



**U.S. Department of the Interior**  
*Temporary Duty Travel Policy*



**August 31, 2018**

## Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
1 Introduction	6
1.1 Temporary Duty Travel Allowances	6
1.1.1 Defining TDY Travel	6
1.1.2 Understanding Eligibility for TDY Allowances	7
1.1.3 Understanding Responsibility for Travel-Related Costs	7
1.1.4 Using Promotional Benefits Earned during TDY Travel	8
1.2 E-Gov Travel Service (ETS)	8
1.2.1 Understanding ETS	8
1.2.2 Defining the Federal Travel Management Program	10
1.3 Travel Authorizations	10
1.3.1 Defining the Purpose for Issuing a Travel Authorization	10
1.3.2 Defining Types of Travel Authorizations	11
1.3.3 Defining Minimum Standards for Travel Authorizations	11
1.3.4 Establishing Internal Policies and Procedures for Travel Authorizations	12
1.3.5 Identifying Trip Purpose Codes	13
1.3.6 Identifying Travel-Related Expenses that Require Specific Authorization	14
1.3.7 Booking Combined Official and Personal Travel	14
1.4 Travel Claims for Reimbursement	15
1.4.1 Understanding Travel Vouchers	15
1.4.2 Defining Approving Officials' Responsibilities	16
1.4.3 Defining Timeline for Travel Claims	17
1.4.4 Disallowing Travel Claims	17
1.5 Invitational and Contractor Travel	17
1.5.1 Understanding Invitational Travel	17
1.5.2 Understanding Pre-Employment Interview Travel	19
1.5.3 Understanding Contractor Travel	19
1.6 Travel Funded by Non-Federal Source or Government Agency	19
1.6.1 Defining Travel Funded by Non-Federal Source or Government Agency	19
1.6.2 Understanding Travel Sponsored by Non-Federal Source	20
1.6.3 Understanding Intra- or Inter-Governmental Travel	21
2 Per Diem Expenses	23
2.1 Eligibility for Per Diem Reimbursement	23
2.1.1 Determining Eligibility for Per Diem Reimbursement	23
2.1.2 Establishing Policies to Govern Authorization and Payment of Per Diem Expenses	24
2.1.3 Determining Eligibility for Rest Periods during TDY Travel	24
2.1.4 Determining Eligibility for Per Diem on Leave or Non-Workdays during TDY Travel	25
2.1.5 Determining Eligibility for Per Diem during Return Travel	25
2.2 Lodging Costs	26
2.2.1 Obtaining Lodging for TDY Travel	26
2.2.2 Understanding Types of Lodging	27
2.2.3 Understanding Lodging Taxes and Tax Exempt Status	28
2.2.4 Determining Eligibility for Advanced Room Deposits	28
2.3 Meal Costs	29
2.3.1 Defining Complimentary Meals	29
2.3.2 Defining Meals Provided by the Government	29
2.3.3 Refusing Meals for Medical or Religious Reasons	30
2.4 Documentation Requirements	30
2.5 Lodgings-plus Per Diem	30

2.5.1 Determining Allowable Lodging Reimbursement Rate.....	30
2.5.2 Determining Allowable M&IE Reimbursement Rate.....	30
2.6 Reduced Per Diem.....	32
2.6.1 Reducing Per Diem during TDY Travel.....	32
2.6.2 Understanding Camp Rates.....	32
2.7 Actual Expense.....	32
2.7.1 Determining Eligibility for Actual Expense Reimbursement.....	32
2.7.2 Requesting Actual Expense Reimbursement.....	33
2.7.3 Authorizing Actual Expense Reimbursement.....	33
2.7.4 Identifying Required Receipts for Actual Expense Reimbursement.....	34
3 Extenuating Circumstances for Travel.....	35
3.1 Travel of Employee with Disability or Special Need.....	35
3.1.1 Understanding Allowable Expenses.....	35
3.1.2 Authorizing and Paying Additional Travel Expenses for Employee with Disability or Special Need.....	35
3.2 Emergency Travel.....	36
3.2.1 Understanding Emergency Travel.....	36
3.2.2 Determining When Emergency Travel is Necessary.....	36
3.2.3 Interrupting or Discontinuing TDY Travel.....	36
3.2.4 Determining Allowable Expenses when Illness or Injury Occurs.....	37
3.3 Travel Guidance for Year End and Beginning of New Fiscal Year.....	38
3.4 Travel during Periods Covered by Continuing Resolution Authority.....	38
3.5 Official Travel during Periods of Conflict.....	38
3.6 Travel of Threatened Law Enforcement or Investigative Employees.....	39
3.6.1 Understanding Allowable Subsistence and Transportation Expenses for Law Enforcement or Investigative Employees.....	39
3.6.2 Identifying Allowable Lodging Expenses.....	39
3.6.3 Identifying Allowable Transportation Expenses.....	40
3.6.4 Identifying Allowable Subsistence Expenses.....	40
3.6.5 Documenting Subsistence Expenses.....	40
3.6.6 Determining the Allowable Period of Expense Reimbursement.....	41
3.6.7 Obtaining Travel Advance for Transportation and Subsistence Expenses.....	41
3.6.8 Identifying Required Receipts for Reimbursement.....	41
4 Transportation Expenses.....	42
4.1 Understanding Allowable Transportation Expenses.....	42
4.1.1 Identifying and Authorizing Allowable Transportation Expenses.....	42
4.1.2 Selecting Most Advantageous Mode of Transportation.....	43
4.1.3 Traveling by Most Direct Route.....	43
4.1.4 Creating Cost Comparisons.....	44
4.2 Air Travel.....	44
4.2.1 Understanding Basic Requirements for Air Travel.....	44
4.2.2 Using Contract City Pair Airfare and Non-Refundable Fares.....	44
4.2.3 Selecting Appropriate Class of Airline Accommodations.....	46
4.2.4 Understanding Reduced Group or Charter Fares.....	48
4.2.5 Selecting Among Airlines that Offer Same Fare.....	48
4.2.6 Changing and Cancelling Ticketed Airfares.....	48
4.2.7 Determining Appropriate Use of U.S. Flag Air Carriers.....	49
4.3 Train Travel.....	51
4.3.1 Selecting Appropriate Class of Train Accommodations.....	51
4.3.2 Travel by Train as Personal Preference.....	51
4.4 Travel by Ship.....	51

4.4.1 Authorizing Travel by Ship.....	51
4.5 Determining Appropriate Use of Local Transit System	52
4.6 Use of GOV	52
4.6.1 Determining When Use of GOV is Advantageous .....	52
4.6.2 Administering Use of GOV .....	53
4.6.3 Understanding Appropriate Use of GOV .....	53
4.6.4 Following Accident Procedures .....	54
4.7 Use of POV	54
4.7.1 Determining Allowable Use of POV .....	54
4.7.2 Calculating POV Mileage Reimbursement.....	55
4.7.3 Using POV as Personal Preference.....	55
4.7.4 Identifying Other Reimbursable Expenses when Traveling by POV.....	56
4.8 Determining Appropriate Use of Special Conveyances	57
4.9 Use of Taxis and Shuttle Service	57
4.9.1 Determining Appropriate Use .....	57
4.9.2 Tipping Taxi, Shuttle Service and Courtesy Transportation Drivers .....	57
4.10 Rental Cars	58
4.10.1 Authorizing Use of Rental Vehicles .....	58
4.10.2 Selecting Appropriate Rental Car .....	58
4.10.3 Determining Reimbursement for Premium Services or Assistive Technologies .....	59
4.10.4 Determining Reimbursement for Rental Car Insurance.....	60
4.10.5 Following Accident Procedures .....	60
4.10.6 Understanding Liability for Unauthorized Use of Rental Vehicle.....	61
4.10.7 Using Rental Cars for Combined Official and Personal Travel .....	61
4.10.8 Use of Transportation Network Companies .....	61
4.11 Use of Government Aircraft	62
4.11.1 Understanding Government Aircraft vs. Special Conveyance .....	62
4.11.2 Determining Appropriate Use of Government Aircraft .....	62
4.11.3 Authorizing Use of Government Aircraft .....	62
4.11.4 Ensuring that Travel on Government Aircraft is Cost-Effective .....	62
4.11.5 Obtaining Approval to Use Government Aircraft to Carry Passengers .....	62
4.11.6 Reporting Requirements for Travel on Government Aircraft .....	62
4.11.7 Identifying Required Documentation for Travel on Government Aircraft.....	63
5 Miscellaneous Expenses	64
5.1 Identifying Allowable Miscellaneous Expenses	64
5.2 Authorizing and Paying Miscellaneous Expenses	64
5.3 Understanding Communications Policies	65
5.4 Understanding Reimbursement for Baggage Fees	65
5.5 Determining Eligibility for Laundry Reimbursement	65
6 Conference Related Travel	67
6.1 Guidance for Conference Attendees	67
6.1.1 Defining Terms.....	67
6.1.2 Establishing Conference Travel Guidance .....	67
6.1.3 Reimbursing Advanced Payment of Conference Registration Fees .....	68
7 Extended TDY Assignments and Income Tax Reimbursement Allowances	69
7.1 Determining Eligibility for Extended TDY Reimbursement	69
7.2 Travel Expenses during Extended TDY Assignments	69
7.2.1 Traveling To and From Extended TDY Assignment.....	69

7.2.2 Calculating Per Diem Reimbursement during Extended TDY Assignment.....	70
7.3 Tax Implications of Extended TDY Assignments	71
7.3.1 When Extended TDY Assignments are Taxable .....	71
7.3.2 Understanding Income Tax Reimbursement Allowance (ITRA) .....	72
7.3.3 Identifying Documentation Required to Substantiate ITRA Claim.....	73
7.3.4 Understanding ITRA Calculations.....	73
7.4 Documentation Requirements for Extended TDY Assignments	73
7.4.1 Documenting Extended TDY Assignment Reimbursement .....	73
7.4.2 Documenting Interruptions to Extended TDY Assignments .....	74
8 Travel Charge Card Rules	76
8.1 Payment of Travel Expenses with the Government Charge Card	76
8.1.1 Identifying Required Method of Payment for Official Travel Expenses .....	76
8.1.2 Understanding Exceptions to Mandatory Use of the Charge Card.....	76
8.1.3 Understanding Limitations on Allowable Charge Card Use.....	77
8.1.4 Understanding Responsibility for Payment.....	77
8.2 Alternative Payment Methods for Travel Expenses	77
8.2.1 Understanding Allowable ATM Cash Withdrawals .....	77
8.2.2 Understanding Allowable Use of the Travel Advance .....	77
8.2.3 Paying for Travel Expenses with Personal Funds.....	78
Appendix A: Glossary of TDY Travel Terms	79

# 1 Introduction

This section introduces temporary duty (TDY) travel and includes guidance on the eligibility for travel allowances, E-Gov Travel Service (ETS), pre-travel authorizations, vouchers for reimbursement claims and the different types of TDY trips. The Secretary and Deputy Secretary for the Department of the Interior, as the Agency Heads, are exempt from the requirements of this policy guide where it exceeds the requirements of the Federal Travel Regulations. This policy guide applies to all Department of the Interior (DOI) Bureaus, offices, regions, employees and invitational travelers, regardless of status. It is the responsibility of the traveler and the approving official to know applicable travel regulations and related requirements.

## 1.1 Temporary Duty Travel Allowances

### 1.1.1 Defining TDY Travel

A TDY trip is pre-authorized official travel to a location farther than 50 miles from a traveler's official duty station and residence. The following sections provide additional guidance on distinguishing among TDY, relocation, and local travel.

#### Distinguishing Between TDY and Relocation Travel

A TDY travel is when a trip, usually of a short-term duration, is made and the traveler returns to the official duty station when the mission has been completed. In contrast, relocation travel is when an employee is authorized to move to another official duty station either with the intent of not returning to the current duty station; or, in rare instances returning to the previous official duty station once a long-term assignment is completed.

A traveler who is relocating is not eligible for TDY allowances and should instead refer to the [DOI PCS Handbook](#) and [347 DM 302, DOI Federal Travel Regulations \(FTR\) Implementing Instructions](#) for guidance.

#### Distinguishing Between TDY and Local Travel

The chart below distinguishes between TDY and local travel. Local travelers are not eligible for TDY allowances and may not use ETS to claim reimbursement for travel-related costs.

	TDY Travel	Local Travel
<i>What is it?</i>	<p>TDY travel is any official travel that is farther than 50 miles from both the employee's official duty station and residence. An official duty station can be a large contiguous area defined by a boundary that is designated as a location that an employee regularly maintains or patrols, and would not be limited to a 50 mile radius when determining an official TDY travel.</p> <p><b>Note: The definition of TDY travel is <u>not</u> contingent upon per diem entitlement.</b></p>	<p>Local travel is travel that does not meet the requirements of TDY travel because of the close distance of the location and typically occurs during normal duty hours. Employees performing local travel are not entitled to per diem reimbursement. Travelers should refer to <a href="#">347 DM 200, DOI FTR Implementing Instructions</a> for DOI's local travel policy.</p>

<i>How is it approved?</i>	The traveler must have a valid travel authorization prior to performing TDY travel. For guidance on travel authorizations, see <a href="#">Section 1.3</a> .	Employees must follow their Bureau’s policy for local travel to ensure the expenses will be paid.
<i>What mileage may travelers claim?</i>	Mileage reimbursement for TDY travel by privately-owned vehicle (POV) is paid at the full General Services Administration (GSA) mileage rate when use of a POV is authorized as advantageous to the Government. For additional information on POV mileage reimbursement, see <a href="#">Section 4.7.2</a> .	Mileage reimbursement for local travel by POV is paid to employees at the full GSA mileage rate if authorized as advantageous to the Government, and at the IRS deductible amount (\$.14 per mile) for volunteers. Reimbursement is limited to claims in excess of normal commuting costs. This limitation applies to all local travel (e.g., travel to training).
<i>How do travelers claim reimbursement?</i>	In most TDY claim situations the traveler must create a travel voucher in ETS to claim reimbursement for TDY travel. For guidance on travel vouchers see <a href="#">Section 1.4</a> .	The traveler must file a <a href="#">Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business (OF-1164)</a> , to request reimbursement. The traveler may not use ETS to submit a claim for local travel reimbursement.

### 1.1.2 Understanding Eligibility for TDY Allowances

An employee for purposes of TDY allowances is:

- a) An individual employed by an agency, regardless of status or rank; or
- b) An individual employed intermittently in Government service as an expert or consultant and paid on a daily when actually-employed (WAE) basis; or
- c) An individual serving without pay or at \$1 a year (also referred to as “invitational traveler”).

The following individuals are eligible for reimbursement of authorized expenses when in TDY travel status:

- a) Employees traveling on official business;
- b) Invitational travelers;
- c) Interviewees performing pre-employment interview travel;
- d) Expert or consultant who is paid on a daily (when-actually-employed) basis;
- e) Employees who must interrupt official business travel to perform emergency travel as a result of an incapacitating illness or injury or a personal emergency situation; and
- f) Law enforcement or investigative employees and members of their families traveling as a result of a threat directly associated with their official duties;

### 1.1.3 Understanding Responsibility for Travel-Related Costs

Bureaus may reimburse travelers for reasonable and necessary transportation, miscellaneous, and per diem expenses incurred during TDY trips. Per Diem reimbursement refers to the daily allowance for lodging, meals, and incidental expenses (M&IE). Travelers may only claim

reimbursement for expenses that are essential to the official purpose of a TDY trip. For more information on allowable expenses, refer to the following sections:

- Per diem expenses: [Section 2](#)
- Travel expenses related to a special need/disability: [Section 3.1](#)
- Transportation expenses: [Section 4](#)
- Miscellaneous expenses: [Section 5](#)

**Note: The reference to DOI Bureaus applies to Bureaus, all large DOI entities, including Offices and Regions and all sub-organization elements that exist within DOI.**

### **Prudent Person Rule**

Travelers who perform authorized TDY travel must follow the prudent person rule. This rule states that travelers are expected to exercise the same care when incurring expenses on official travel that a prudent person would if traveling at their own personal expense. Travelers must pay for any costs which are not authorized or necessary when considering the nature of the TDY travel with personal funds. A traveler may not claim reimbursement for costs associated with an indirect route, extended travel time or premium accommodations and services that are not essential to perform the official mission of the trip.

In an effort to minimize costs, travelers should also consider less expensive alternatives to travel, such as teleconferencing, web conferencing or video conferencing. When travel is necessary, employees should follow the guidance below in order to reduce travel costs:

- Use electronic tickets, whenever available;
- When traveling by automobile, use Government-owned vehicles (GOVs) and carpool, whenever possible;
- Use public transportation around the TDY site and to or from transportation terminals, with consideration to time spent in transit;
- Reduce the frequency of regularly scheduled meetings that require travel; and
- Restrict the number of employees traveling to the same destination for the same purpose to only the essential personnel required for the purpose of the TDY trip.

#### **1.1.4 Using Promotional Benefits Earned during TDY Travel**

Travel vendors may offer promotional benefits (e.g., frequent flyer miles, hotel points). Travelers may use these benefits for personal use or future official travel if the following conditions are met:

- Benefits are offered to the general public; and
- No additional cost will be incurred to the Government.

A traveler must not book or reserve transportation, lodging, or rental cars based on vendors' promotional benefits or participation in a specific frequent traveler program. Travelers must follow the prudent person rule and use travel vendors under contract with the Government that provide the lowest cost and meet schedule requirements, whenever possible.

## **1.2 E-Gov Travel Service (ETS)**

### **1.2.1 Understanding ETS**

The ETS is a part of the overall DOI travel management program that administers a travel authorization, claim and reservations system in accordance with FTR requirements. The ETS provides an automated process for DOI employees and supervisors to plan, document, manage



and monitor TDY travel. The purpose of ETS is to document and pay for authorized and allowable travel expenses, provide the data needed to manage official travel, and support adequate accounting for travel expenses. Bureaus must capture and record TDY expenses in ETS as described in [Appendix C to Chapter 301 of the FTR](#). The requirements of Appendix C state that travelers must record expenditures by trip purpose, travel type and appropriate budget object class, which is also recognized as the commitment item in the Financial and Business Management System (FBMS). Bureaus must be able to aggregate expenditures (e.g., per diem, transportation, rental car expense, privately owned vehicle (POV) expense, travel management center transaction costs) by trip purpose and travel type.

The DOI employees are required to use ETS for official TDY travel. Any traveler who books transportation, lodging, or rental cars outside of the authorized ETS system will not be reimbursed any additional costs resulting from the non-compliance. Additional costs may include service fees, cancellation or itinerary change penalties, and damages or liabilities caused by vehicle accidents. Travelers will be required to pay for unreimbursed costs with personal funds.

The reservation and purchase of TDY lodging or transportation with third party travel vendors, (e.g., Travelocity, Expedia, etc.) is never allowable. However, a Bureau Associate Director of Administration or an equivalent may grant exceptions, on a case-by-case basis, to the required use of ETS as a result of the following:

- Place an unreasonable burden on the traveler (e.g., emergency travel, invitational travel, travel of an employee with a documented special need or disability);
- Compromise a national security interest; and
- Endanger the traveler's life (e.g., threatened law enforcement or investigative employee).

In the above situations the travel must be reserved with DOI's travel management center (TMC).

