United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

APR 17 2009

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FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT MEMORANDUM 2009-044 (Vol. X.H)

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

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

Subject: Mandatory Use of Travel Management System (TMS)

Attached is revised policy and guidance for dealing with the mandatory use of a Travel Management System (TMS) for official travel. It provides waivers from the requirement to use a TMS for making lodging accommodations for:

- Pre-Arranged Lodging Accommodations;
- Overseas Lodging Accommodations;
- Lodging Accommodations for Unplanned Travel; and/or
- Lodging Accommodations at Establishments not covered by the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act

The waivers from the mandatory use of a TMS apply only to lodging arrangements in the instances cited above.

As always, travelers are required to accomplish travel in the most prudent manner possible.

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 2001-005

# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

FEB 28 2001

Memorandum

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

From: Robert J. Lamb
Acting Assistant Secretary- Policy, Management and Budget

Subject: Attached DOI Policy Regarding Exceptions to Mandatory Use of a Travel Management System(TMS)

Since the issuance of FAM 2000-30 on December 18, 2000, we have received many comments from DOI travelers concerning the mandatory GSA requirement to use a Travel Management System for all common carrier, lodging and car rental reservations. Many of the concerns expressed by travelers involved the requirement to use a TMS for making lodging reservations in DOI's operating environment.

A review of the comments provided by DOI travelers reveals that GSA's mandatory use regulation has substantially increased the number of lodging reservations that are placed through a TMS, which has adversely impacted travel service. For example, many of the Department's 1,800 field locations are located in remote areas where lodging availability is limited to small, independently-owned establishments, which are exempt from the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act. Requiring the use of a TMS in these instances becomes problematic-- since these establishments typically do not participate in any centralized reservation system.

Other examples of lodging arrangements where the value-added by a TMS is questionable, includes overseas travel (where lodging arrangements are frequently handled by host country organizations), and pre-arranged lodging (for conferences and training)-- where direct booking by attendees is necessary.

To address these needs, the attached policy, issued under the authority provided in 41CFR 301-73.102, exempts the following four categories of lodging arrangements from the Mandatory TMS--Use regulation:

- o Pre-Arranged Lodging Accommodations
- o Overseas Lodging Accommodations
- o Lodging Accommodations for Unplanned Travel
- o Lodging Accommodations at Establishments Exempted by the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act

Implementation of the attached policy statement will mitigate a number of the concerns expressed by travelers, while keeping the Department in compliance with the statutory provisions of the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act (5 USC 5707a).

Our goal is to provide the highest level of travel service possible to our traveling employees on an ongoing basis. We are continuing to review the Travel Management Center operations, and will take the necessary actions to ensure that this goal is achieved.

Attachment

cc: Associate Directors for Administration
Chief Financial Officers
Deputy Chief Financial Officers
Bureau Finance Officers

# DOI Policy Regarding Exceptions to Mandatory Use of a Travel Management System (TMS)

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Department's policies regarding exceptions to the Federal Travel Regulation: Mandatory Use of a Travel Management System, which became effective on January 1, 2001. The Final Rule ( 41CFR 301-73.102) was published as an implementation regulation for the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act (P.L. 101-391), and requires travelers to use the Travel Management System selected by the Department for all common carrier, lodging and car rental arrangements.

The Department selected Omega World Travel in March, 2000 to satisfy the FTR requirement to use a Travel Management System. Given the Department's high level of decentralization (involving some 1,800 or so locations), booking hotel reservations through the TMS has proven to be problematic. Therefore, under the authority provided in 41 CFR 301-73.102, the Department will exempt the following types of lodging arrangements from the Mandatory TMS Use regulation:

(1) Pre-Arranged Lodging Accommodations -Frequently, it is necessary to arrange for a block of rooms to be set aside for a special purpose (i.e., Conference, Training Sessions, etc). To ensure that the set aside rooms are used, direct booking, by prospective attendees, is frequently required. Consequently, the use of a TMS for lodging accommodations is not mandatory in these instances.

(2) Overseas Lodging Arrangements - Lodging arrangements overseas are frequently handled by host country sponsors (i.e., universities, international organizations, conference sponsors, and the like). Thus the use of a TMS for overseas lodging arrangements frequently would not be practical; would add complexity to the logistics of itinerary planning; and thus is not mandatory.

(3) Lodging Accommodations for Unplanned Travel- The mandatory TMS- use regulation applies to official travel *that can be planned.* For certain types of extended field activities within DOI, it may not be possible to make advance hotel or motel reservations -- and thus the use of a TMS is not mandatory.

