

Travel Reminders

It is the policy of the government that agencies shall authorize only that travel which is necessary to accomplish the purposes of the government effectively and economically. Authorizing officials should be aware of travel plans.

How Should I Travel?

By following the Prudent Person rule: an employee traveling on official business is expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business. Employees will be responsible for excess costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience.

How Do I Select the Method of Transportation to be used?

Travel by common carrier (air, rail or bus) generally results in the most efficient use of energy resources and in the least costly and most expeditious performance of travel. Therefore, this method shall be used whenever it is reasonably available.

1. Is common carrier (air, rail or bus) available?
 - a. If Yes, authorize common carrier. Compare carrier fares (govt. vs. non-govt. rates) to see what is most affordable. Factor in employee time costs when deciding affordability.
 - b. If No, travel via automobile.
2. Is a government-furnished automobile available?
 - a. If Yes, authorize GOV.
 - b. If No, check for contract rental automobile (Sato).
3. Is contract rental available?
 - a. If Yes, authorize contract rental.
 - b. If no, authorize POV.
4. Is POV available?
 - a. If Yes, authorize at rate advantageous to the employee
 - b. If No, authorize special conveyance. (Dog sled, mule train, horse, boat, hang-glider)

When a Government-furnished vehicle (including rental) is used by an employee for official travel, its use shall be limited to official purposes, which include transportation between places where the employee's presence is required incident to official business.

The Prudent Person will arrange for within-per-diem-lodging close to their duty location and which provides for sufficient dining facilities that the employee will not need to drive a Government-provided vehicle for non-duty purposes.

What Flight Should I Take?

Does a contract city pair fare exist?

1. If Yes, is it the most economical and efficient way to travel? (i.e., is the flight cheaper, but the employee will sit at the airport for 2 extra hours?)
2. If No, what is the most economical and efficient flight? Check GovTrip Non-Government fare tab for options. Be aware that a penalty may be incurred for changing a Non-Government flight; however, these flights may still be the most economical even after penalties.

How Should I Get To and From the Airport and Work Location?

1. Is a shuttle available?
 - a. If Yes, you are authorized the use of the shuttle and a reasonable transportation tip (15% is recommended) to the driver.
 - b. If No, check for public transportation service options.
2. Is public transportation or mass transit available?
 - a. If Yes, you may purchase a Metro card (or other) using your government charge card, or be reimbursed for cash payment.
 - b. If No, consider taxi service.
3. Is taxi service available?
 - a. If Yes, you are authorized to use the taxi, plus a reasonable transportation tip.
 - b. If No, you may be authorized to use a rental car if no other options exist.

A rental car may be authorized only if none of the above conditions exist, or if mission requirements make using other methods of official transportation impractical (Specialized equipment transportation, etc.).

A rental car may be the most advantageous method of travel for the government, especially when multiple persons are using it for transportation. However, it still may not be used for unofficial business. The employee is responsible for any additional cost resulting from the unauthorized use of a rental vehicle for other than official travel-related expenses.

When two or more persons travel together by means of a rented vehicle, that fact, together with the name of each traveler and the name of his/her employing agency, must be stated by each traveler on his or her travel voucher.

Lodging

Lodging must be acquired as close to the temporary duty location as possible. Personal preference shall not take precedence over government advantage. However, a more distant facility may offer a lower rate. In that case, the facility may be used if the additional cost of transportation to and from the duty location does not exceed the cost savings of the cheaper facility.

Leave

If an employee takes annual leave exceeding four hours while in travel status, they are entitled to no meals and incidental expenses for that day. Depending on the circumstance, they may be entitled to lodging.

Combining Personal and Official Travel (Vehicles)

A government-owned/rented vehicle may not be used for personal travel. If an employee wishes to combine personal travel with government business, they shall either use their POV for travel, or shall book the rental car under their personal credit card, and may be reimbursed mileage costs for official transportation.

Per Diem

Per Diem is based where you perform your duties, not necessarily where you lay your head. When an employee elects to lodge at a per diem location other than their duty location, any extra costs for that stay (including increased lodging and/or M&IE rates, as well as transportation to and from the duty location) must be paid by the employee. Additionally, documentation of this situation must be recorded on the GovTrip authorization and voucher, and per diem costs must be adjusted accordingly.

If no lodging is available at the duty location, or lodging (including transportation to the duty location) can be obtained elsewhere at a rate more advantageous to the government, then an alternate per diem location may be authorized.

Can I Park My Car at the Airport?

You may only park your car at the airport if the cost of POV mileage to and from the airport, plus the cost of parking does not exceed the cost of round-trip taxi service between your home and the airport.

Additionally, travelers should bear in mind the Prudent Person rule, and realize that parking is widely available on the NIFC campus. When it is economical and effective to do so, a traveler should park his or her POV and either take a taxi, walk, or request a ride to and from the airport with a co-worker.

What is a Cost Comparison?

When a traveler elects to deviate from the course of authorized travel, the traveler is responsible for providing a documented cost comparison to justify their expenses. In almost all cases (except for emergency travel), this justification must be provided in advance of the travel and must be approved by the travel approving official. You will construct a trip that shows how you “should have” traveled (by the means most advantageous to the government), with a total cost of that travel. Then you will create your voucher and ensure that the costs of that voucher do not exceed the constructed costs. You should attach your constructed trip documentation along with your receipts to your actual travel voucher.

What must be documented on a Cost Comparison?

You must provide cost comparisons to show the most advantageous methods to the Government.

1. Mode of Transportation: Cost of coach class airline accommodations on a commercial air carrier. Is travel between a city/airport pair for which air carrier service is provided under contract with GSA?
 - a. If yes, the constructive cost is limited to the appropriate contract air fare.
 - b. If no, the constructive cost is limited to the lowest unrestricted coach class fare proved by a commercial air carrier.
2. Costs to be considered in addition to fares:
 - a. Transportation costs to and from the common carrier terminals/ parking at terminal
 - b. Cost of excess baggage if it would have been allowed
 - c. Mode of travel to/from the airport, including mileage and airport

parking.

3. Per Diem that would be allowable if the traveler had used the carrier upon which costs are determined.
4. Mileage rates based on paper or electronic standard highway mileage guides or the actual miles driven as determined from odometer readings.