Transportation on small airlines or with bush pilots should be arranged through the appropriate TMC. Arranging transportation directly with the airlines is prohibited unless written justification is provided that the TMC cannot arrange transportation between the travel origination and destination locations.

Bureaus may not provide non-employees with access to ETS, nor may access be provided to contractors (**for official travel use**). Travel arrangers must access ETS to book travel on behalf of non-employees. Contractors must book travel through their employers; DOI cannot book contractor travel in ETS. For additional information on non-employee TDY travel see [Section 1.5](#).

As shown in the table that distinguishes between TDY and local travel, Bureaus must not use ETS to process local travel claims. For local travel claims, use [OF-1164](#).

Electronic signatures on official travel documents processed through ETS are legally binding to both the traveler and the supervisor.

## 1.2.2 Defining the Federal Travel Management Program

The DOI travel administrators oversee a robust travel management program to help ensure that employees and invitational travelers perform efficient and cost-effective travel. The travel management program includes the following types of support:

- a) Travel authorization and claims system, which is part of the Department's ETS;
- b) Reservation and ticketing support and reports on travel activities, which is provided through the Department's ETS or TMC;
- c) Travel payment system. The Department participates in the GSA SmartPay2 Program, which provides employees Government charge cards. For information on the use of Government charge cards for TDY travel, see Section 8;
- d) Contracts with transportation and lodging providers (e.g., City Pair airfares, U.S. Rental Car Agreement, FedRooms), which provide preferential rates and benefits to Government travelers. The travelers are required to use these programs, in accordance with the DOI TDY Travel policy; and
- e) Reporting system that covers financial and other travel characteristics, gathered from ETS and TMC.

**Note:** For restrictions related to contractors or grantees, see [Section 1.5.3](#)

## 1.3 Travel Authorizations

### 1.3.1 Defining the Purpose for Issuing a Travel Authorization

The travel authorization process enables management oversight of travel and related expenditures. Specifically, the process completes the following tasks:

- Provide review of travel and associated expenses in advance of DOI expending funds;
- Commits DOI, once signed by an approving official, to pay for authorized expenses that are incurred in compliance with Federal and Department travel policy;
- Provide travelers with information about authorized travel expenses;
- Provide vendors with necessary information to reserve travel accommodations;
- Develop cost estimates for budget planning purposes; and
- Identify the types and purposes of trips performed Department-wide.

Travelers must always obtain authorization prior to performing TDY travel; exceptions to this requirement are limited to bona fide emergency situations when a travel authorization cannot be reasonably obtained in advance. However, a travel authorization must be created and approved as soon as possible. The DOI will not reimburse employees for costs associated with unauthorized travel.

Prior to authorizing TDY travel, the approving official must first determine if travel is necessary to achieve the official purpose of the proposed trip. The official should always consider less expensive alternatives to travel, such as local or technology-based alternatives (e.g., teleconferencing). If travel is deemed necessary, the approving official must ensure that the traveler follows the prudent person rule and completes the trip using the most direct route and mode of transportation.

Approving officials and travelers should also support DOI's effort to reduce its carbon footprint by focusing on minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, whenever possible and advantageous to the government. For example, using a public transit system at the TDY site is preferable to using a rental car because it is both cost-effective and results in reduced carbon footprint.

Once a traveler obtains authorization for TDY, his or her reimbursement will be limited to the authorized expenses of their official business trip. If a traveler chooses to deviate from the itinerary because of personal preference, any additional costs incurred from these actions are not reimbursable. For information on combined official and personal travel, see [Section 1.3.7](#).

### 1.3.2 Defining Types of Travel Authorizations

A TDY travel authorization is defined under the following two categories:

1. ***Trip-by-Trip Authorization.*** The most common type which allows an individual or group to take one specific official TDY trip. The authorization must include a specific purpose, itinerary and estimated costs.
2. ***Blanket Authorizations.*** Authorizations that allow for multiple trips without obtaining trip-specific approval. Blanket authorizations must include an estimate of the travel costs anticipated over the covered period. Bureaus should limit the use of these authorizations and may disallow the use entirely. Types of blanket authorizations may include the following:
  - o *Limited Open.* An authorization that allows an employee to travel repeatedly to a specific geographic location or for a specific purpose. These authorizations are subject to trip cost ceilings.
  - o *Unlimited Open.* An authorization that allows an employee to travel for any official purpose without further approval. This type is rare and generally reserved for high-level officials. Bureaus must establish policy to indicate which employees may travel under these authorizations. Bureau Directors or their designees have the authority to issue Unlimited Open travel authorizations.

**Note: Under no circumstances may premium class transportation be authorized on a blanket authorization, unless it meets the criteria associated with a medical condition or physical disability. For travel in premium class accommodations, see [Section 4.1.1](#), and for a list of exceptions, see [Section 4.2.3](#).**

### 1.3.3 Defining Minimum Standards for Travel Authorizations

Bureaus may only authorize travel when it is necessary. Travel authorizations must include the following information:

- Name of the traveler(s);
- Trip purpose of travel;
- TDY location(s) of the trip;
- Approximate date(s) of the trip;
- Include any conditions or limitations that apply to the authorization, such as:
  - o Use of other than coach-class service on common carrier transportation;
  - o Use of a foreign air carrier;
  - o Use of reduced fares for group or charter arrangements;
  - o Use of cash to pay for common carrier transportation;
  - o Use of extra-fare train service;
  - o Travel by ship;
  - o Use of a rental car;
  - o Use of a Government aircraft;
  - o Payment of a reduced per diem rate;
  - o Payment of actual expense per diem;

- Travel expenses related to emergency travel;
  - Transportation expenses related to threatened law enforcement or investigative employees and members of their families;
  - Travel expenses related to travel to a foreign area;
  - Acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source for travel expenses;
  - Travel expenses related to attendance at a conference; and
  - Payment of the full M&IE allowance, based on an employee's medical requirements or religious beliefs, even though meals are furnished by the Government either directly or through a registration fee or other payment for a conference or other event.
- Estimate of the travel costs;
  - Appropriate Bureau or office line of accounting information (e.g., source of funds);
  - Authorized method of transportation to the TDY location; and
  - Approving official's signature. Approving authority must be assigned to an employee who serves in a supervisory position, understands how the travel will contribute to the mission, knows the employee's travel plans, and is responsible for the funds that will pay for the travel costs.

**Note: A detailed description of the reason for travel should be placed on the travel authorization.**

### 1.3.4 Establishing Internal Policies and Procedures for Travel Authorizations

Each Bureau must establish policy to designate the appropriate approving officials for the different types of travel authorizations. Bureaus must determine when to allow blanket authorizations and may eliminate the use of these authorizations entirely.

Each of the following types of travel must be approved based on a Trip-by-Trip authorization. Bureaus may not deviate from these requirements:

- **Conference Travel.** The only exception is for internal meetings that have been exempted from the conference planning process; travelers may attend these meetings under a blanket travel authorization. For additional information on conference travel, see [Section 6](#).
- **Training-Related Travel.** Under the provisions of the Training Act, travelers may only claim reimbursement for expenses that are specifically authorized for training-related travel. For additional information on training-related travel, see [5 C.F.R. 410](#).
- **Foreign Travel.** Approving officials must ensure that travelers performing foreign travel comply with the Fly America Act, GSA contract City Pair program, direct routing requirements and policies set by the Office of International Affairs.
- **Invitational Travel.** Once authorized, Bureaus should attempt to coordinate travel and arrange lodging for invitational travelers through ETS, when possible. For additional information on invitational travel, see [Section 1.5.1](#).
- **Travel Received From Non-Federal Source.** Donated travel is highly scrutinized by Congress and requires a Trip-by-Trip authorization to support proper documentation and reconciliation of payment arrangements made between the donor organization and the traveler. Travelers must obtain pre-approval from their Ethics Office prior to accepting donated travel funds. For additional information on travel funded by a non-federal source, see [Section 1.6.2](#).

- **Extended TDY Assignments.** For additional information on TDY trips of 30 consecutive calendar days or longer made to one destination, see [Section 7](#).

### 1.3.5 Identifying Trip Purpose Codes

Travelers are required to use one of the following trip purpose codes in ETS:

- **Conference Attendance (C).** Travel performed in connection with a prearranged meeting, retreat, convention, seminar or symposium for consultation, exchange of information or discussion. The traveler must distinguish between conference and training attendance and use the appropriate purpose code based on what will be done during the majority of time on TDY travel (see Training Attendance in this section).
- **Entitlement Travel (E).** Employee or immediate family member travel related to outside the Continental United States (OCONUS) tour renewal, as applicable.
- **Employee Emergency Travel (G).** Travel related to an unexpected occurrence, event, injury or illness that affects the employee directly and personally and that requires immediate action and attention. For example, a traveler is incapacitated by illness, injury or death; death or serious illness of a family member; or catastrophic occurrence or impending disaster that directly affects the employee's home. This code also includes travel for medical care, medical attendant transportation and assistance travel for an employee with special needs while employee is in TDY status away from the official station.
- **Training Attendance (T).** Travel in conjunction with educational activities to become proficient or qualified in one or more areas of responsibility. As defined in 5 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 4101(4), "training" means the process of providing for and making available to an employee, and placing or enrolling the employee in a planned, prepared, and coordinated program, course, curriculum, subject, system, or routine of instruction or education, in scientific, professional, technical, mechanical, trade, clerical, fiscal, administrative, or other fields which will improve individual and organizational performance and assist in achieving the agency's mission and performance goals." The term "conference" may also apply to training activities that are considered to be conferences under [5 C.F.R. § 410.404](#), which states that "agencies may sponsor an employee's attendance at a conference as a developmental assignment under Section 5 U.S.C. § 4101, when:
  - (a) The announced purpose of the conference is educational or instructional;
  - (b) More than half of the time is scheduled for a planned, organized exchange of information between presenters and audience which meets the definition of "training" in Section 5 U.S.C. § 4101;
  - (c) The content of the conference is germane to improving individual and organizational performance; and
  - (d) Development benefits will be derived through the employee's attendance.
 Travelers must distinguish between conference and training attendance and use the appropriate identifier (see Conference Attendance in this section). Examples include job required training, internships and forums.
- **Mission (Operational) (M).** Travel to a particular site in order to perform operational or managerial activities, or to attend a meeting to discuss general agency operations, review status reports or topics of general interest. For example employee's day-to-day operational or managerial activities, as defined by the agency, to include, but not be limited to hearings, site visits, information meetings, inspections, audits, investigations and examinations.

- ***Special Agency Mission (N)***. Travel to carry out a special agency mission and perform a task outside the agency’s normal course of day-to-day business activities that is unique or distinct. These special missions are defined by the head of agency and are normally not programmed in the agency annual funding authorization. For example, agency-defined special missions may include details, security missions, and agency emergency response and recovery efforts such as civil, natural disasters, evacuation, catastrophic events, technical assistance, evaluations or assessments.

**Note: If a traveler participates the majority of time in a planned program as an attendee, a speaker, a panelist, a presenter, a host, a planner, an exhibitor or a designee to oversee the conference, the purpose would be a “conference attendance.” If the traveler spends a majority of time in job related training events, the purpose of the travel would be “Training Attendance.” The identification of trip purpose does not relieve the traveler from obtaining prior approval for attending a conference; regardless if the conference is informational or instructional in nature.**

### **1.3.6 Identifying Travel-Related Expenses that Require Specific Authorization**

The following travel arrangements require specific authorization prior to the trip departure:

- Use and authorized upgrade of a rental car;
- Payment of actual expense reimbursement (cannot be included on blanket authorizations);
- Travel expenses related to attendance at a conference;
- Use of other than coach-class service on common carrier transportation;
- Acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source for travel expenses;
- Use of cash to pay for common carrier transportation;
- Travel expenses related to foreign travel;
- Use of a foreign air carrier when no U.S. flag carrier is available;
- Use of extra-fare train service;
- Use of a Government aircraft;
- Travel by ship;
- Payment of a reduced per diem rate;
- Use of reduced fares for group or charter arrangements;
- Travel expenses related to employee emergency travel;
- Transportation expenses related to threatened law enforcement or investigative employees and members of their families; and
- Payment of the full M&IE allowance when meals are furnished by the Government but the traveler's religion or dietary needs prevent consumption of these meals.

In limited situations travelers may incur necessary travel expenses after the trip begins, however the traveler must notify the approving official of the unexpected expense. There must be a description of the need to incur the expense noted on the travel voucher.

Bureaus will implement procedures for ensuring that specific authorizations are made for these expenses.

### **1.3.7 Booking Combined Official and Personal Travel**

When combining official and personal travel, travelers must exercise care to ensure that Government funds are not used for personal benefit. Before authorizing a combined official and

personal trip, the approving official must review the request to verify that the official travel is essential and the personal travel is only incidental to the purpose of the trip.

A traveler who wishes to perform personal travel in conjunction with official travel must contact the TMC to request a cost estimate of the two separate portions of the trip when the personal portion of the travel is at an alternate location. The traveler must then submit the cost breakdown to the approving official. Bureaus must establish forms or processes to document these comparative estimates.

The traveler is responsible for covering all costs associated with the personal portion of the trip and may not use a Government charge card to pay for any of the personal expenses. This is not prohibited if extending travel at the TDY location for personal reasons does not result in additional cost to the Government. If the traveler obtains approval to perform the combined trip, the traveler must provide the TMC with a personal credit card for all costs associated with the personal portion of the trip.

Travelers must comply with the following regulations when combining official and personal trips:

- Obtain pre-authorization. Prior to travel authorization approval, the traveler must submit to the approving official documentation that shows that the official trip is essential and the personal travel is incidental to the purpose of the trip.
- Use a personal credit card to pay the full-service TMC fee that will be charged for booking the personal travel portion; travelers may not seek reimbursement for this fee.
- Perform the official portion of the trip using the flight schedule and route that is most advantageous to the Government and pay any additional costs resulting from the changes made due to personal preference with personal funds.
- Pay any cost associated with change or cancellation fees for the combined official and personal trip with personal funds; travelers will not be reimbursed for these fees.
- Do not use Government contracted rates (e.g., GSA Contract City Pair fares, rental cars, etc.), discounts, or services for the personal portion of the trip when flying to an alternate location.
- Do not claim per diem reimbursement for any of the following:
  - A day that the traveler takes leave for more than half of the scheduled work day.
  - Additional days at the TDY location when a trip is extended for personal purposes.

## **1.4 Travel Claims for Reimbursement**

### **1.4.1 Understanding Travel Vouchers**

A traveler or travel arranger will create a voucher in ETS after the conclusion of a TDY trip. Travel vouchers must account for all allowable related costs (e.g., transportation, lodging, M&IE, and miscellaneous expenses). The traveler must submit all required receipts and supporting documentation with the voucher in order to receive reimbursement. Travel vouchers must include the following information:

- Traveler's name;
- Period of travel associated with the claim;
- Travel Authorization Number and a copy of the travel authorization (if a hard copy signature was required);
- Traveler's signature and date;

- Approving official's signature and date;
- Amount claimed for reimbursement;
- Accounting information (e.g., source of funds for the trip); and
- All required receipts.
  - Common carrier transportation;
  - Lodging, including any associated taxes or fees;
  - Rental car;
  - Meals reimbursed under the Actual Expense per diem method; and
  - Any individual authorized expense of \$75 or more.

**Note: Bureaus and Offices may establish stricter receipt requirements than those outlined in this Department policy manual.**

Prior to signing the travel voucher, the traveler must verify that all expenses included in the claim are prudent and necessary and that the voucher is correct and complete. The traveler should validate the following items before signing the voucher:

- All travel arrangements requiring specific authorization or prior approval have been annotated on the travel authorization, or a written justification has been included on the travel voucher;
- Travel itinerary showing proof of purchase and total cost is included as documentation;
- All required receipts are included as documentation;
- Lodging rates on the travel voucher have been adjusted to reflect actual rates paid;
- M&IE reimbursement for the first and last day of travel reflect 75% of the locality rate; and
- Updated constructive cost comparison is filed with the travel voucher, if applicable.

The traveler is responsible to provide a complete record of their TDY trip. All travelers must provide an acceptable reason for not including the appropriate receipt(s) with the travel voucher. Inconvenience is not an acceptable reason for not producing a receipt. If a traveler loses a receipt, the traveler must attempt to contact the vendor to obtain a copy of the receipt or record of the transaction. If a receipt is not available because an expense was covered by an approved non-Federal source, the traveler must include a note regarding the expense in the voucher.

**Note: In rare instances travelers may need to review and sign a hard copy of a voucher (e.g., when document errors occur in ConcurGov, an invitational traveler, etc.) Bureau delegations of authority should be used to determine circumstances when hard copy vouchers are accepted.**

#### **1.4.2 Defining Approving Officials' Responsibilities**

Generally, the same official who approved the travel authorization is responsible for certifying the travel voucher. Bureaus may designate a different approving official to review travel claims, as necessary. The designated official must have the fiduciary authority to approve the use and expenditure of travel-related appropriated funds, have full knowledge of the traveler's activities during the TDY trip, and must verify the following items on the submitted travel voucher:

- Claim is properly prepared;
- Claim includes a copy of the applicable travel authorization, if not covered by an active blanket authorization or not electronically linked in to an authorization in ETS;
- Ensure centrally-billed charge card transactions are not reimbursed to the traveler;



- Expenses are authorized and allowable and the associated amounts are accurate; and
- Required documentation (i.e., justifications) and receipts are attached to the travel voucher and scanned into ETS. Bureaus shall not reimburse travelers for improperly documented expenses. In instances when a traveler has lost a receipt, officials must ensure that prior to approving the voucher the traveler has tried to obtain a duplicate receipt from the vendor. If unsuccessful, a full justification, which includes other substantiating documentation (e.g., charge card statement, etc.) must be attached to the travel voucher.

The traveler is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the travel voucher, and all expenses claimed are accurate. The approving official is responsible for ensuring that the travel voucher expenses are correct, necessary and in compliance with Federal, Department and Bureau travel policy. The Certifying official is ultimately responsible for the disbursement of funds for an official travel claim; however approving officials can be held liable for pecuniary penalties on negligent approvals of travel claims.

### **1.4.3 Defining Timeline for Travel Claims**

The traveler must submit a voucher claim within 5 business days after completing a TDY trip, or every 30 days if on continuous TDY travel status. Bureaus must issue reimbursement within 30 calendar days of receiving a complete and proper voucher, or the traveler must be paid a late payment fee. If a traveler submits a voucher that cannot be approved, the approving official must return the voucher to the traveler within 7 calendar days with an explanation. The traveler must correct and resubmit a corrected voucher in a timely manner.

For extended TDY assignments, travelers must submit travel vouchers at least once every 30 calendar days. For additional information on submitting travel vouchers for extended TDY assignments see [Section 7.4.1](#).

If a traveler still has not filed a voucher claim after 45 calendar days from completing a TDY trip, Bureau finance offices may implement action to ensure a claim is filed. This may include correspondence with the employee's supervisor.

### **1.4.4 Disallowing Travel Claims**

Travel claims will be returned or disallowed if any of the following apply to the traveler:

- Did not properly itemize travel expenses;
- Did not provide required receipts or supporting documentation; or
- Claimed an unauthorized or improper expense.

If an approving official or travel voucher auditor disallows a claim, the traveler must be notified and a detailed explanation for the rejection must be provided. Bureaus should set policy regarding appeals of disallowed travel claims; the policy should include an appeals process and timeline.