(4)Lodging Establishments in Remote Areas - Many of the Department's 1,800 field offices are located in remote areas where lodging availability is limited to small, independently owned establishments, of three stories or less, that are exempt from the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act. Additionally, these lodging establishments are not likely to participate in a central reservation -- which severely limits the ability of any TMS to book reservations. In these instances, travelers are not required to use a TMS.

**FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION MEMORANDUM**
**Mandatory Use of Travel Management System**

## I. REGULATORY Q & A'S

(41CFR Section 301-73.101)

**QUESTION #1:**
**What are the basic services that should be covered by a travel management system (TMS)?**

**ANSWER:**

The travel management system selected should, as a minimum include:

(a) The ability to provide the following as appropriate to the agency's travel needs:

(1) Common carrier information (e.g., flight confirmation and seat assignment; compliance with the Fly America Act, governmentwide travel policies, and contract city-pair fares, electronic ticketing and ticket delivery);

(2) Lodging information (e.g., room availability and confirmation, compliance with Hotel/Motel Fire Safety Act, per diem rate acceptability);

(3) Car rental information (e.g. availability of Government rate and confirmation of reservations).

(b) Provide basic management information, such as:

(1) Number of reservations by type of service (common carrier, lodging, and car rental);

(2) Policy compliance and reasons for exceptions;

**(Mandatory Use of Travel Management System- Continued)**

(3) Origin and destination points of common carrier use;

(4) Destination points for lodging accommodations;

(5) Number of lodging nights in approved accommodations;

(6) City or location where car rentals are obtained;

(7) Other tasks, e.g., reconciliation of charges on centrally billed accounts, processing ticket refunds.

(41CFR Section 301-73.102)

**QUESTION#2:**

**Must we require travelers to use a travel management system?**

**ANSWER:**

Yes, starting January 1, 2001, to implement the Hotel/ Motel Fire Safety Act (HMFSA) , as amended (see 5 USC 5707c). Until that time, you should encourage your travelers to use the travel management system selected by you for all common carrier, lodging, and car rental arrangements. Beginning January 1, 2001 you must require travelers to use the travel management system selected by you.

**(Mandatory Use of Travel Management System- Continued)**

(41CFR Section 301-73.103 allows agency heads to identify exceptions, and DOI has requested the following waivers from GSA)

**QUESTION #3:**

**Are there any exceptions to the requirement to use a travel management system?**

Yes, the Department of the Interior, through a PMB Policy directive, has identified the following four exceptions:

(1) Pre-Arranged Lodging Accommodations -Frequently, it is necessary to arrange for a block of rooms to be set aside for a special purpose (i.e., Conference, Training Sessions, etc). To ensure that the set aside rooms are used, direct booking, by prospective attendees, is frequently required. Consequently, the use of a TMS for lodging accommodations is not mandatory in these instances.

(2) Overseas Lodging Arrangements - Lodging arrangements overseas are frequently handled by host country sponsors (i.e., universities, international organizations, conference sponsors, and the like). Thus the use of a TMS for overseas lodging arrangements frequently would not be practical; would add complexity to the logistics of itinerary planning; and thus is not mandatory.

(3) Lodging Accommodations for Unplanned Travel- The mandatory TMS- use regulation applies to official travel *that can be planned.* For certain types of extended field activities within DOI, it may not be possible to make advance hotel or motel reservations -- and thus the use of a TMS is not mandatory.

**(Mandatory Use of Travel Management System- Continued)**

(4)Lodging Establishments within the U.S. that are Exempted from the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act. - DOI travelers are strongly encouraged to utilize certified fire-safe facilities at all times. However, many of the Department's 1,800 field offices are located in remote areas where lodging availability is limited to small, independently owned establishments that do not participate in any central reservation system, and which are three stories or less (thus being exempt from HMFSA). In these instances travelers are not required to use a TMS.

**QUESTION#4:**
**What is my liability if I use an unauthorized travel agent or unauthorized travel management system?**

**ANSWER:**

You are responsible for any additional costs that result from the unauthorized use, and you are subject to any penalties your agency may impose.

## II. OTHER Q & A'S

**Can I use a web-based system for booking travel?**

Yes, but you may ONLY use **TripManager for Government**. This system is presently being pilot tested in NPS, and will be implemented in other DOI bureaus by April, 2001. Reservations booked through TripManager are reviewed, for quality assurance purposes, by DOI's Travel Management Center (Omega World Travel), and hence comply fully with the regulation.