorization for travel is provided; (c) The types of expenses claimed are authorized and allowable expenses; (d) The amounts claimed are accurate; and, (e) The required receipts, statements, justifications, etc. are attached to the travel claim.

- The certifying officer assumes ultimate responsibility for the validity of the claim; however, (a) The traveler must ensure all travel expenses are prudent and necessary and submit the expenses in the form of a proper claim; and, (b) The authorizing/approving official shall review the completed claim to ensure that the claim is properly prepared in accordance with regulations and agency procedures prior to authorizing it for payment.

Senior Officials are defined as all political, or non-career, appointments to Executive Level and Senior Executive Service pay grades and those career appointments to the SES who are bureau Directors and Deputy Directors.

Approving travel authorizations and travel vouchers shall continue to be held at a high level to ensure policies are consistently applied. The Department prohibits approving officials from approving their own travel authorization or voucher or having the approval done by subordinates. In all cases, approving officials must have their own travel authorization and vouchers approved at the next higher level. Officials who are responsible for approving travel payments must review the travel authorization and vouchers and ensure compliance with the FTR regulations and DOI Travel policies, including proper exercise of discretion in approving amount of reimbursement claimed by employees. Failure to exercise discretion consistent with applicable policies and guidance, and/or approval of reimbursement which is inappropriate under them, may be cause for disciplinary action, an indication of performance deficiencies, and/or personal liability for the improper amount of payment.

cc: Deputy Secretary
Chief of Staff