## **1.5 Invitational and Contractor Travel**

### **1.5.1 Understanding Invitational Travel**

In accordance with [5 U.S.C. § 5703](#), invitational travel is a trip authorized for individuals who are either not employed or employed intermittently in Government service. Travel allowances

authorized for invitational travelers are the same as those approved for DOI employees on TDY trips. Travel performed by a DOI employee for another Bureau or Federal Government agency is not considered invitational travel. Instead, this arrangement is reimbursable travel that must be performed under a reimbursable support agreement (RSA). For more information on RSA, see [Section 1.6.3](#).

The term invitational traveler can refer to any of the following individuals:

- Non-Federal Government employee attending or presenting at a Department or Bureau-sponsored conference;
- Non-Federal Government employee serving as a subject matter specialist or consultant who is not under contract with the Department/Bureau (e.g., attending a committee meeting);
- Non-Federal Government employee traveling to an interview for employment with DOI. For guidance on pre-employment interview travel, see [Section 1.5.2](#);
- Volunteer directed to perform TDY travel for official purposes. Volunteer subsistence and appropriate TDY travel are referenced in the Bureau policies;
- Former Federal Government employee or other individual being honored at an awards ceremony. The individual's spouse or family member attending the ceremony may also be considered an invitational traveler. Bureaus should establish policy on the attendance of a family member at an awards ceremony paid at the Government's expense;
- Family member or attendant traveling with an employee who has a special need or disability;
- The DOI employee in any of the following situations:
  - Traveling at the invitation of another Government agency, including another Bureau, in a status other than official capacity (i.e., leave status);
  - Invited to attend a non-Federal meeting or conference related to the official duties and is funded by a non-Federal source (state or local Government agency, private company or non-profit organization);
  - Employee is traveling entirely outside of the United States and the travel is paid by a foreign government. For additional information on approvals required for foreign travel, see Office of International Affairs policy.

An invitational traveler must have an authorization prepared and approved by the office sponsoring the travel prior to the beginning of a trip. For guidance on travel authorizations, see [Section 1.3](#). For those Bureaus that do not process invitational travel using ETS, the traveler must prepare the authorization ([Form DI-1020](#)). The office sponsoring the trip must purchase transportation tickets for the invitational traveler using a Government corporate charge card. Invitational travelers are expected to cover their M&IE with personal funds. If the traveler cannot cover expenses that are expected to exceed \$50, the Bureau may determine if a cash advance or a declining balance charge card should be provided to assist the traveler in completing TDY travel.

Within 5 business days after completing TDY travel, the invitational traveler must submit all receipts and supporting documentation to the travel arranger. The travel arranger must review the receipts and create a voucher in ETS or using a manual voucher ([Form SF-1012](#)). The sponsoring Bureau will reimburse the invitational traveler for official expenses paid with personal funds, as approved on the travel voucher.

In addition to standard travel voucher procedures, provided in [Section 1.4](#), the sponsoring Bureau must collect any travel advances concurrent with processing the voucher. If the reimbursement amount is insufficient to repay the advance, the invitational traveler must repay the remaining balance. If the invitational traveler fails to repay the advance, the sponsoring office must request repayment twice and document the requests. If the invitational traveler does not repay the advance after two requests, the sponsoring office must initiate collection actions. The advanced amount must then be reported as taxable income to the traveler. Bureaus must follow their internal policies in reporting taxable income.

### 1.5.2 Understanding Pre-Employment Interview Travel

The DOI may pay for pre-employment interview travel expenses when the trip is in the best interest of the Government. Interview-related travel expenses are allowable when a position is difficult to fill, or the office must perform an in-person interview in a location that is costly or difficult to access. An approving official in the interviewing office must review requests to pay pre-employment interview travel expenses on a case-by-case basis to determine if the Bureau will pay and which expenses will be reimbursed.

Pre-employment interview travel is a type of invitational travel. However, there are two important distinctions, in which interviewees:

1. May not receive travel advances.
2. Cannot be reimbursed for communication expenses unless the expenses are required to make travel arrangements for the interview (e.g., call to the travel arranger).

### 1.5.3 Understanding Contractor Travel

Contractors are not authorized to book travel through ETS or use Government rates for any expense type (e.g., City Pair airfares, FedRooms) to perform official travel. Instead, contractors must book trips with their employer's travel agents in accordance with the terms of their contracts and firm's policies. However, Bureaus may issue letters of identification to assist contractors in obtaining reduced fares offered to Government travelers (excluding City Pair airfares) when it is in the best interest of the Government. Letters of identification should include the following language:

**TO:** Participating Vendor  
**SUBJECT:** Official Travel of Government Contractor

[Insert full name of traveler], the bearer of this letter, is an employee of [insert company name], which has a contract with this agency under Government contract [insert contract number]. During the period of the contract ([insert contract start and end dates]), **AND WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE CONTRACT VENDOR**, the employee is eligible and authorized to use available travel discount rates in accordance with Government contracts and/or agreements.

## 1.6 Travel Funded by Non-Federal Source or Government Agency

### 1.6.1 Defining Travel Funded by Non-Federal Source or Government Agency

This Section includes guidance on travel sponsored by a non-Federal source and intra-Governmental and inter-Governmental travel. The table below outlines the documentation requirements associated with these types of travel.

<i>Type of Travel</i>	What additional pre-travel approval is required?	Does the traveler file a travel voucher?
<i>Travel Sponsored by a Non-Federal Source</i>	Supervisor's approval; Bureau Ethics Office	Yes, only for expenses not covered by the source under a payment in kind arrangement
<i>Intra-Governmental Travel (i.e., within DOI)</i>	Intra-Agency Travel Agreement	Yes, include all costs and file in accordance with "home" Bureau policies
<i>Inter-Governmental Travel (i.e., with another Federal agency)</i>	Inter-Agency Travel Agreement	Yes, include all costs and file in accordance with "home" Bureau policies

### 1.6.2 Understanding Travel Sponsored by Non-Federal Source

In some cases, employees may accept travel funds from non-Federal sources. These trips must be directly related to the employee's official duties (e.g., presenting at a conference). Bureaus must closely monitor travel funded by non-Federal sources and include their Ethics Offices in the approval process to ensure that sponsored trip does not create a conflict of interest or compromise the integrity of the mission.

Non-Federal sources sponsor travel of DOI employees by offering the following three options:

1. An advanced payment;
2. A payment after travel occurs (only if allowed by specific statutory authority); or
3. A payment in kind agreement.

Under an advanced payment arrangement, the sponsoring non-Federal organization issues payment to the traveler's home Bureau in advance to cover the cost of the trip. Upon verified receipt of the advance payment from a non-Federal entity, the traveler will book the trip in accordance with their Bureau's policies and processes and submit a voucher for all costs associated with the trip. The non-Federal source must provide funds sufficient to cover the total estimated cost of travel in the form of a check made payable to the sponsoring entity (i.e., DOI or Bureau).

**Note: Travelers may not accept cash payments.**

Alternatively, a non-Federal entity may propose to cover some or all of a traveler's trip-related expenses through an in kind payment. Under this arrangement, the sponsoring non-Federal source provides transportation, food, lodging and other travel services; instead of paying the Government directly for these items. A payment in kind may also include a waiver of fees that a non-Federal source would typically collect from meeting attendees (e.g., registration fees). The traveler is responsible for clearly noting on the pre-travel cost estimate which items will be covered under the payment in kind arrangement (see *Pre-Travel Approvals* section below) and omitting any costs covered in kind from the travel voucher to avoid double payment.

Under no circumstances should a Federal employee accept monetary funds from a non-Federal source to pay for travel. Receiving monetary payments for travel has a negative perception and

may lead to integrity questions. Therefore, monetary funds should not be accepted and reimbursement should be made by means previously described above.

### **Pre-Travel Approvals**

When an employee is invited to travel on behalf of a non-Federal entity, the employee must obtain written approval from a supervisor who is authorized to consider the invitation. Once written supervisory approval is obtained, the traveler must develop an itemized list of all the estimated costs associated with the trip; the traveler should use ETS to obtain and document cost estimates. The traveler must consider all costs associated with transportation (including booking and baggage fees), M&IE, lodging, mileage, airport parking, rental car, rental car fuel, taxi (plus tip), parking at the TDY site, cash advance fees and any other anticipated incidental expenses.

The traveler must clearly note which costs the non-Federal source will cover, whether the non-Federal source will issue advanced payment, post travel payment (when allowed by law) or cover the costs under a payment in kind arrangement, and if the traveler or home Bureau is expected to cover any costs. The traveler must obtain approval from the supervisor on the detailed cost estimate and submit it to the non-Federal source for written concurrence. The estimate should include the procedures that the Bureau will follow to obtain reimbursement of any travel-related cost overages from the non-Federal source, if applicable.

If the non-Federal source is paying the Bureau for the estimated costs of the trip, the payment check must be made payable to the employee's Bureau.

The employee must then prepare a travel authorization that includes the following information:

- Supervisor's initial written approval;
- Authority used to accept non-Federal payments;
- Statement explaining that the travel complies with ethics requirements;
- Reimbursable accounting string that the traveler will charge for the travel costs not covered under a payment in kind arrangement; and
- Statement that the traveler may seek reimbursement from the Bureau if there is a difference between the authorized allowances and the payment provided by the non-Federal source.

The traveler must submit the travel authorization and a [Report of Payments Accepted from Non-Federal Sources \(Form DI-2000\)](#) to the supervisor for approval. Approved documents must be sent to the Bureau's Ethics Office for concurrence, in accordance with Bureau policy.

### **1.6.3 Understanding Intra- or Inter-Governmental Travel**

#### **Intra-Governmental Travel**

Travel performed by a DOI employee of a Bureau that is sponsored and paid for by another Bureau is referred to as Intra-Governmental travel. In accordance with the [Inter or Intra-Agency Travel Agreement \(ITA\)](#) an employee may not book Intra-Governmental travel until an Inter or Intra-Agency Travel Agreement (ITA) is in place between the two DOI Bureaus. The traveler's Bureau (selling or home Bureau) and the sponsoring Bureau (buying Bureau) must complete the form. The buying Bureau initiates the ITA, enters the required data in accordance with the form's instructions, and verifies the accuracy of all accounting data.

The traveler is responsible for creating an estimate of all expenses associated with the trip. The traveler must provide the cost estimate to the buying Bureau and enter it into the ITA; an official that has the authority to approve travel funds for the buying Bureau must sign the form. The form is then submitted to the traveler's Bureau for completion. The traveler's supervisor must sign the form. Within three business days of approving the form, both parties must send copies to their respective finance offices for processing.

The traveler must prepare the travel authorization for Intra-Governmental travel in accordance with their Bureau's processes and policies. The traveler must include an accounting string associated with a reimbursable account on the authorization and obtain approval prior to travel.

Except for the payment of transportation, the traveler must perform travel in accordance with their Bureau's policies. The buying Bureau may purchase the traveler's transportation on a Government corporate charge card and reduce the ITA by the amount of the transportation. If the buying Bureau uses a Government corporate charge card to cover the cost of the employee's transportation, the traveler must ensure that this action is clearly stated on the travel authorization.

The traveler must submit the travel voucher to their Bureau for reimbursement. Either the travel arranger or office budget coordinator must verify that the total expenditures for the trip, including Government corporate charge card centrally-billed transactions, have been allocated to the cost reimbursable account that was created for the agreement.

### **Inter-Governmental Travel**

Travel that is sponsored and paid for by a non-DOI Federal agency is referred to as Inter-Governmental travel. The Bureau whose employee is performing travel is the selling Bureau and the agency paying for the travel is the buying agency. The buying agency and selling Bureau must complete an RSA form before a DOI employee can perform Inter-Governmental travel. The employee may use the buying Agency's RSA form or the DOI ITA form (if the buying Agency agrees); the buying Agency determines which form will be used.

The traveler must arrange travel, incur travel costs, claim reimbursement, and document the trip in accordance with their Bureau's travel policies. The traveler must submit the travel authorization and voucher to their Bureau for reimbursement.

## 2 Per Diem Expenses

This section includes guidance on authorizing, documenting and claiming per diem expenses (lodging and M&IE).

### 2.1 Eligibility for Per Diem Reimbursement

#### 2.1.1 Determining Eligibility for Per Diem Reimbursement

Per Diem reimbursement refers to the daily allowance for lodging and M&IE that travelers receive while in TDY status. To be eligible for per diem reimbursement, the travel distance must be more than 50 miles from the residence and official duty station and TDY status is at least 12 continuous hours. Travelers are not eligible for per diem reimbursement for local travel.

A traveler's per diem allowance is based on the pre-authorized TDY location(s) that are stated on the authorization and where the official temporary duty is performed. If lodging is not available near an official TDY duty site (e.g., a remote area does not have accommodations or space is not available in local hotels), travelers should obtain pre-travel approval to claim per diem for the lodging locations. Bureaus should limit post-travel approval of per diem reimbursement based on an alternate location to cases in which a traveler was unable to obtain pre-approval due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., emergency travel, or substandard or unsafe prearranged lodging).

A traveler enters TDY status upon departing from their residence, official duty station, or approved alternate location, whichever occurs immediately prior to the trip. Travelers may be authorized to take leave while in a TDY status; however, per diem allowance is only received for days when the leave hours do not exceed more than ½ of the scheduled work hours. Travelers must base the number of work hours on their standard work schedules.

#### Travel within 50 Miles

Under special circumstances, employees may be eligible for and authorized per diem for travel to a TDY location within 50 miles, but not less than 30 miles in distance of a traveler's residence and official duty station. The designated approving official may authorize per diem reimbursement in any of the following situations:

- Extreme conditions, such as inclement weather, that would endanger a traveler's health or safety if the traveler were to return from a TDY location. The traveler should attempt to obtain pre-authorization, whenever possible; however the primary concern is for the traveler's safety. Bureaus may grant post-travel approval on a case-by-case basis.
- Attendance at a training session or conference where the traveler would receive the full benefit of the event from remaining onsite to attend evening meetings or working meals.

#### Seasonal Workers

Bureaus should verify all seasonal workers' places of residence for their terms of service. Bureaus should only authorize per diem reimbursement for trips where official business takes a seasonal worker more than 50 miles away from the primary place of residence and official duty station for the seasonal tenure. Bureaus may grant exceptions to this policy and authorize per diem for a seasonal worker on official travel within 50 miles, but not less than 30 miles in distance, of the current place of residence or official duty station on a case-by-case basis when the situations described above apply.

### 2.1.2 Establishing Policies to Govern Authorization and Payment of Per Diem Expenses

When authorizing and approving the reimbursement of per diem expenses, Bureaus are granted the authority to designate the management level of the approving officials for determining the following cases in which:

- Rest periods are acceptable and allowed by law;
- Employees may return to their official duty stations on non-workdays;
- Per diem rates will be reduced;
- Per diem allowances are appropriate to provide to travelers performing travel within 50 miles, but not less than 30 miles, of their official duty stations and residences;
- Actual expense reimbursement is appropriate on a case-by-case basis and the associated reimbursement rate; and
- Employees may claim the full M&IE allowance, especially when meals were furnished by the Government.

### 2.1.3 Determining Eligibility for Rest Periods during TDY Travel

Bureaus may authorize a traveler to claim per diem reimbursement for a rest period of up to 24 hours when a trip meets **all** of the following conditions:

- Travel is direct between duty points separated by at least three time zones;
- At least one duty point is OCONUS;
- Air travel between the duty points is in coach class accommodations;
- Scheduled flight time (including stopovers less than eight hours) exceeds 14 hours; and
- Air travel takes a direct or usual traveled route.

Bureaus may authorize a rest stop at any intermediate point, including a CONUS location or at the temporary duty destination. Bureaus may only extend rest stops beyond 24 hours under extenuating circumstances such as inclement weather, an act of nature, an official deviation, or an airline delay.

**Note: Bureaus may not authorize a rest stop when an employee elects to travel by an indirect route for personal convenience and this decision results in excess travel time.**

During an authorized rest stop, the per diem reimbursement rate is determined by the rest stop location. For guidance on locating lodging and M&IE rates, see [Section 2.5](#). The following expenses are allowable during a rest stop:

- Lodging, not to exceed the allowable location lodging rate;
- M&IE, not to exceed the per diem meal rate of the location;
- Transportation to obtain lodging and meals using the most cost-effective method; and
- Charges for baggage storage.

**Note: International travel and other lengthy trips can be tiring and stressful. Traveling in premium class accommodations can help to minimize the impact of travel, however, the cost of these accommodations frequently exceeds the costs associated with a rest stop. In support of DOI's effort to curtail the use of premium class accommodations, Bureaus should authorize a 24-hour rest stop at an intermediate point, when possible, or upon arrival at the TDY location.**



## 2.1.4 Determining Eligibility for Per Diem on Leave or Non-Workdays during TDY Travel

Travelers may claim per diem reimbursement while on authorized sick leave or on non-workdays (e.g., Federal holiday, other scheduled non-workday) if on TDY status the day before and after the non-workday. When traveling between the temporary and official duty station on a non-workday, the traveler will be reimbursed 75 percent of the per diem rate for that day of the official business trip.

If a traveler takes annual leave for more than one half of the work hours for the day while on TDY status, they are not eligible for M&IE. If the traveler requests leave on more than one day and is sick or not on extended travel, the approving official must re-evaluate the purpose of the trip and determine whether the traveler should remain on TDY status.

If official and personal travel are combined, the traveler must obtain pre-approval and must ensure that the Government does not incur any cost associated with the personal portion of the trip. All leave must be incidental to the official purpose of the trip. Bureaus must review combined official and personal trips to ensure that the business portion cannot be completed through any other means (e.g., videoconference). A traveler must complete a cost comparison for any combined official and personal travel and include it with the travel authorization. For additional information on combined official and personal travel, see [Section 1.3.7](#). For information on cost comparisons, see [Section 4.1.4](#).

## 2.1.5 Determining Eligibility for Per Diem during Return Travel

Return travel is defined as a pre-authorized round-trip that an employee completes between the TDY location and residence or official duty station. Travelers must always obtain pre-approval to perform return travel. Bureaus may only grant post-travel approval for emergency travel. Bureaus may authorize return travel to a traveler's residence or official duty station in the three following cases:

- ***Directed Return Travel for Official Purposes.*** The approver may authorize return travel for purposes when an employee's return to the residence or official duty station is advantageous to the Government (e.g., to perform business related to the employee's permanent assignment). The frequency of directed return travel for official purposes is not limited. However, Bureaus may not break up an extended TDY assignment into shorter trips in order to increase an employee's per diem reimbursement or avoid IRS Code requirements on the taxability of per diem reimbursement during extended TDY assignments that last more than 365 days.
- ***Return Travel to Limit Cost.*** When an employee's return to the residence or official duty station (as compared to remaining at the TDY location) will result in substantial cost savings, the approving official may authorize a return trip. For example, a traveler on TDY assignment in Manhattan, New York, may decrease the overall cost of the trip by flying home to Arlington, Virginia, on the weekends. The traveler must document the cost savings as part of the pre-approval and include this documentation with the travel voucher.
- ***Return Travel for Health and Well-Being.*** When an employee is assigned to complete an extended TDY assignment, the employee and the approving official should determine the appropriate frequency for return travel to maintain the employee's health and well-being prior to the onset of the assignment. The frequency of the return travel must be stated on the travel authorization. The approving official may authorize one return trip every four weeks during the extended assignment; however, based on individual

circumstances, intervals between return trips may be shorter or longer. For additional information on return travel during extended TDY assignments, see [Section 7.4.2](#).

For the days spent traveling to and from the residence or official duty station, an employee should only claim 75 percent of the maximum locality M&IE rate as travel day per diem. The employee may not claim per diem during time spent at the residence or official duty station. If possible, the traveler is expected to vacate lodging at the extended duty site and arrange for lodging at the same rates upon return. If the traveler has entered into a term period lease and cannot vacate lodging because of the terms, lodging may be claimed during the time that they return to the official duty station. The traveler should perform a cost analysis to ensure that a lease is more advantageous when compared to extended or traditional hotels. If it is not feasible for the traveler to check out of the accommodations while performing pre-authorized return travel for health and well-being or directed travel for official purposes, Bureaus may allow a traveler to continue claiming lodging reimbursement at the TDY location for the duration of the trip.

If the TDY location will become the employee's official duty station, the employee must be allowed to return to his or her residence to prepare for relocation. The return trip should occur immediately upon knowledge of the employee's permanent assignment to his or her TDY location, and the employee must be given at least 6 weeks at their old duty station to prepare for reassignment. Employees are no longer eligible for TDY per diem reimbursement once they report to their new official duty station. For additional information on allowable relocation expenses, including temporary quarter's reimbursement, see the [DOI PCS Handbook](#).

## **2.2 Lodging Costs**

### **2.2.1 Obtaining Lodging for TDY Travel**

Travelers must consider the least expensive conventional lodging available that facilitates successful completion of the official trip, while also evaluating additional transportation costs. If lodging costs exceed the per diem rate for the pre-authorized TDY location and the traveler did not obtain pre-approval to use the Actual Expense method of reimbursement, the difference is not a reimbursable expense. The traveler must assume the cost and pay for the difference with personal funds.

When obtaining conventional lodging, travelers must book reservations through ETS or the TMC; and use FedRooms program lodging, whenever available. The FedRooms program includes the following benefits:

- No add-on fees;
- Guaranteed rates at or below the prescribed lodging rate for the TDY location;
- No penalties for cancellations made up until 4:00pm on the day of arrival;
- Early check-in;
- Late checkout;
- Real-time information on room availability; and
- Rates available through ETS.

Booking directly with a lodging establishment is allowable under the following circumstances:

- Traveler is attending a conference and must reserve a room that conference organizers procured under a blanket purchase agreement or held under a "block" reservation.

- Known lodging establishment cannot be located through ETS or the TMC and the lodging rates are at or below the per diem allowance for the TDY location;
- Nature of the travel is such that lodging cannot be planned for all TDY locations in advance (e.g., investigations with unknown itineraries, emergency travel, multiple locations requiring ground transportation with stop-over locations that may vary because of terrain, weather, etc.);
- Pre-arranged lodging is found to be substandard or unsafe; or
- Emergency situations as identified by agency and Bureau management on an individual basis.

In rare instances when a traveler books lodging outside of ETS or the TMC, it is the traveler's responsibility to inquire about the rates for all days included in the stay and obtain pre-approval to exceed the locality rate, if necessary; even if such an increase is required for only part of the stay (e.g., increased weekend rate). Using a third party travel website (e.g., Travelocity, Expedia, etc.) to book lodging is never allowable.

If a lodging facility uses a third party vendor (e.g., online service provider) to facilitate reservation bookings then those fees may be reimbursed.

### **Dual Lodging**

Dual lodging is incurred when a traveler receives reimbursement for lodging at two different TDY locations during the same period. When an employee must travel to another TDY location for official business, the employee must attempt to adjust or cancel previously made reservations as soon as possible. If the employee cannot avoid incurring lodging costs at both locations, Bureaus may authorize reimbursement for both lodging costs; however, the traveler must receive authorization for dual lodging prior to incurring any additional costs. Bureau officials should only authorize dual lodging reimbursement if the traveler acted responsibly and attempted to change reservations. Travelers must provide receipts to support dual lodging claims.

### **2.2.2 Understanding Types of Lodging**

Bureaus may authorize travelers to use any of the following types of lodging for TDY travel:

- ***Conventional Lodging.*** Hotels, motels, bed-and-breakfasts and boarding houses are considered conventional establishments. A traveler may claim the single occupancy rate when staying in a conventional lodging establishment alone or shares lodging with anyone other than a Government employee on official travel.
- ***Corporate Lodging and Apartment Rental.*** Corporate lodging is normally obtained during extended TDY assignments. These establishments offer long term or monthly leases on furnished apartments for travelers who are assigned 30 days or more to a TDY location. Apartments may be rented, as well, and are recommended if the lease is aligned with the period of the TDY (e.g., a six month lease with a six month TDY assignment). Travelers may also claim furniture rental, fees for normal utilities and maid services as part of the lodging rate.
- ***Government Quarters.*** Travelers may claim the fees or service charges for staying in Government quarters when directed to use such lodging.
- ***Lodging with Friends or Relatives.*** When a traveler stays with a friend or relative, Bureaus must limit lodging reimbursement to the additional costs, up to the locality lodging rate, that the host incurs as a direct result of the traveler's stay. Travelers must provide receipts to justify claimed amounts. Examples of these additional costs include

expenses for the rental of furniture and bedding or increases in rental fees for an apartment. Bureaus may not authorize reimbursement for costs associated with insurance, utilities, purchase of furniture and bedding or repairs. When determining the reduced rate, a traveler may not compare the cost of conventional lodging with the cost incurred by the host.

- ***Staying at a Secondary Residence.*** If a traveler owns a residence at a TDY site, e.g., rental property, second residence, or recreational vehicle (RV), the traveler may not claim lodging reimbursement while staying at the secondary residence.
- ***Nonconventional Lodging.*** When it is advantageous to the Government or conventional lodging is unavailable, a traveler may claim costs associated with staying at a nonconventional lodging establishment, such as a house, rented room or camp. Non-conventional lodging also includes Home Rental Services such as Airbnb and Trovit. Non-conventional lodging is typically used in instances of extended TDY assignment or when conventional lodging is not within reasonable distance of the TDY site. Supervisors cannot require a traveler to stay at a private residence while on TDY travel. However, if the traveler agrees to stay in a private residence, they are responsible for ensuring that the residence is equipped with adequate safety items, such as the following: working smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and adequate exits. If a traveler does not have authorization to use non-conventional lodging, they will be responsible for additional costs incurred.

### 2.2.3 Understanding Lodging Taxes and Tax Exempt Status

Travelers performing official non-foreign travel should attempt to obtain tax exempt status by informing lodging establishments that they qualify and requesting removal of the taxes from their hotel bills. If a lodging establishment refuses to remove the taxes, the traveler should request that the taxes are itemized separately from the room fee on the hotel bill. The traveler must provide the lodging establishment any required forms or letters to claim tax exemption and pay the full bill with the Government charge card. For additional information on tax exempt status and state tax exemption forms, see the [GSA website](#).

When TDY locations will not exempt Government employees from paying lodging taxes, Bureaus may reimburse the taxes as follows.

- ***For CONUS and non-foreign OCONUS travel:*** Lodging taxes are not included in the traveler's M&IE allowance. The traveler should claim lodging taxes as a separate miscellaneous expense item on the travel voucher. If lodging costs exceed the established reimbursement rate and the traveler pays the difference with personal funds, Bureaus must limit reimbursement for the taxes to the prorated amount associated with the reimbursable lodging cost.
- ***For foreign travel:*** The Department of State's (DOS) prescribed per diem rate does not allow the payment of lodging taxes and foreign per diem separately. The lodging portion of the per diem includes lodging taxes factored into its pre-determined rate. As a result, travelers may not claim additional miscellaneous reimbursement (beyond the allowed M&IE per diem rates) for lodging taxes incurred during foreign travel.

### 2.2.4 Determining Eligibility for Advanced Room Deposits

Travelers may claim advanced deposits when lodging facilities require payment prior to scheduled travel to secure room reservations. If a traveler charges an advanced room deposit to the Government charge card and fails to perform the official travel for an unapproved reason

(e.g., personal convenience), the traveler must repay the loss on the deposit to the Government within 30 days of the forfeiture. Bureaus may grant exceptions to the requirement to repay the deposit when a traveler cannot perform TDY travel due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., severe weather, illness).

## 2.3 Meal Costs

### 2.3.1 Defining Complimentary Meals

A complimentary meal is food provided by a hotel or air carrier that is not furnished at Government expense. Complimentary meals offered by hotels are those that are not factored into the cost of lodging or itemized on the hotel bill. Travelers are not required to deduct complimentary meals from their daily M&IE reimbursement. However, in support of the Department's effort to reduce travel costs, a traveler is *encouraged* to deduct a complimentary meal (e.g., a continental breakfast at a hotel) from the meal allowance.

### 2.3.2 Defining Meals Provided by the Government

If meals are provided as a part of a meeting, conference registration fee, or added to a base lodging rate, the associated cost must be deducted from the travelers M&IE reimbursement for each meal provided.

Meals furnished as part of the cost of lodging are different from complimentary meals in that the lodging establishment factors the cost of each meal into the daily lodging rate. As a result, travelers are required to reduce their M&IE reimbursement by the amount associated with each meal that the establishment "built into" the lodging cost. This often occurs when traveling to facilities such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservancy Training Center (NCTC) for training or meetings. Similarly, when attending meetings or conferences, meals may be included in the cost of the registration fee. Since the meals are included in a fee paid by the Government, travelers must deduct the furnished meals from the amount of the daily M&IE reimbursement.

For a traveler reimbursed under the Lodgings-plus method, the amount of the daily M&IE reimbursement will not be less than the incidental expense amount for official travel in CONUS.

The amount that travelers must deduct from the M&IE allowance for each meal furnished by the Government is itemized in [FTR Section 301-11.18](#).

#### Sample Calculation

Roger is participating in a training course at NCTC in Shepherdstown, WV. NCTC provides all participants with dinner on the night of arrival; the cost of dinner is included in the lodging fee. Roger should calculate his per diem reimbursement for his day of arrival at NCTC as follows:

- Locate the maximum per diem rate for Shepherdstown, WV on the GSA website: Roger will claim 75% of the maximum rate since the night of arrival is a travel day.
- Locate the value associated with Government-provided meal: Roger will use the M&IE allocation on the GSA website to determine the portion of the M&IE allowance that GSA allocated to his dinner in Shepherdstown, WV.
- Calculate travel day M&IE allowance:  
\$34.50 (Travel day per diem rate: \$46.00 x 0.75 = \$34.50)  
- \$21.00 (Portion of M&IE associated with dinner)  
**\$13.50** (Total M&IE allowance on day of arrival)

### 2.3.3 Refusing Meals for Medical or Religious Reasons

If a traveler is unable to consume a meal for medical or religious reasons, and was unable to obtain an alternate meal in advance, the traveler may claim the full meal amount (i.e., the traveler is not required to reduce the M&IE allowance). Travelers must document these instances when submitting a voucher. The required documentation for such cases is a narrative description of steps taken to obtain an alternate meal (e.g., email or phone correspondence with a representative of the facility). The approving official must use discretion when approving a claim for a furnished meal and must disallow the claim if the justification is not sufficient.

### 2.4 Documentation Requirements

Travelers must either scan hard copy receipts and submit the documents electronically through ETS or fax the receipts to the ETS vendor for uploading and attachment to the travel voucher. The ETS will retain electronic copies of the receipts in accordance with statutory requirements; travelers are encouraged to retain scanned hard copies, as well.

### 2.5 Lodgings-plus Per Diem

The following sections include guidance on Lodgings-plus per diem reimbursement, which is the Department's default method for reimbursing the lodging expenses and M&IE

#### 2.5.1 Determining Allowable Lodging Reimbursement Rate

When overnight lodging is required, the traveler may claim the actual cost up to the maximum allowable rate for the TDY location. The GSA establishes maximum lodging reimbursement rates for all CONUS localities, which are available on the [GSA website](#). If the TDY location is not listed on the GSA website, the traveler must use the standard CONUS per diem rate. The GSA, DOS, and the Department of Defense's (DOD) Per diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee meet and collaborate to determine maximum rates for [OCONUS](#) and [foreign TDY locations](#).

Unless pre-travel approval is obtained to stay in an alternate location, the traveler must use the per diem and lodging rate associated with the pre-authorized TDY location.

#### 2.5.2 Determining Allowable M&IE Reimbursement Rate

Under the Lodgings-plus method of reimbursement, travelers are eligible for daily M&IE allowances that are prescribed for the pre-authorized TDY locations. The GSA establishes the M&IE rates based on factors that the Government believes to be "reasonable" costs for M&IE in various CONUS locations. The GSA provides a [sample allocation of the M&IE allowance](#) for meals and incidental expenses and similar information for the allocation of per diem.

The M&IE allowance is a set amount that a traveler on TDY status receives and is based on the pre-authorized TDY location. Travelers must note the following when they occur:

- When travelers have the option of meals provided by the Government, the M&IE allowance must be reduced by the amount associated with that meal. For additional information on meal costs see [Section 2.3](#).
- When the travel period is more than 12 hours but fewer than 24, the M&IE allowance is calculated based on 75 percent of the maximum per diem rate for the locality.

In addition, the traveler must adjust the M&IE allowance on the first and last day of a TDY trip (travel days). For travel of 24 hours or more, the M&IE allowance is as follows:

- On the first day of the trip (travel day), the traveler receives 75 percent of the maximum M&IE rate applicable to the TDY location;
- On the final day of the trip (travel day), the traveler receives 75 percent of the maximum M&IE rate applicable to the TDY location from the preceding calendar day;
- For each day in between the first and last days of the trip, the traveler receives 100 percent of the M&IE rate applicable to the TDY location.

The M&IE rate for travel days that require lodging is determined by the TDY location or pre-authorized stopover point. For TDY travel that does not require lodging, the M&IE allowance is as follows.

- **Travel of more than 12 but less than 24 hours:** 75 percent of the M&IE rate applicable to the TDY site or the highest M&IE rate among the sites when multiple locations are involved.
- **Travel of 24 hours or more:**
  - If the traveler is going to a new TDY location or stopover point after midnight, the M&IE is determined by the new location or stopover point.
  - If the traveler is returning to the official duty station, the M&IE is determined by the location from the preceding calendar day.

If a TDY trip is extended for personal reasons, Bureaus must limit per diem reimbursement to the costs that the traveler would have incurred without the personal portion of the trip.

**Sample Calculation: Impact of Personal Travel on M&IE Reimbursement**

Bryan traveled to Butte, Montana on Tuesday and was eligible for an M&IE allowance of \$38.25 (\$51 x 0.75 for travel day). He was on TDY status Wednesday and Thursday, and was eligible for an M&IE allowance of \$51.00 each day. Bryan's official duty ends at 10:00 AM on Friday, but he elects to stay the weekend on his own personal time and travel home on Sunday. Bryan is not eligible for per diem on Friday; he pays his Friday and Saturday expenses with personal funds. However, he may claim an M&IE allowance of \$38.25 on Sunday (\$51 x 0.75 for travel day).

**Sample Calculation: Calculating Total Lodgings-plus Reimbursement**

Joe is from his official duty station in Washington, DC to Denver, Colorado. He will leave Washington on Monday and arrive in Denver the same day. He will stay in Denver on Monday and Tuesday nights and return to Washington on Wednesday. Joe should calculate his Lodgings-plus per diem reimbursement as follows:

- Locate the maximum per diem rate for Denver, Colorado, on the GSA website: Joe cannot exceed \$141 for lodging on Monday and Tuesday. Joe locates a hotel room for \$132 per night; he will be reimbursed \$132 for lodging per night. Joe will claim \$66 for M&IE on days that he is performing his official duty for the entire day, and \$49.50 for M&IE on days when he is traveling (\$66 x 0.75 = \$49.50).
- Joe will calculate his total per diem reimbursement as follows:
  - \$ 49.50 (Monday M&IE, travel day)
  - \$132.00 (Monday lodging)
  - \$ 66.00 (Tuesday M&IE)
  - \$132.00 (Tuesday lodging)
  - + \$ 49.50 (Wednesday M&IE, travel day)
  - \$429.00 (Total Lodgings-plus reimbursement)**

## 2.6 Reduced Per Diem

This section includes guidance on when Bureaus may authorize a per diem rate below the maximum locality rate for the pre-authorized TDY location. A reduced per diem may be authorized for short term TDY assignments, but is generally associated with extended travel (trips 30 days or longer in duration) and lodging in nonconventional facilities.

### 2.6.1 Reducing Per Diem during TDY Travel

Bureaus may reduce a traveler's per diem rate for any TDY trip when the approving official can determine in advance that lodging or meal costs will be lower than the prescribed per diem rate. When establishing a reduced per diem rate, the lowest authorized per diem rate **must** be clearly stated on the travel authorization. Approving officials may not include reduced per diem rates on blanket authorizations (e.g., Limited Open travel authorization).

For information on when a traveler is on an extended TDY assignment see [Section 7.1](#).

A pre-authorized reduced per diem rate is applicable through the entire duration of the TDY trip, unless a supervisor determines a higher per diem rate is appropriate. Different per diem reimbursement rates must be identified for the applicable dates. The M&IE rate should not be further reduced on the first or last day of travel. In other words, the first and last travel days are not calculated at 75 percent of the reduced per diem rate.

When TDY assignments with an expected duration of less than 30 days are extended (i.e., becomes an extended TDY), the Bureau must establish a reduced per diem rate for the remaining days of the assignment. The approving official must ensure that the traveler's travel authorization is immediately amended as soon as it is known that the assignment will surpass 30 days; the travel authorization must include the lowest authorized reduced per diem rate. The approving official must also ensure that the traveler has been notified of the change in per diem.

### 2.6.2 Understanding Camp Rates

Camp rates are reduced per diem rates established by certain Bureaus to cover the travel expenses of employees who must eat and lodge at nonconventional facilities. The Bureaus determine these rates based on the conditions and facilities available at each camp site; each Bureau may establish its own camp rates. Bureaus should extend the same camp rate to all travelers in similar situations at a given site and may revise a site's camp rate, as needed. Travelers reimbursed under a camp rate (a reduced per diem method) may receive a reduced incidental expense amount. Bureaus have the authority to establish a minimum amount for reimbursing incidental expenses on reduced per diem rates.

## 2.7 Actual Expense

This section includes guidance on when Bureaus may authorize a per diem rate in excess of the maximum locality rate for the pre-authorized TDY location.

### 2.7.1 Determining Eligibility for Actual Expense Reimbursement

A traveler may only incur expenses that are reasonable and necessary to accomplish the official purpose of a TDY trip. Claims for actual expense reimbursement, i.e., reimbursement in excess of the prescribed locality per diem rate, must be authorized prior to the trip on the travel



authorization. The approving official may authorize the Actual Expense method of reimbursement when a traveler is unable to obtain meals or lodging within the prescribed rate. Prior to the trip, the traveler must provide the approving official a justification for claiming meals or lodging that are not available within the prescribed rates and include the justification with the travel authorization and voucher.

Bureaus may authorize actual expense reimbursement in the following situations:

- Costs are inflated due to special circumstances (e.g., conventions, natural disasters);
- Lodging or meals must be obtained at a prearranged site to accomplish the official purpose of a trip (e.g., a hotel where a meeting, conference or training session is held);
- Lodging or meals cannot be obtained within prescribed allowances nearby and travel to an area with lower-cost lodging or meals would be unduly burdensome;
- During emergency travel;
- Traveling to parts of the U.S. declared as a Federal disaster area by the President; or
- Official mission of the trip requires actual expenses to be incurred.

### 2.7.2 Requesting Actual Expense Reimbursement

Travelers must obtain authorization for actual expense reimbursement prior to the beginning of the trip. The only exceptions to this requirement are when performing travel to a Presidential declared disaster area, where DOI or Bureau has issued a blanket approval to incur actual expense reimbursement. In limited situations, actual expense reimbursement may be approved after travel to an area not designated as a disaster area. Each instance will be reviewed with consideration of whether a disaster was declared after travel began, the scope of the response to the event, and if there were mitigating circumstances that required lodging be obtained in specific locations.

**Note: A traveler's lodging preference is not an acceptable reason to authorize actual expense reimbursement.**

### 2.7.3 Authorizing Actual Expense Reimbursement

Approving officials may authorize actual expense reimbursement only when the expense is necessary and fully justified. The official must determine the appropriate reimbursement rate on a case-by-case basis, and record this rate on the travel authorization. Travelers can only be authorized actual expense reimbursement on Trip-by-Trip authorizations; this type of reimbursement cannot be authorized on blanket authorizations (e.g., Limited Open travel authorization).

If multiple instances have been documented in which travelers were unable to obtain lodging or meals under the established per diem rates, Bureaus should notify the DOI Travel Program Manager and provide supporting documentation so that the Department can communicate the issue to GSA.

Each Bureau must determine the appropriate approval level for requests to claim actual expense reimbursement. Bureaus should require a higher level of approval for reimbursement exceeding 150 percent of the locality per diem rate. The maximum actual expense reimbursement for non-foreign CONUS and OCONUS travel is 300 percent of the established locality per diem rate.

## 2.7.4 Identifying Required Receipts for Actual Expense Reimbursement

Travelers are required to provide itemized receipts for all expenses claimed under the Actual Expense method of reimbursement, including meals if actual expense was authorized for the M&IE portion of per diem. Actual expense reimbursement is limited to the actual costs that the traveler incurs during the trip. If this amount is less than the authorized actual expense reimbursement rate, the traveler will only be paid for the actual cost of the trip.

If a traveler fails to attach all of the required receipts to their travel voucher, the Bureau will reduce the traveler's reimbursement by the amount that is not supported. However, in accordance with Bureau policy, Bureaus will provide full reimbursement on a case-by-case basis if a traveler submits reasonable justification for not providing a receipt (e.g., threatened law enforcement/investigative employee with security concerns).

### **Example**

Meg is performing mission-critical TDY travel to assess the impact of a recent hurricane on DOI facilities. Meg will leave her official duty station in Denver, Colorado on Wednesday, stay in Miami, Florida on Wednesday and Thursday nights, and return to Denver on Friday. Meg takes the following actions to seek approval for claiming actual expense reimbursement at 150% of the applicable per diem rate:

Meg researches the cost of lodging and determines that the lowest-cost lodging is 150% of the GSA lodging rate for the locality. Meg determines that meal costs are also similarly inflated due to business closures following the storm. Meg documents her findings and submits a request for approval. The approving official authorizes a 150% actual expense reimbursement rate for Meg's trip. After her trip, Meg submits a claim for reimbursement based on the actual costs that she incurred and substantiates these costs with receipts.

## 3 Extenuating Circumstances for Travel

This section includes guidance on travel for employees with special needs, disabilities, emergency travel, and for threatened law enforcement or investigative employees.

### 3.1 Travel of Employee with Disability or Special Need

#### 3.1.1 Understanding Allowable Expenses

When an employee with a documented disability or special need travels on TDY assignment, the employee is eligible to claim reimbursement for pre-approved expenses associated with reasonable accommodations. The employee must obtain approval prior to travel to be eligible for reimbursement of the expenses related to the disability or special need.

Bureaus may pre-authorize reimbursement for any of the following expenses related to a disability or special need that is incurred during TDY travel:

- Transportation costs incurred by a medical attendant or family member acting as a medical attendant traveling with the employee. A competent medical authority must justify the need for a medical attendant, and the traveler must include this justification with the claim for reimbursement;
- Labor costs associated with the services of a medical attendant for the duration of the trip;
- Specialized transportation to, from and at the TDY location;
- Specialized services to accommodate the traveler's disability or special need (e.g., sign language interpreter);
- Baggage handling costs that are a direct result of the disability or special need;
- Costs associated with renting or transporting a wheelchair;
- Premium class accommodations, when necessary. Prior to authorizing premium class accommodations, Bureaus should consider less expensive alternatives (e.g., "bulk-head" seating; providing two coach class seats instead of one business class seat). For additional information on premium class travel refer to [Section 4.2.3](#).

A traveler may not claim reimbursement for costs incurred when not in TDY status. If a Bureau covers costs associated with an employee's disability or special need at the official duty station (e.g., full-time interpreter), the employee should continue to claim reimbursement of these costs under the same arrangement, regardless of duty location. Travelers may only claim incremental costs associated with being in TDY status on their travel vouchers.

#### 3.1.2 Authorizing and Paying Additional Travel Expenses for Employee with Disability or Special Need

Bureaus are responsible for designating the appropriate official to issue pre-travel approval of the following items:

- Statement from a competent medical authority documenting an employee's disability or special need. Documentation is generally required; Bureaus may set policy to exempt employees from submitting medical certifications for visible physical conditions.
- Additional travel expenses related to accommodating an employee's disability or special need.

Bureaus must cover the cost associated with providing reasonable accommodations to enable an employee with a disability or special need to complete the official duty with the same degree of effectiveness as an employee without that disability or special need.

## 3.2 Emergency Travel

### 3.2.1 Understanding Emergency Travel

Emergency travel results from any of the following situations while in TDY status:

- ***Traveler becomes incapacitated by a serious or life-threatening illness or injury.***  
Bureaus may authorize certain costs associated with any of the following options:
  - Employee remaining at the TDY location and suspending official duty for the duration of the illness/injury;
  - Employee returning to the official duty station;
  - Employee traveling to an alternate location for medical treatment; or
  - Family member traveling to or accompanying the employee from the TDY location as an invitational traveler (transportation costs only).
- ***Member of the employee's immediate family dies or contracts a serious illness.***  
Bureaus may authorize reimbursement of transportation costs and change fees up to the cost associated with return travel to the official duty station (i.e., if an employee travels to an alternate location, reimbursement is limited to the cost of returning to the official duty station). The traveler is eligible for en route per diem expenses. Bureaus may expand eligibility to include illness or death of a member of the employee's or the employee's spouse or domestic partner's extended family on a case-by-case basis.
- ***Disaster that directly impacts the employee's home occurs or is reasonably expected to occur.*** Bureaus may authorize reimbursement of transportation costs and change fees to return to the official duty station to take care of pertinent issues (e.g., safety of his or her family). The traveler is eligible for travel day per diem expenses.
- ***Death of an employee on TDY.*** When an employee dies while on official TDY travel, Bureaus must pay for the following expenses:
  - Expenses related to the preparation of employee remains
  - Expense related to the transportation of remains, to include the cost of an attendants travel.

**Note: This section does not include guidance on travel related to official emergencies (e.g., travel to support fire and emergency response efforts). Travelers should refer to Bureau policies on these types of travel.**

### 3.2.2 Determining When Emergency Travel is Necessary

When authorizing emergency travel, approving officials must consider the following factors on a case-by-case basis:

- Extent of the emergency;
- Relationship between the employee and person involved in the emergency; and
- Amount of responsibility the employee has for the person involved in the emergency.

### 3.2.3 Interrupting or Discontinuing TDY Travel

A traveler must notify the approving official as soon as possible of the need to interrupt or discontinue a TDY trip because of a personal emergency. Travelers must obtain approval prior

to incurring costs associated with deviations; Bureaus may grant post-travel approval on a case-by-case basis when the employee documents that pre-approval was not able to be obtained.

An employee must take leave for the duration of the interruption to TDY travel. The approving official must decide which of the following is appropriate:

- Employee should suspend the official duty and remain at the TDY location for the duration of the interruption;
- Employee should return to the official duty station;
- Employee should travel to an alternate location to receive medical care; or
- Member of the employee's family or a medical attendant should travel to the employee's TDY location. This will only occur in the case of a life-threatening illness or injury.

Once an employee is able to resume official duties, further authorization for the suspended trip will depend on the initial type of authorization. If the employee was traveling under a Trip-by-Trip authorization and returned to the official duty station or traveled to an alternate location for medical attention, the employee must obtain a new authorization to return to the TDY location.

### **3.2.4 Determining Allowable Expenses when Illness or Injury Occurs**

When official TDY travel is interrupted because of an illness or injury, Bureaus may provide reimbursement for the following:

- Per Diem expenses (i.e., lodging, M&IE) at the TDY location where the illness or injury occurred. If an employee opts to stay at this location and suspend the official portion of the trip, the approving official may authorize per diem reimbursement up to 14 calendar days while the employee is on sick leave. Reimbursement for additional days may be authorized on a case-by-case basis when fully justified and documented. The official should complete a cost comparison of the per diem reimbursement versus return travel to the employee's residence, taking into consideration the person's ability to travel;
- Transportation costs, change fees and en route per diem of an employee traveling to an alternate location to receive medical treatment;
- Transportation costs, change fees and en route per diem of an employee returning to the official duty station;
- Transportation costs of a family member or medical attendant traveling to or accompanying the employee from the TDY location. A competent medical authority must confirm that this course of action is warranted. Pre-travel approval is preferred, whenever possible; approving officials may grant post-travel approval on a case-by-case basis;
- Transportation costs of the employee traveling to or from medical facilities around the TDY location (e.g., taxi fare, fuel for a rental car; excludes emergency transportation).
- Dual lodging expenses if an employee travels to an alternate location for medical treatment. Approving officials may authorize dual lodging on a case-by-case basis for deviations in travel when travelers document that they were unable to adjust existing lodging reservations.

### **3.3 Travel Guidance for Year End and Beginning of New Fiscal Year**

Bureaus with multi-year (2 year and no-year) funding may continue to authorize travel from these funds as long as a sufficient balance is available to cover the travel expenses. The authorized travel should be for the purpose for which the funds were appropriated. Bureaus and Offices that do not have multi-year funding should not arrange or plan travel which will require tickets to be issued on or after October 1 until a continuing resolution or appropriation for the new year has been signed by the President.

Travel arrangements that are made for the last few days of the fiscal year may be funded from the current annual appropriation, providing the travel starts on or before September 30 and the per diem and other miscellaneous expenses are charged to the fiscal year in which the expenses are incurred. In the event funding is not forthcoming and an employee is in a travel status at midnight on September 30, DOI will advise Bureaus/Offices if it is necessary to have the employee return to the permanent duty station.

Tickets, rental cars, parking, and other centrally billed items funded by an annual appropriation may not be charged to the Centrally Billed Charge Card account or Individually Billed Charge Card account until a continuing resolution or appropriation has been signed. Centrally billed charges become immediate obligations and could result in an Anti-Deficiency Act violation.

### **3.4 Travel during Periods Covered by Continuing Resolution Authority**

Travel arrangements may continue to be made during a continuing resolution provided that adequate funding is available to cover anticipated travel expenses. Program offices and approving officials must work closely with their budget offices to ensure travel arrangements do not create obligations that exceed approved funding levels.

Travelers are to be reminded that, except in emergency situations, official travel may not commence unless a continuing resolution is in effect, or a regular appropriation has been enacted. Employees who are already in travel status when a continuing resolution expires (and a new continuing resolution is not in place) should seek direction from their supervisor on whether it is necessary return to the permanent duty station.

Travel arrangers and travelers are encouraged to purchase only contract City Pair tickets or fully refundable tickets during this period of uncertain funding. This will ensure that a refund will be available in the event a new continuing resolution is not signed and travel must be cancelled after the ticket has been issued.

### **3.5 Official Travel during Periods of Conflict**

As a general rule, travel to areas overseas that are experiencing possible conflict must always be mission-critical, and should be avoided, whenever possible. Employees planning to commence travel to or through such areas should contact their supervisor and Bureau or the Office of International Affairs to keep DOI abreast of the current situation in these areas. Unless U.S. flag carriers are not available, anticipated conflict or disruption of travel services is not considered justification to use non-U.S. flag carriers for passenger transportation.

Employees who are planning to travel to areas overseas may also check with the DOS country advisory notices before initiating travel. Employees who are already in travel status when a

conflict arises or becomes imminent should contact their supervisor for further instructions and stay in close contact with the local U.S. Embassy or Consulate staff.

U.S. Embassy clearance is always required for Government employees planning to travel to foreign countries. If an overseas conflict arises, Bureau International Affairs Offices must reconfirm all embassy clearances for travel to these countries before travel is initiated.

In the event of an evacuation from a foreign area, all employees must comply with the DOS instructions. Do not seek special permission to remain in the country unless your continued presence has been requested by the embassy and you receive DOI supervisory clearance.

### **3.6 Travel of Threatened Law Enforcement or Investigative Employees**

#### **3.6.1 Understanding Allowable Subsistence and Transportation Expenses for Law Enforcement or Investigative Employees**

When law enforcement or investigative employees and their immediate families are threatened as a result of official duties, and must travel to evade the threat, Bureaus may authorize reimbursement of transportation and subsistence expenses. The eligibility for reimbursement of travel expenses may be expanded to include members of an employee or the employee's spouse or domestic partner's extended family on a case-by-case basis.

Bureaus must identify the appropriate approval level to authorize these expenses. The designated approving official should consider the following questions when authorizing reimbursement for threatened law enforcement or investigative employees and their families:

- How serious is the threat to each individual involved (i.e., the employee, immediate family, extended family)?
- What action should the Bureau take to protect the individuals involved?
- Where should the temporary living accommodations be and how long should the individual(s) stay in the temporary accommodations?
- How should the Bureau reevaluate the threat and how frequently? Is there a period after which the Bureau should evaluate whether relocation is more appropriate than temporary accommodations?

When a Bureau determines that the threat to an employee or the employee's immediate family justifies relocation, the Bureau may provide reimbursement for transportation and subsistence during the relocation period in accordance with the [DOI PCS Handbook](#). Before authorizing relocation, the approving official should weigh the costs and benefits of a PCS against temporary accommodations. The official should consider whether relocation would improve the quality of life for the individual(s), and if the costs would be lower than those associated with temporary living accommodations.

#### **3.6.2 Identifying Allowable Lodging Expenses**

A threatened law enforcement or investigative employee may claim reimbursement for lodging either within the vicinity of the official duty station or at an alternate location, depending on the severity of the situation. If the threat requires that the employee and his or her family be separated, Bureaus may reimburse lodging expenses for two locations. The employee and Bureau must first consider the least expensive class of lodging available.

### 3.6.3 Identifying Allowable Transportation Expenses

Bureaus may authorize reimbursement for any of the following transportation costs for threatened law enforcement or investigative employees and their families to travel to temporary lodging locations:

- Common carrier transportation;
- GOV;
- POV; and
- Special conveyance

### 3.6.4 Identifying Allowable Subsistence Expenses

Bureaus will only authorize reimbursement of actual subsistence and lodging costs for threatened law enforcement or investigative employees and their immediate families. If the temporary living accommodations do not include a kitchen or laundry facility, Bureaus may also authorize reimbursement of meals and laundry expenses on a case-by-case basis. Bureaus may only authorize reimbursement of actual subsistence expenses, not per diem allowances. Reimbursable expenses cannot exceed the "maximum allowable amount" for the time spent in the temporary lodging accommodations.

The "maximum allowable amount" is defined as the "maximum daily amount" (see table below), multiplied by the number of days spent in temporary lodging accommodations (not to exceed the number of days authorized).

<i>If authorized for...</i>	"Maximum daily amount" of per diem expenses that...		
	Employee or an unaccompanied family member may receive is...	Accompanied family member who is age 12 or older may receive is...	Family member who is under age 12 may receive is...
<i>Payment of only lodging expenses.</i>	Maximum lodging amount applicable to the locality.	0.75 times the maximum lodging amount applicable to the locality.	0.5 times the maximum lodging amount applicable to the locality.
<i>Payment for lodging, meals and incidentals.</i>	Maximum per diem rate applicable to the locality.	0.75 times the maximum per diem rate applicable to the locality.	0.5 times the maximum per diem rate applicable to the locality.

**Note: See GSA FTR link.**

### 3.6.5 Documenting Subsistence Expenses

Threatened law enforcement or investigative employees must document and submit claims for subsistent reimbursement with supporting documentation once every two weeks. For further guidance on required receipts, see [Section 2.7.4](#).



### **3.6.6 Determining the Allowable Period of Expense Reimbursement**

Bureaus may authorize reimbursement of subsistence expenses for an initial period of up to 60 days. The period of reimbursement may be extended beyond 60 days if the approving official reviews the situation and documents the need for an extension.

Unless the approving official determines that more frequent reevaluations are required, Bureaus should reassess payment of transportation and subsistence expenses every 30 days, after the initial period.

### **3.6.7 Obtaining Travel Advance for Transportation and Subsistence Expenses**

A threatened law enforcement or investigative employee should work with the approving official to determine whether it is appropriate to obtain a charge card with increased advance limits.

Bureaus may authorize travel advances to cover up to 30 days of costs associated with transportation and subsistence expenses. The advance may not exceed the allowable amount, as determined under [Section 3.6.4](#). If an employee spends any portion of the advance on unallowable items or does not spend any of the advance funding, the employee must reimburse the Bureau for the difference within 30 days of the last day of the temporary living arrangement.

### **3.6.8 Identifying Required Receipts for Reimbursement**

Receipts are required for all transactions made while occupying temporary living accommodations. Threatened law enforcement or investigative employees must provide receipts for all lodging, transportation, meal and laundry expenses for which they claim reimbursement. However, if requesting or providing receipts would compromise the security of the individual(s), Bureaus may waive the receipt requirement on a case-by-case basis.

## 4 Transportation Expenses

This section includes guidance on transportation methods that employees may use for TDY travel, including common carrier transportation, GOV, POV and special conveyances.

### 4.1 Understanding Allowable Transportation Expenses

#### 4.1.1 Identifying and Authorizing Allowable Transportation Expenses

A traveler is eligible for reimbursement of authorized transportation expenses when performing TDY travel away from the official duty station. When making travel arrangements, using the least expensive mode of transportation and class of accommodations to accomplish the TDY mission must be considered.

When authorizing travel expenses, the approving official must limit the authorization to the expenses that are necessary to complete the official purpose of the trip in the most expeditious and cost-effective manner. Travelers must cover any additional transportation costs resulting from use of an indirect route or alternate mode of travel as a personal preference with personal funds.

Approving officials may authorize TDY travelers to use any of the following methods of transportation, listed in order of preference:

- Common carrier (aircraft, train, bus, ship or local transit system);
- GOV;
- Commercial rental car; and
- POV.

When the most cost-effective mode of transportation has been authorized, any of the following related discretionary expenses are allowable:

- Taxi and shuttle fares;
- Rental fees;
- Mileage reimbursement;
- Tolls;
- Parking fees;
- Fuel for rental cars; and
- Local transit fares.

Transportation expenses that are **not** allowable for TDY travel include the following:

- Incremental cost associated with using a less advantageous mode of transportation or an indirect route as a personal preference. If the traveler elects not to use the most advantageous mode of transportation or travels by an indirect route, only the cost of traveling by the most advantageous itinerary will be reimbursed and the excess cost must be covered with personal funds.
- Travel in premium class accommodations (e.g., first class, business class). Travelers may only claim reimbursement for the most cost-effective class of transportation, which is generally coach class. Bureaus may make limited exceptions to this rule (see [Section 4.2.3](#) for a list of these exceptions which require Department and Secretary Office level approvals); pre-approval is always required to travel in premium class accommodations at Government expense.

### 4.1.2 Selecting Most Advantageous Mode of Transportation

In general, the two most advantageous modes of transportation are common carrier airfare and GOV. The following is additional information on each form of transportation:

- **Common carrier airfare:** For official business that is 350 miles or farther from an employee's residence or official duty station, common carrier is presumed to be the most advantageous and must be used when reasonably available. The preferred method of common carrier is air transportation. Officials should only authorize other modes of transportation when the use of airfare would interfere with official business, impose an undue hardship upon the traveler or is lower in cost and would not add significant travel time while en route to the TDY location.
- **GOV:** When an approving official determines that travel must be performed by automobile, GOV is presumed to be the most advantageous mode of transportation. The approving official is responsible for determining whether a GOV is available; the traveler must act timely to reserve a GOV.

When an automobile is determined to be the most advantageous method of transportation the order of preference is listed as follows:

- GOV;
- Special Conveyance (Rental Car); and
- POV

When a traveler uses another mode of transportation as a personal preference, the traveler must create a comparison to document the constructive cost of using the most advantageous mode versus the actual cost of travel. The approving official is responsible for ensuring that the authorization clearly states that the traveler is approved to incur costs up to the constructive amount that is documented in the comparison. The traveler must cover any excess cost with personal funds. This also pertains to automobile transportation. If a traveler is authorized to use a rental car, but a POV is used for personal preference, then a cost reconstruction must be created for comparison.

If more than one employee is assigned to a GOV or rental car, then the approving official must designate a primary driver for the vehicle based on seniority or a random lot. Any passenger assigned to a GOV or rental car, who chooses to use a POV for personal preference, is not entitled to a mileage reimbursement claim because the transportation for the passenger in the GOV would not have incurred a cost to the Government.

### 4.1.3 Traveling by Most Direct Route

Government travelers are required to use the most direct, commonly traveled route unless pre-approval is obtained for a deviation. When a traveler uses another route as a personal preference, the traveler must create a comparison to document the constructive cost of using the most direct route versus the actual cost of travel. The approving official is responsible for ensuring that the authorization clearly states that the traveler is approved to incur costs up to the constructive amount documented in the comparison. The traveler must cover the excess cost with personal funds.

#### **4.1.4 Creating Cost Comparisons**

A cost comparison must be submitted as supporting documentation with the travel authorization when any of the following are used:

- Mode of transportation other than the one that is most advantageous to the Government;
- Route other than the most direct route;
- Mode of transportation other than common carrier airfare to travel to a TDY location 350 miles or farther from the residence and official duty station. When travelers create cost comparisons for "fly vs drive," en route travel by automobile of 350 miles or 8 hours per day is assumed;
- Combined official and personal travel.

Bureaus may establish different formats of cost comparisons. Travelers must complete cost comparisons prior to incurring any travel-related costs by obtaining estimates from ETS or the TMC. The costs associated with the constructive and preferred itineraries must be documented and submitted to the approving official. The traveler must include a copy of the signed cost comparison with the travel authorization.

Approving officials may grant exceptions on limiting reimbursement to the constructive cost for special circumstances directly related to the official purpose of the trip (e.g., transporting official equipment that cannot be shipped). Similarly, a traveler may claim additional costs associated with an indirect route when it is related to the official purpose of the trip (e.g., traveling to multiple TDY points with an indefinite meeting schedule) or is medically necessary. In all other cases, the traveler must pay the difference between the constructive and actual cost of the trip with personal funds and may not seek reimbursement. Bureaus should ensure that no centrally billed charge card transactions are for personal travel related reasons.

Travelers are responsible for obtaining approval of their cost comparisons in advance of the trip and including the comparison document with their claim for reimbursement.

## **4.2 Air Travel**

### **4.2.1 Understanding Basic Requirements for Air Travel**

The following are three basic requirements for traveling by commercial aircraft. A traveler must use:

- GSA contract City Pair airfare, whenever available;
- Coach class service, unless the traveler is pre-authorized to use another class of service or pays to upgrade the ticket with personal funds;
- U.S. flag air carrier service, unless the traveler is pre-authorized to use a foreign air carrier, as permitted under regulations or an international agreement.

### **4.2.2 Using Contract City Pair Airfare and Non-Refundable Fares**

DOI requires that travelers use GSA contract City Pair fares for official air travel. If a City Pair airfare is not used when one is available, the Bureau must limit reimbursement to the price of a City Pair ticket, unless an allowable exception exists.

Travelers and travel arrangers should look for and use lower cost capacity-controlled City Pair coach class contract fares, when available. These fares are designated by a 3-character code ending in 'CA' (other than the full cost YCA fare.). The first character may differ by airline,

e.g., MCA, QCA, VCA, etc. If such fares are not available, the traveler should then locate unrestricted coach class contract fares (YCA).

All travel must be booked through the ETS ConcurGov, or by calling the TMC Duluth Travel for trips in the continental United States or El Sol for trips in Alaska, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands. The use of third party travel vendors (e.g. Expedia, airline websites,) is prohibited. Any additional costs incurred from use of third party travel services will be the traveler's responsibility. If the traveler's official station is within commuting distance of two or more airports that offer City Pair service, the traveler should use the airport that will enable completing the TDY trip by the most direct route and cost-effective manner available when based on the TDY mission requirements. If only one airport offers City Pair service, the traveler may not use the other airport for personal convenience (e.g., Dulles rather than Reagan National Airport).

Contract City Pair airfares may not be used for the personal portion of a combined official and personal trip when travel deviates to an alternate locations. Contractors may also not use contract City Pair airfares. For additional information on contractor travel, see [Section 1.5.3](#).

### **Exceptions to Use of City Pair Fares**

Bureaus may authorize the use of a non-contract carrier in the following circumstances:

- Space is not available on scheduled City Pair flights to accomplish the purpose of the TDY trip on time;
- Use of City Pair flights would require that the traveler incur unnecessary overnight lodging that would make the total cost of the trip higher than using the non-contract fare;
- Non-contract carrier offers a lower fare to the general public that would result in a lower total trip cost (based on the combined costs of transportation, lodging, meals, additional hours and related expenses). This does not apply if a City Pair carrier offers the same fare and has available seats;
- Group travel must be booked for 10 or more passengers traveling together on the same flight for the same official business. Generally, a travel arranger books group travel through the TMC and selects flights that are practical and cost-effective;
- City Pair flights are not available between the commercial airports that service the traveler's official duty station and the arrival airports at the TDY location.

Approving officials must pre-authorize the use of non-contract carriers on a case-by-case basis. If a non-contract fare is purchased without prior authorization, the traveler must pay the difference in cost with personal funds, including any penalties associated with flight changes and cancellations. Use of a non-contract carrier as a preference to earn frequent flyer benefits is not acceptable justification.

**Note: If the flight reservation has not been approved for ticketing, the GSA City Pairs Program allows contracted carriers to cancel travel reservations 48 hours prior to the scheduled departure time. It is imperative that travel authorizations are approved in a timely manner, since the approved authorizations are the recognized official documentation required for ticketing reserved flights. Travelers who perform travel without authorization approval risk not being reimbursed their travel costs.**

## Non-Refundable Fares

Travelers should use caution when purchasing non-refundable fares due to the significant fees that associated with changing or cancelling a ticket. Before purchasing a non-refundable fare, travelers should be able to answer “yes” to each of the following questions:

- Do you qualify for one of the allowable exceptions from use of City Pair airfare listed above?
- Does the travel authorization clearly state that you are approved to use a non-contract fare?
- Are you confident that your official business trip will occur without schedule changes?
- Are you a frequent traveler (i.e., travel three or more times per year)?

If a non-refundable ticket is cancelled or rescheduled, the airline will issue a voucher for the price of the fare in the traveler's name for use on a future flight. The airline voucher is valid for 12 months, cannot be transferred to another person, and may only be used for future official travel. Airlines will charge a penalty to process non-refundable ticket changes. Bureaus may require that travelers pay the penalty with personal funds when the use of a non-refundable fare was not pre-approved or the traveler cancelled or adjusted the trip as a personal preference.

**Note: Non-refundable fares must be approved for use within 24 hours of reservation, or the airline will cancel the reservation.**

### 4.2.3 Selecting Appropriate Class of Airline Accommodations

For the purpose of official TDY travel, the following are the classes of airline accommodations:

- **Economy/Coach Class:** The basic class of accommodation offered by an airline; generally, the lowest-cost fare available. Also referred to as “tourist class,” “coach class” or “single class.”
- **Economy/Coach Plus:** A class of accommodation that is higher than economy and lower in cost and amenities than first and business class. Economy Plus refers to seats with extra leg room and may also be called “coach elite, coach plus or preferred coach.”
- **Business class:** A class of accommodation that falls in between coach and first class in terms of cost and amenities. Business class is also referred to as “business elite, business first, world business, connoisseur or envoy.”
- **First class:** The highest class of accommodation in terms of cost and amenities.

Travelers are required to follow the prudent person rule and are expected to use economy/coach class accommodations for official domestic and international trips

If the Government does not incur any associated costs, travelers may use frequent flyer benefits to upgrade to economy/coach plus, business or first class accommodations without prior approval. Travelers may also choose to upgrade to *other than coach class*<sup>1</sup> at their own personal expense without additional approval. **Travelers must ensure that the Government does not incur any cost associated with upgrades made as a personal preference.**

---

<sup>1</sup> Definition per 41 C.F.R. 301-10.121 and FTR 301-10.121, Subpart B – *What classes of airline accommodations are available?*

Under special circumstances, approving officials may authorize other than economy/coach class travel at the Government's expense. The official must use discretion when authorizing on a case-by-case basis other than coach class accommodations in an effort to curtail the amount of taxpayer dollars spent on premium class travel. Acceptable reasons for authorizing other than economy/coach class accommodations at the Government's expense are explained in the sections that follow. A traveler with an acceptable reason for using other than economy/coach class accommodations must include a detailed justification for the upgrade in a Trip-by-Trip authorization and obtain all required approvals prior to travel.

Travelers must book premium accommodations (First and Business Class) through the ConcurGov or with the TMC. The traveler must obtain prior approval for any upgraded transportation when booking upgrades. A statement on the travel authorization should identify and document the reason for the upgrade. If premium class accommodations are not properly approved in advance, the traveler will be responsible for the price of the premium class ticket.

### **First Class Accommodations**

All requests for first class travel require approval from the Director of the Office of Financial Management (PFM) and the Assistant Secretary of Policy, Management and Budget (PMB). The Department must report to Congress all use of first class airline accommodations, along with the corresponding cost comparisons (e.g., first class as compared to contract City Pair airfares).

The Director–PFM and Assistant Secretary–PMB may issue pre-travel approval for the use of first class accommodations when one of the following circumstances is justified and documented in the travel authorization:

- For an urgent trip, coach class is not reasonably available under City Pair and non-contract carriers within 24 hours of the traveler's proposed departure or arrival time at the TDY location. The traveler must provide an explanation of the need for the urgency, the reason the trip cannot be postponed and how a delay would endanger the mission. The explanation should describe when the travel requirement became known and when the trip was scheduled, including reasons for failure to make advance arrangements;
- Use of first class is necessary to accommodate a traveler's special need or disability:
  - Traveler must provide current medical documentation supporting the request to use premium class accommodations. Unless documented as a permanent condition, the traveler must re-certify the medical need on an annual basis. Approval must first be granted by the traveler's approving official, followed by the Director-PFM and the Office of Occupational Health and Safety, with final approval by the Assistant Secretary-PMB;
  - Bureaus should consider alternatives before authorizing the use of first class;
- Exceptional security circumstances require the use of first class accommodations (e.g., use of economy/coach class would endanger the life of the traveler); or
- Lower classes of accommodations on an approved foreign air carrier do not meet minimum health standards.

### **Business Class Accommodations**

Bureaus may not delegate approval for the use of business class accommodations below the Assistant or Associate Director of Administration.

**Note: Business class travel for Departmental Offices must be approved by the Deputy Assistant Secretary – Budget Finance Performance and Acquisition.**

The Bureau Associate Director of Administration, or their equivalent should approve the use of business class in lieu of first class for the circumstances above, whenever possible. Additionally, Bureaus may authorize business class accommodations when one of the following circumstances is justified and appropriately documented in the travel authorization:

- Origin or destination is OCONUS and scheduled flight time (including stopovers and plane changes) is in excess of 14 hours.
  - 14-hour rule may only be used when the traveler is required to report for duty the same or following day. Total flight time does not include time spent at the originating or final arrival airport. If authorized to use other than coach class, the traveler is not eligible for a rest stop en route or upon arrival.
  - Bureaus should consider a rest stop or rest period in lieu of authorizing business class accommodations, when feasible.
- Use results in overall cost savings for the Government.

### **Economy Plus**

Bureaus should approve Economy Plus accommodations in lieu of first class or business class for the above circumstances, whenever possible. Additionally, Bureaus may authorize an upgrade to Economy Plus seating when a traveler has physical characteristics that would cause significant discomfort if seated in coach class. Bureaus must determine the criteria for this exception. The traveler must document the exception in the travel authorization.

#### **4.2.4 Understanding Reduced Group or Charter Fares**

Reduced group or charter flights are discounted fares that airlines provide to groups traveling together to the same TDY destination for official purposes. An approving official may pre-authorize the use of a reduced group or charter fare on a case-by-case basis, when cost-effective. Groups are considered to be 10 or more employees. The approving official may make exceptions to authorize the use of group fares for a smaller number of employees if it is more cost-effective to book group rather than individual travel. If approved for reduced group or charter fares, groups should book travel through the TMC.

#### **4.2.5 Selecting Among Airlines that Offer Same Fare**

If two or more different airlines offer the same non-contract fare and no lower cost City Pair fare exists, travelers should consider the following when choosing between the options:

- Does the timing of the flights differ? Will this difference impact the overall performance of the TDY mission? If so, the traveler should pick the fare that would best result in accomplishment of the mission;
- Does the traveler belong to an airline loyalty program? If so, the traveler should use the airline that will provide benefits to defray the cost of future travel.

#### **4.2.6 Changing and Cancelling Ticketed Airfares**

Travelers must cancel or change ticketed airfares if the TDY travel changes because of official business reasons. The traveler is responsible for ensuring that the Government is properly credited for any cancellations or changes to the airfare. Failure to cancel or change ticketed airfares could result in the traveler being responsible for additional costs from a failure to act.

When cancelling or changing ticketed airfares arranged by the TMC, a traveler must adhere to the following procedures:



- ***Ticketed airfare is cancelled:*** The traveler must ensure cancelled airfare is refunded on the Government charge card.
- ***Ticketed airfare is downgraded to a lower fare:*** Instruct the airline to apply the credit directly to the Government charge card used to purchase the ticket. The traveler must ensure that the reduced fare is applied to the Government charge card, and that a copy of the new airfare receipt is attached to the travel voucher claim.
- ***Ticketed airfare is partially used:*** Notify the TMC. The traveler must document the cost associated with the portion of the ticket that was used on the travel voucher.

The traveler is responsible for covering any costs associated with the cancelled or changed tickets and improperly applied refunds if the above procedures are not followed or ticketed airfare is cancelled/changed for personal convenience.

A traveler may voluntarily vacate a seat on a scheduled flight (e.g., oversold flight) and keep any airline compensation for personal use if the official purpose of the trip will not be affected and the Government will not incur additional costs as a result of the change. The traveler must take leave for any additional time spent traveling during duty hours as a result of vacating the seat.

In accordance with the terms of the GSA City Pair contract, if a traveler is denied boarding and receives compensation from an airline, the compensation is the property of the U.S. Government. The procedure for this situation is as follows:

- ***Compensation is a voucher;*** the traveler should retain the voucher and use it on the next official trip.
- ***Compensation is a check,*** the traveler must ensure that the check is made payable to the “Treasurer of the United States”, and forward it to the Bureau Finance Office for processing.

A traveler must report any compensation paid to the Treasurer of the United States, as a result of involuntary removal from a flight within 30 days of the date the check was issued.

#### 4.2.7 Determining Appropriate Use of U.S. Flag Air Carriers

A U.S. flag air carrier is an aircraft that holds a certificate issued under [49 U.S.C. § 41102](#); a foreign air carrier operating under a permit is not a U.S. flag air carrier. For the purpose of this section, U.S. refers to the 50 states, the District of Columbia and territories and possessions of the U.S.

Except in a specific set of circumstances, Government travelers are required to use U.S. flag air carrier service under the Fly America Act for all domestic and international flights. For international travel, this requirement applies both to travel between the U.S. and foreign countries and travel entirely outside of the U.S. Any exceptions to the use of a U.S. flag carrier must be based on aircraft changes **outside of the U.S.**

The [Open Skies Agreement](#) allows travelers to perform official travel using airlines operating under code share agreements and bilateral/multilateral transportation agreements. Code share and bilateral/multilateral transportation agreements are defined as follows.

- ***Code share agreement:*** Two or more airlines providing service over the same route to partner with the same air flight, sharing revenue under the terms of the agreement. Under a code share agreement, the flight number will be designated to a U.S. flag carrier and the

ticket will be issued in the name of the U.S. flag carrier. The equipment and crew may be foreign or domestic.

- ***Bilateral/multilateral transportation agreement:*** An agreement authorized and controlled by the Department of Transportation allowing a foreign air carrier to operate in the U.S. under its own name and in a manner similar to a U.S. flag air carrier.

### **Exceptions to Use of U.S. Flag Air Carriers**

The following are the only exceptions to the required use of a U.S. flag air carrier:

- Transportation is provided under a code share agreement or a bilateral/multilateral air transportation agreement, as defined above;
- Costs of transportation are fully reimbursed by a third party, such as a foreign government, international agency or other organization;
- U.S. flag air carrier reroutes the employee's travel on a foreign air carrier;
- U.S. flag air carrier does not provide service on a particular leg of the route. In this case, the traveler may use foreign air carrier service to and from the nearest interchange point to connect with a U.S. flag air carrier;
- Use of a U.S. flag air carrier would extend travel time, including delay at origin by 24 hours or more, when traveling between the U.S. and another country;
- Use of a U.S. flag air carrier, when compared to a foreign air carrier, would:
  - Increase the number of aircraft changes that the traveler must make outside the U.S. by two or more;
  - Extend travel time by 6 hours or more; or
  - Require a connecting time of four hours or more at an overseas interchange point;
- Travel is entirely within a foreign country and U.S. flag air carriers or code share air carriers do not operate in the country. The traveler must provide a signed statement with the travel authorization indicating that U.S. flag or code share carriers were not available;
- Use of a foreign air carrier is determined to be necessary to complete the official purpose of the trip. Foreign air carrier service may be deemed necessary when an available U.S. flag air carrier cannot provide the required air transportation or the available service will not allow the traveler to accomplish the mission of the trip. The Assistant Secretary-PMB must approve that the use of a foreign air carrier is necessary. Necessity includes, but is not limited to, the following circumstances:
  - Medical reasons (e.g., use of a foreign air carrier would decrease the number of connections required for a traveler with a special need or disability);
  - To avoid an unreasonable risk to a traveler's safety (e.g., terrorist threats). Bureau approval must be given on a case-by-case basis and supported by a travel advisory notice issued by the Federal Aviation Administration and DOS or by evidence of the threat;
  - Only premium class accommodations are available on a U.S. flag air carrier and a coach class seat is available on a foreign air carrier.

### **Use of Foreign Air Carriers**

Travel performed by a foreign air carrier must be booked through the TMC and a justification for the use of a foreign air carrier included on the travel voucher. Approving officials are responsible for evaluating the justifications and may only authorize the use of a foreign carrier when it is advantageous or unavoidable.

Travelers who use foreign air carrier service without prior approval or an appropriate justification must cover the difference in cost between U.S. flag air carrier and foreign air carrier

with personal funds. This applies even if misuse occurs only on one leg of the trip; travelers are not eligible for reimbursement for any leg of a trip that is not properly authorized.

## 4.3 Train Travel

### 4.3.1 Selecting Appropriate Class of Train Accommodations

For the purpose of official TDY travel, train accommodations are defined as follows:

- **Coach class:** The basic class of accommodations offered that includes a level of service available to all passengers regardless of the fare paid. Coach class includes reserved and slumber coach for overnight train travel. If a train only offers two classes of accommodations, the lowest is considered coach class.
- **Extra-fare train:** A high-performance train that charges an increased fare when compared to "Regional" service (e.g., operates at high speed with fewer stops).
- **Business class:** Above coach class, but lower than first class in terms of fare and accommodations.
- **First class:** The highest level of accommodations offered; generally includes a bedroom, roomette, club service, parlor car accommodations or other premium amenities.

When traveling by train, travelers must use coach class accommodations, whenever available. If travelers use other than coach class without prior approval, reimbursement will be limited to the lesser of the cost of coach class train or air travel (based on the City Pair fare, when available).

Approving officials may authorize the use of extra-fare train service or other than coach class accommodations in the following cases:

- Coach class is not available on a train that is scheduled to leave within 24 hours of the proposed departure time or scheduled to arrive within 24 hours of the arrival time;
- Special need or disability of the traveler must be accommodated. The traveler must provide current medical documentation supporting the request for premium class accommodations;
- Coach class on an approved foreign rail carrier do not satisfy health standards;
- Exceptional security circumstances require the accommodation;
- Official mission of the trip requires the accommodation;
- Travel by train is advantageous to the Government. For example, the trip requires overnight travel and slumber coach accommodations are not available;

### 4.3.2 Travel by Train as Personal Preference

If travel is performed by train rather than air due to personal preference or a documented fear of flying, reimbursement will be limited to the constructive cost of airfare (using the lowest-cost City Pair, when available). Travelers must take leave for any work hours spent traveling by train in excess of those required to travel by air.

## 4.4 Travel by Ship

### 4.4.1 Authorizing Travel by Ship

Travel by ship is not generally advantageous to the Government. The approving official must determine whether the benefits offset the higher costs (e.g., per diem, transportation, lost work time) or justify that travel by ship is the only way to accomplish the official purpose of the trip.

## 4.5 Determining Appropriate Use of Local Transit System

A local transit system is defined as a means of public transportation (e.g., subway, light rail, bus), but does not include taxis. As opposed to authorizing rental cars, Bureaus should encourage the use of the local transit systems, when feasible. Unless local transit is unduly burdensome or the use of a rental car would result in substantial cost savings, local transit systems should be used as the "greener" and less expensive option. Travelers may claim reimbursement for the cost of using a local transit system. Bureaus may further define the appropriate use of local transit systems based on Bureau mission and conditions at a TDY site.

The following are criteria for authorizing the use of local transit systems during official TDY travel:

- ***At the traveler's official duty station:***
  - From the traveler's residence or other authorized point of departure for travel (e.g., use light rail to travel from residence to airport);
  - To the traveler's residence or other authorized point of return from TDY travel (e.g., use subway to travel from airport to residence);
  - From the traveler's residence to the official duty station when departing from the official duty station. This only applies on the day the traveler departs for official TDY travel that requires at least one night of lodging;
  - From the traveler's official duty station to the residence. This only applies on the day the traveler returns to the duty station from a TDY assignment that required at least one night of lodging;
- ***Around the TDY location:***
  - From the transit system station at the TDY location to the traveler's place of lodging or place of official business;
  - Between the traveler's place of lodging and official business;
  - Between places of official business;
  - To obtain meals at the nearest available location when meals cannot be obtained at the place of official business or lodging. An explanation for incurring the transportation cost must be included in the travel voucher (i.e., document that meal options were not available at or within walking distance of the lodging facility).

## 4.6 Use of GOV

### 4.6.1 Determining When Use of GOV is Advantageous

When a traveler must use an automobile for TDY travel (e.g., common carrier transportation is not available or practical), GOVs are considered more cost-effective than POVs or commercial rental vehicles. Approving officials should authorize the use of GOVs, whenever practical. Once notified of availability, the traveler must reserve the GOV for the TDY trip in a timely manner.

When considering use of a GOV, approving officials should weigh the following advantages:

- Full utilization or availability of GOVs;
- Lower cost; and
- Type of travel that will be performed (e.g., GOV may be advantageous to a traveler who requires the use of an automobile for frequent official trips).

#### 4.6.2 Administering Use of GOV

Each Bureau with control over GOVs is responsible for issuing the policies necessary to ensure proper care and use of the automobiles. The Bureau must require that the traveler provide a valid state motor vehicle operator's license or U.S. Government motor vehicle operator's identification card and a copy of the travel authorization to check out a vehicle. Bureaus may purchase accident insurance for a GOV that is used for official business in a foreign country, if the insurance is deemed necessary or required by the laws of the country.

Fleet motor vehicle managers must furnish travelers with fleet charge cards to be used for vehicle operating expenses incurred while using the GOVs.

#### 4.6.3 Understanding Appropriate Use of GOV

Travelers must limit the use of GOVs to the following official purposes:

- Transportation between places of official business and temporary lodging;
- Transportation to restaurants, drug stores, barber shops, places of worship, cleaning establishments, and similar places necessary for the sustenance, comfort, or health of the traveler to foster the continued efficient performance of Government business.

Unless it is necessary for the official purpose of the trip, travelers may not keep GOVs at their residences either before or after the TDY travel. When parking a GOV at a residence is required for an official purpose, the traveler must obtain pre-approval on the travel authorization prior to obtaining the GOV.

**Note: Under no circumstances may insurance be purchased by a traveler for authorized GOV use.**

Travelers are responsible for the proper use, servicing and protection of GOVs that are in their possession. If a traveler incurs any cost associated with unauthorized or irresponsible use of a GOV, the traveler may be subject to discipline for misuse of Government property. The traveler is responsible for covering any cost associated with traffic or parking violations, as well as any locksmith services.

When operating GOVs, travelers must adhere to the following procedures:

- Obtain an approved travel authorization;
- Carry the required operating permit (e.g., valid state motor vehicle operator's license);
- Operate the vehicle in a safe, prudent manner. The traveler must obey all traffic laws, including payment of parking meter fees;
- Safeguard the vehicle and the vehicle's keys against theft or misuse;
- Report any lost, damaged or stolen vehicles, and stolen vehicle contents, fleet cards or license plates to the fleet motor vehicle manager and local police immediately upon discovery; and
- Report any accident involving a GOV.

If multiple travelers are assigned to ride in a GOV as a passenger while performing TDY, they are not authorized to receive reimbursement if they choose to use a POV for personal convenience. Riding as a passenger incurs no cost to the Government. Approving officials must assign one primary driver to the GOV based on either employee seniority or by random drawing.

#### **4.6.4 Following Accident Procedures**

In the event of an accident, travelers must adhere to the following procedures:

- a) Stop immediately and take steps to prevent another accident from occurring at the scene;
- b) Call for emergency medical assistance, if necessary;
- c) Notify police and obtain a copy of the police report;
- d) Do not sign any documents or make any statement as to which party was at fault;
- e) Complete SF-91 Operator's Report of Motor Vehicle Accident (form is located in the vehicle);
- f) Notify the fleet manager and immediate supervisor as soon as possible; and
- g) If the vehicle is unsafe or cannot be driven, have it towed to the nearest service station.

Travelers should contact their Bureaus' fleet management teams and review the fleet policy for additional information on the use of GOVs and accident procedures.

#### **4.7 Use of POV**

##### **4.7.1 Determining Allowable Use of POV**

The use of a GOV or commercial carrier is more advantageous to the Government than use of a POV. Pre-authorization must be obtained on an authorization to perform TDY travel by POV, as it is the least preferred method of transportation.

The approving official should consider the following factors when determining whether use of a POV is advantageous to the Government:

- Is there a safer mode of transportation available?
  - Common Carrier
  - GOV (because of known maintenance records)
  - Special Conveyance (Rental Car)
- Is the distance of the travel unreasonable to use common carrier transportation (i.e., does the time in travel extend arrival at the TDY location beyond an acceptable period)?
- Are all GOVs reserved or otherwise unavailable?
- Are there no rental car agencies within reasonable distance of the traveler's official duty station or residence?
- Is the schedule for common carrier transportation between the points of the trip incompatible with the official schedule, and would the use of a POV result in more expeditious completion of the official business?
- Does the official purpose of the trip require the traveler to transport bulky Government equipment or supplies?

Bureaus cannot require that travelers use POVs to perform official travel. Travelers should review their personal insurance policies, as some policies exclude use of POVs to perform official business. When employees must travel by automobile, GOVs or rental cars obtained through ETS or TMC should be used, whenever possible, to avoid personal liability for official travel. The cost of insurance is factored into the POV mileage reimbursement rate. As such, travelers may not claim reimbursement for additional insurance coverage purchased when using a POV for official travel.

## 4.7.2 Calculating POV Mileage Reimbursement

When a POV is authorized as the primary mode of transportation, mileage reimbursement may be claimed to offset the costs incurred. The Bureau must apply one of the following mileage reimbursement rates for use of a POV on official travel:

- Higher rate when use of a POV is determined to be advantageous to the Government; or
- Lower rate when the traveler either uses a POV instead of an available GOV or chooses to use a POV as a personal preference.

Although the traveler may claim mileage reimbursement when authorized, the use of a POV must be limited to the following official purposes:

- Transportation between places of official business and temporary lodging;
- Transportation between multiple places of official business; or
- Transportation within reasonable distance to restaurants, drug stores, barber shops, places of worship, cleaning establishments, and similar places necessary for the sustenance, comfort, or health of the employee in order to foster the continued efficient performance of Government business.

If the official travel requires overnight lodging and use of GOVs is authorized, reimbursement for POV mileage to travel from their residences to the offices or GOV pick-up locations may be claimed.

If two or more employees are traveling to the same TDY location in the same POV, only the employee who owns the POV is eligible to claim mileage reimbursement. Other passengers may not claim expenses associated with use of the car (e.g., fuel receipts).

Travelers must document approval for the use of POV on their authorizations. The mileage reimbursement is calculated by multiplying the distance traveled by the applicable mileage rate. The authorized rates are available in the [GSA POV Mileage Reimbursement Rate table](#).

## 4.7.3 Using POV as Personal Preference

The travel authorization should record the authorized mode of transportation, and any alternative mode of transportation which is used by the traveler for personal preference will be shown on the travel voucher claim. When employees elect to use POVs as a personal preference, the reimbursement will be based on actual costs not to exceed the total trip costs as if performed under the commonly traveled route, including lodging, transportation, per diem, and miscellaneous expenses.

### **In Lieu of Common Carrier:**

If authorized to travel by common carrier transportation, but elects to use a POV for personal preference, the traveler must have attempted to obtain a GOV to perform the TDY trip from the office's GOV fleet source. The GOV request must be submitted in sufficient time prior to travel departure to ensure vehicle availability. The GOV request must be documented and attached to the travel authorization.

If a GOV is available, but the traveler chooses to use a POV for personal preference, the actual expense claim will be reimbursed at the prescribed lower GSA mileage rate. If a GOV is not available, the actual expense claim will be reimbursed using the authorized POV mileage rate.

The traveler must complete and obtain signed approval on a constructive cost comparison prior to departure on official travel. The comparison document must be attached to the travel authorization.

**In Lieu of GOV:**

When a traveler uses a POV in lieu of an available GOV, reimbursement is based on the lower GOV mileage rate. When a Bureau assigns a GOV for a specific purpose or trip and the employee elects to use a POV, as a matter of personal preference or because of failure to reserve a GOV in a timely manner, the approving official must authorize the lower of the two GSA mileage reimbursement rates.

**In Lieu of Special Conveyance:**

If a rental car is authorized as the most advantageous method of transportation, and a POV is used instead for personal preference, the traveler must prepare a constructive cost comparison using the cost of rental car and the associated rental car operating expenses. Reimbursement would be limited to the lesser of the reconstructed rental car cost or the actual cost of POV use.

When POV is elected for traveling to common carrier terminals from residences or official duty stations, instead of by taxi or airport shuttle service, reimbursement may only be claimed for mileage and parking. However, reimbursement of airport parking is limited to the amount it would cost for round-trip taxi fare plus tip on the same trip. Travelers may use an estimating tool, such as (<http://www.taxifarefinder.com>), to estimate the cost of round-trip taxi fares.

**4.7.4 Identifying Other Reimbursable Expenses when Traveling by POV**

In addition to mileage rate allowances, approving officials may authorize travelers to claim reimbursement for any of the following expenses when travel by POV is pre-authorized and advantageous to the Government:

- Parking fees;
- Ferry fees;
- Bridge, road and tunnel fees/tolls;
- Aircraft parking, landing and tie-down fees for a personally-owned aircraft.

The following expenses may not be claimed when traveling by POV:

- Charges for repairs;
- Depreciation;
- Replacements;
- Grease, oil or antifreeze;
- Towage or similar expenses;
- Gasoline;
- Insurance;
- Federal or State taxes.



## 4.8 Determining Appropriate Use of Special Conveyances

Taxis, commercial rental cars, transportation network companies (Uber, Lyft), and innovative technology management companies (hourly rental companies, such as Car2go and Zipcar, bike sharing vendors, ride sharing vendors) are the most common types of special conveyances. Bureaus may authorize travelers to use these or other types of special conveyances, including boats, snowmobiles or horses, when these modes of transportation are advantageous to the Government.

## 4.9 Use of Taxis and Shuttle Service

### 4.9.1 Determining Appropriate Use

Travelers should use taxis, shuttles or local transit services at TDY locations instead of obtaining rental cars when it is advantageous to the Government. In this case, the criteria for the reimbursement of these costs are as follows:

- ***At the traveler's official station:***
  - From the residence or other authorized point of departure (e.g., to travel from residence to airport);
  - To the residence or other authorized point of return (e.g., to travel from airport to residence);
  - To pick up or drop off a GOV at the duty station or another pick-up location.
- ***At the traveler's TDY location:***
  - From the transit system station to the traveler's place of lodging or TDY site;
  - Between the places of lodging and official business;
  - Between places of official business;
  - To obtain meals at the nearest available place when meals cannot be obtained within walking distance, weather permitting (traveler must include explanation in voucher), of the place of lodging or official business.

Travelers should use shuttle services or courtesy transportation instead of incurring the costs associated with taxis, whenever possible. Generally, such shuttles are provided between common carrier terminals and places of lodging. Travelers should only use taxis when the use of courtesy transportation would adversely affect the trip or unduly extend the travel time.

Unless a cost benefit to the Government can be documented, the traveler may not claim reimbursement for any taxi or shuttle fares incurred at the TDY location, when a rental car has been authorized as the most advantageous mode of transportation.

### 4.9.2 Tipping Taxi, Shuttle Service and Courtesy Transportation Drivers

Travelers may claim reimbursement for taxi, shuttle and local transit fares, as well as reasonable tips for drivers, when a rental car is not obtained. Bureaus may reimburse up to 20 percent of the cost of the fare, but may also set a lower limit within Bureau policy. Reimbursement for tips for complimentary transportation (e.g., hotel airport shuttle) is limited to \$2 per large bag. Travelers may add tips, along with taxi, shuttle or local transit fares, directly to the travel voucher. Travelers must submit receipts to substantiate any charges over \$75 (fare plus tip).

## 4.10 Rental Cars

### 4.10.1 Authorizing Use of Rental Vehicles

Bureaus may authorize rental cars when the use is advantageous to the Government. If local transportation is feasible (e.g., travel in a major metropolitan area), the employee should not request a rental car unless using local transportation would be unduly burdensome or less cost-effective.

The approving official should consider the following factors when evaluating whether to approve a rental car request:

- If travelers are attending conferences or training events when lodging is onsite, rental cars are usually not needed and the request should be scrutinized;
- If multiple travelers are performing official business at the same TDY site, the travelers should share one rental car, (see Section 4.10.2 for additional information on rental car size), whenever feasible;
- When TDY travel is performed in remote locations or local transportation is not available, travelers may need rental cars for obtaining meals;
- When the official purpose of a TDY trip requires the traveler to transport large or bulky Government equipment.

### 4.10.2 Selecting Appropriate Rental Car

The Government charge card must be used to pay for the costs associated with rental cars (e.g., rental, fuel). Travelers must obtain rental cars using the ETS system or TMC and be covered by the Department of Defense (DOD) U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement. The rental car companies on this agreement are required to furnish current model cars; include insurance in the rental fee; and not charge for authorizing additional Government drivers. When calculating total cost, travelers must use the lowest-cost rental car provider that will meet the requirements of the agreement and should consider the location of the pick-up and drop-off points.

When authorized a rental vehicle, the traveler must rent a **compact size car**. Travelers may request approval for vehicle upgrades under the following circumstances:

- Sharing a rental vehicle with two or more Government employees who are traveling to the same TDY site; three or more total travelers;
- Accommodate the transportation of a large amount of Government equipment;
- Provides documented medical condition that requires use of a larger vehicle;
- Accommodate a traveler's physical size is such that a compact vehicle would not allow for safe operation of the vehicle. The approving official should use discretion when approving such requests;
- Require use of an SUV with off-road capabilities and possibly studded tires due to the need to access areas of extremely rough terrain or challenging weather conditions.

When approving vehicle upgrades the approving official should authorize the least costly vehicle size that will meet the traveler's needs.

**Note: If the intended use of the rental car is for off-paved roads, the traveler must inform the rental car company and obtain written approval from them to use the vehicle in this manner.**

### 4.10.3 Determining Reimbursement for Premium Services or Assistive Technologies

Rental car companies frequently offer premium services or assistive technologies. The most common premium service is the prepaid fuel option, while the most common assistive technologies are the Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) and automated toll payment systems. These items are rarely needed to accomplish official travel. Therefore, the costs associated with these services are only allowed under limited circumstances.

#### Road Side Assistance

A Roadside Assistance Program is included under the U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement. Travelers must not authorize rental car companies to include this option on their rental agreements. The rental car company will provide to Government renters a toll free telephone number to call, for service covered under the U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement, in case of an accident or need for repair 24 hours per day/7 days per week.

**Note: In some instances changing a tire is not included in the car rental agreement. If the rental car company refuses to provide this service, and there is risk of injury to the employee when changing the tire on their own, the authorized renter of the vehicle may call a car towing service to request assistance. The service of the towing company may be claimed by the renter as a miscellaneous cost associated with the car rental.**

#### Prepaid Fuel Option

Travelers must not authorize rental car companies to include the prepaid fuel option on their rental agreements. Travelers are expected to refuel rental cars prior to returning them. Travelers should be prepared to provide fuel receipts upon request at the rental car return site.

For safety reasons, if a traveler thinks they may be harmed while attempting to refuel the rental car (e.g., poorly lit gas station, or bad neighborhoods), the vehicle may be returned without refueling.

#### Global Positioning Satellite

GPS is normally not a necessary expense for official travel. Approving officials may only authorize the rental of GPS technology in the following situations:

- To assist in accomplishing an active law enforcement mission;
- When required for a firefighting mission;
- When renting a vehicle in a foreign country; or
- When required to access extremely remote locations without clearly marked road signs (e.g., tribal lands).

Bureaus must determine the level of authority necessary for approval of GPS rental. The approving official must review each request and only authorize the expense on a case-by-case basis when specifically required to accomplish official travel.

#### Automated Toll Payment Systems

Travelers may use automated toll payment systems (e.g., EZ Pass, FasTrak, ExpressToll, TollTag, Automated Car Plate Readers etc.) when required. If the use of such technology is required or embedded in the rental car agreement it may be used and reimbursed. If payment devices are not used or available but a toll road is used, then the toll should be paid using the Government charge card or cash and claimed on the travel voucher.

**Note: If a premium rental car service or assistive technology is used without proper authorization, the traveler will be responsible for reimbursing the Department the associated cost and may be subject to adverse personnel action.**

#### **4.10.4 Determining Reimbursement for Rental Car Insurance**

##### **Collision Insurance for CONUS or OCONUS Non-Foreign Travel**

Rental car companies included under the DOD agreement provide full insurance coverage for property damage and injury or death to third parties resulting from the traveler's use of a rented vehicle. Property damage is limited to \$25,000 in total damage, and \$100,000 for personal injury and death per person with a \$300,000 limit.

As such, Bureaus may not reimburse the cost of Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) or theft insurance when official travel is performed entirely within CONUS or OCONUS in non-foreign locations when the option of renting the vehicle using ETS or the TMC under the Government Car Rental Agreement exists. However, if a non-foreign rental car location does not offer rental vehicles under the terms and conditions of the Government Car Rental Agreement **and requires the purchase of the CDW**, it may be reimbursed when needed.

If property damage or injury claims exceed the provided insurance coverage, the rental car company shall file an additional claim with the traveler's Bureau. The Government is self-insured. As long as an accident occurred while performing official business, the claim shall be settled under the U.S. Tort Claims Act. The DOI Solicitors Office will review and decide on the approval to pay the claim.

##### **Collision Insurance for Foreign Travel**

For foreign travel, Bureaus may reimburse travelers for the cost of CDW or collision damage insurance on a rental vehicle, if one or more of the following conditions exist:

- Rental or leasing agency requires the purchase of such coverage;
- Foreign statute requires the purchase of such coverage; or
- Traveler is involved in an accident and legal procedures could cause extreme difficulty if coverage is not purchased.

Employees should ensure that the insurance covers potential liability for property damage, personal injury and death to third parties. Bureaus should limit reimbursement of the cost to the minimum amount of insurance required for the use of roads in a foreign country or to be purchased based on industrial custom.

#### **4.10.5 Following Accident Procedures**

In the event of an accident in a rental car, the traveler must adhere to the following procedures:

1. Stop immediately and take steps to prevent another accident at the scene;
2. Call for emergency medical assistance, if necessary;
3. Notify police and obtain a copy of the police report;
4. Do not sign any documents or make any statement as to which party was at fault;
5. Notify the supervisor and rental car company as soon as possible, and submit a copy of the police accident report to the rental car company.

Rental car companies may not bill Government travelers directly for damages. Any damage to a rental car, not covered under the Government Rental Car Agreement, should be billed to the Bureau finance office or the Department Solicitor's office. The rental car company will submit a Standard Form 95 (SF-95) to either office. The employee and supervisor will also complete an SF-91 to document and report the accident. The SF-91 must be submitted to the Department Solicitor to facilitate the investigation process.

If an investigation reveals that the damage resulted from negligence or improper use of the vehicle, the traveler may be responsible for the cost and injury caused by the accident. If the rental car company attempts to bill the traveler or requests the name of the personal insurance company, the traveler should not provide any personal insurance information, but should contact the TMC that arranged the rental and the national office of the rental car company instead.

#### **4.10.6 Understanding Liability for Unauthorized Use of Rental Vehicle**

When theft or damage occurs as a result of irresponsible use or negligence, as determined by the Defense Travel Management Office, travelers may be held personally liable for the condition of the rental vehicles obtained under the U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement. The traveler must pay any additional cost resulting from the unauthorized use of a commercial rental car with personal funds within 30 days of returning the vehicle. **This includes any cost associated with locksmith services or lost keys.** Unauthorized use refers to other than official travel related or irresponsible use and negligence.

#### **4.10.7 Using Rental Cars for Combined Official and Personal Travel**

When official and personal travels are combined, the traveler may not use a car rented under the U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement for the personal portion of the trip. If Government rental cars are used for personal service, the traveler will be personally liable for damages. The [DOI Charge Card](#) policy also precludes the use of a Government charge card for personal rental car expenses.

The traveler must ask the rental car company whether it is possible to split the rental period into two agreements: one for official travel covered under the U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement and a separate agreement for the personal portion of the trip. The traveler may not use the Government charge card or claim reimbursement for the cost associated with the personal rental. If the rental car company will not split the rental period into two separate agreements, the traveler must return the vehicle at the end of the official business and request to rent the vehicle under a separate reservation for personal use.

Non-Government employees, family members or any other individuals who are not performing official travel and do not hold a current travel authorization may not drive a rental car obtained under the U.S. Government Rental Car Agreement.

#### **4.10.8 Use of Transportation Network Companies**

When a transportation network company, such as Uber or Lyft, is used travelers are responsible for ensuring that these services are used during non-peak periods to avoid premium surcharges. Travelers will be required to create a profile with these application ordered services. The traveler must ensure that the Government charge card is used only for official travel purposes.

## 4.11 Use of Government Aircraft

This section includes general guidance on the use of Government aircraft. For more information on this topic, contact the DOI Travel Lead or Office of the Solicitor.

### 4.11.1 Understanding Government Aircraft vs. Special Conveyance

A Government aircraft is an air carrier that the Government owns, leases, charters or rents. An air carrier hired as a special conveyance is an aircraft that a traveler leases, charters, or rents from a non-Government vendor. If common carrier transportation is not feasible (e.g., the TDY location is remote and not serviced by commercial airlines) but use of an aircraft is required, the traveler must use a Government aircraft, whenever available.

### 4.11.2 Determining Appropriate Use of Government Aircraft

Travel by Government aircraft is only appropriate when performing official business or it is the most cost-effective mode of transportation. Official travel includes operation of a Government aircraft to meet mission requirements, or to perform business on behalf of DOI, or perform required use travel and space available travel.

### 4.11.3 Authorizing Use of Government Aircraft

The traveler must obtain advance written approval from the Bureau sponsoring the trip in order to travel on a Government aircraft. Only the Bureau head, or an official designee, has the authority to approve the use of a Government aircraft.

### 4.11.4 Ensuring that Travel on Government Aircraft is Cost-Effective

When determining whether a Government aircraft is the most cost-effective mode of travel, the designated approving official must work with the traveler on the following:

- Compare the cost of travel alternatives, including travel on:
  - Scheduled commercial airline,
  - Federal aircraft,
  - Government aircraft hired as a commercial aviation service (CAS), and
  - Other available modes of transportation;
- Consider the cost of lost work time and other per diem costs while in travel status;
- Authorize only the most cost-effective alternative that will meet the needs of the TDY mission.

### 4.11.5 Obtaining Approval to Use Government Aircraft to Carry Passengers

Government aircraft owned, hired or operated as a CAS may be used to carry Federal and non-Federal travelers. Bureaus must complete the [process established by the Office of the Solicitor](#) to pre-approve the use of the Government aircraft (e.g., for carrying passengers and any crewmembers or qualified non-crewmembers).

### 4.11.6 Reporting Requirements for Travel on Government Aircraft

Unless the information is classified, records of travel by senior Federal officials and non-Federal travelers on Government aircraft must be made available to the public under the Freedom of Information Act. Bureaus must retain all travel authorizations and cost comparisons for travel on Government aircraft for two years. The Department reports non-classified travel on Government aircraft by senior Federal officials and non-Federal travelers to GSA's Office of Government-

wide Policy. Bureaus must comply with Departmental requests for data related to use of Government aircraft.

#### **4.11.7 Identifying Required Documentation for Travel on Government Aircraft**

Use of a Government aircraft must be approved on the travel authorization by an official at least one organizational level above the traveler. All crewmembers and qualified non-crewmembers are considered travelers and must also be pre-authorized to travel on Government aircraft. Bureaus must retain travel authorizations and flight information for any travel on Government aircraft by senior Federal officials and non-Federal travelers for two years.

## 5 Miscellaneous Expenses

This section includes guidance for claiming reimbursement of miscellaneous expenses incurred during TDY travel.

### 5.1 Identifying Allowable Miscellaneous Expenses

Travelers may claim reimbursement for miscellaneous expenses directly related to an official Government business trip (e.g., use of services, technologies, payment methods). The anticipated miscellaneous expenses should be shown on the travel authorization in order to facilitate timely travel voucher creation and submission. Travelers may incur certain unexpected miscellaneous expenses, which may be added to the travel voucher.

Travelers must obtain **pre-authorization** for the following miscellaneous expenses:

- The purchase of calling cards when performing travel in remote locations where cellular reception does not exist. Note: Calling cards should be treated as a purchase and travelers should coordinate with their supervisor when purchasing calling cards for official travel; and
- Global Entry Program Pass, \$100 membership fee. This expense is only reimbursable for frequent international travelers, defined as employees who travel internationally three or more times in a calendar year and whose lost productive time associated with processing through customs outweighs the membership fee.

The following expenses are **not** reimbursable as miscellaneous expenses, and are not reimbursable as a separate expense claim:

- Fees charged by the TMC for the personal portion of a combined official and personal trip;
- Lodging taxes or surcharges for lodging in OCONUS non-foreign and foreign locations (see Section 5.1.5);
- Laundry or dry cleaning expenses for OCONUS non-foreign or foreign travel (see Section 5.1.5);
- Membership or application fees for registered travel programs (e.g., CLEAR); these programs provide pre-screened travelers with access cards to pass through security using special lanes. The access cards are a personal expense and are not necessary for official travel;
- Associated bank and ATM fees, when using a personal debit, credit or charge card; and
- Personal phone calls home that are not related to planning transportation for the travelers return trip to the official duty station, or for emergency reasons.

### 5.2 Authorizing and Paying Miscellaneous Expenses

Travelers may only claim reimbursement for miscellaneous expenses that are necessary for TDY travel and are incurred in the interest of the Government. If a traveler anticipates incurring miscellaneous expenses that are not typically allowable, the approving official must ensure that these expenses are necessary for the official purpose of the trip prior to authorizing the expenses. Although the approving official generally determines which miscellaneous expenses are appropriate, Bureaus may establish a higher level of approval for incurring miscellaneous expenses on official TDY travel, if necessary.



### 5.3 Understanding Communications Policies

Travelers are expected to use Government telephones, cellular phones or an issued prepaid calling cards for long-distance official calls while on TDY travel. Prior to the beginning of the trip, the supervisor is responsible for assisting the traveler to obtain a calling card. The calling card should be bought using the Government purchase card. Bureaus are responsible for implementing the purchase, issuance and tracking procedures for these calling cards.

The following communications policies should be observed when on TDY travel status:

- **Official business calls:** Travelers must use Government-issued telephones or prepaid calling cards for long-distance business calls while on official travel, whenever possible. Travelers should only make phone calls that are necessary for official business;
- **Personal calls home:** Travelers may not claim personal calls home, unless the call is directly related to their official travel (e.g., a change in travel plans, emergency occurrence, etc.).

### 5.4 Understanding Reimbursement for Baggage Fees

Bureaus may reimburse baggage expenses as follows:

- All fees pertaining to one checked bag up to the allowable weight limit;
- Excess baggage (i.e., more than one checked bag, baggage over the standard weight limit) when pre-authorized and required for the official purpose of the trip. The following restrictions apply to excess baggage:
  - Approving officials should limit authorizing excess baggage fees for travelers carrying Government equipment or materials required for the official purposes of travel;
  - Approving officials may not authorize excess baggage fees for personal items (e.g., golf clubs). If travelers bring these items on TDY trips, the baggage fees must be paid with personal funds;
  - Approving officials should limit authorizing excess baggage fees to instances where travel exceeds 10 consecutive days;
- Transportation charges for pre-authorized excess baggage;
- Necessary charges for transferring baggage;
- Necessary charges for baggage storage when incurred for official business (e.g., authorized rest stop);
- Charges or tips at transportation terminals for handling Government property carried by the traveler.

**Note: For short duration TDY trips, travelers should try to avoid the need to pay checked baggage fees and use only carry-on luggage for necessary clothes and hygiene items.**

### 5.5 Determining Eligibility for Laundry Reimbursement

Approving officials may authorize travelers to claim laundry or dry cleaning as miscellaneous expenses when incurred during CONUS TDY trips that are four consecutive nights or longer. Officials should use discretion when authorizing these expenses and consider the tradeoff between reimbursing laundry or dry cleaning expenses and excess baggage fees. The traveler must use their Government issued charge card to pay for all commercial laundry and dry cleaning services. Travelers may use personal funds when using a coin operated laundry.

Travelers may only claim reimbursement for laundry or dry cleaning expenses when incurred during the trip, but not on the last day of a TDY assignment. In order to receive reimbursement, receipts for any laundry or dry cleaning performed at a professional laundry facility must be included with the travel voucher. Bureaus may also reimburse travelers for reasonable expenses incurred for coin-operated laundry. Travelers should follow the prudent person rule when incurring laundry and dry cleaning expenses.

Bureaus may not authorize travelers to claim laundry or dry cleaning expenses as miscellaneous expenses for OCONUS or foreign travel. Laundry and dry cleaning expenses are included in the M&IE allowance of the OCONUS non-foreign and foreign per diem rates and cannot be claimed separately.

Bureau policy may be more restrictive.

## 6 Conference Related Travel

This section includes guidance for DOI employees planning or attending conferences. For additional information on conferences, see the [PFM conference website](#).

All DOI employees must exercise discretion and judgment in ensuring that conference expenses are appropriate, necessary, and managed in a manner that minimizes expense to taxpayers. Conference planners should refer to Financial Management Memorandum 2015-010, for information on planning and reporting conferences.

The [PFM conference website](#) includes all conference guidance. The checklist, annual plan templates, and other related materials are posted for convenient access.

### 6.1 Guidance for Conference Attendees

#### 6.1.1 Defining Terms

A **conference** is a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium or event where individuals who generally do not work on the same team gather to discuss issues, network to exchange ideas or obtain training related to their official duties. Typically, conferences are attended by Government employees from multiple Federal agencies and non-Government employees from other industries. The conference attendees may or may not be in travel status. DOI employees must obtain Trip-by-Trip authorizations to attend conferences that include travel. Training sessions are considered conferences and fall under this definition based on the following criteria:

- The purpose of the training is educational or instructional;
- More than half of the time is scheduled, planned and organized as an exchange of information between presenters and an audience; and
- The content of the training will contribute to performance improvement and development for attendees and their organizations.

**Internal meetings** are intramural gatherings where the attendees are mainly Government employees and few, if any, are non-Government attendees. Internal meetings, as opposed to conferences, focus on overseeing program activities such as reviewing program results, performing on-site visits, identifying lessons learned or prior actions, providing technical assistance, or developing plans. Unless prohibited by Bureau policy, official travel that must be performed to attend an internal meeting may be authorized under a blanket travel authorization (e.g., Limited Open).

#### 6.1.2 Establishing Conference Travel Guidance

When travel is required to attend a conference, the employee and approving official should consider the following guidance:

- ***Per Diem Reimbursement for Travel within 50 Miles:*** Bureaus may grant exceptions to the requirement that, to be eligible for per diem, travel must be farther than 50 miles to qualify for TDY status, but cannot be less than 30 miles from the residence and official duty station. This exception authorizes per diem for conference attendees and should be made in instances when the traveler would receive the full benefit of the event only by remaining onsite to attend evening meetings or working meals.
- ***Transportation:*** When multiple employees travel to attend the same conference, common carrier group or charter fares should be utilized, if available. If three or more employees

are traveling to a conference by car (POV or GOV) or a rental car is required at the TDY site, the employees should share one vehicle, whenever possible.

- **Lodging:** Approving officials may authorize attendees to book lodging outside of ETS or the TMC if room reservations must be procured under a blanket purchase agreement or held by the conference planner under a block reservation. When securing lodging for conferences, travelers must try to obtain rooms at facilities that are within per diem, as close to the conference site as possible to avoid excess transportation costs.
- **Meals:** If meals are furnished by the Government during a conference or meeting, attendees must reduce the M&IE rate by the appropriate amount for each meal. See [FTR Section 301-11.18](#) for the allocated costs of meal deductions. Attendees are not required to reduce M&IE allowances for light refreshments. If an attendee requires a special diet, the attendee must inform the facility of the need for accommodation prior to arriving at the conference.
- **Trip Purpose in ETS:** In an effort to support DOI-wide reporting requirements on conference attendance, approving officials must ensure that employees who travel to attend conferences select the appropriate trip purpose code in ETS.

### 6.1.3 Reimbursing Advanced Payment of Conference Registration Fees

Conference registration fees must be paid with a Government purchase card; not the Government issued travel charge card as the fees must be paid with the purchase business line. Conference registration fees should be paid in advance when offered at a discounted rate and travelers are confident that attendance will occur without schedule changes. In order to optimize cost savings further, conference registration fees should also be paid in advance when a penalty will not be charged for cancellations.

In cases when an employee pays a registration fee in advance, but does not attend the conference or training, the employee must request a refund. If the conference organization will not issue a refund, the Bureau may cover the cost when the employee's change in plans was directed or a result of extenuating circumstances beyond the employee's control. If the failure to attend the conference was due to personal preference or another unauthorized reason, the employee must cover the cost with personal funds and repay the Bureau within 30 days from the first day of the conference.

## 7 Extended TDY Assignments and Income Tax Reimbursement Allowances

This section includes guidance on authorizing and performing a TDY assignment to a single location that lasts 30 consecutive days or longer, and the tax implications of the assignment.

### 7.1 Determining Eligibility for Extended TDY Reimbursement

An extended TDY assignment is a trip that will meet all of the following criteria:

- Traveler is in TDY status for 30 consecutive calendar days or longer at one location;
- TDY location is farther than 50 miles from the residence and official duty station; and
- Travel is not considered a Temporary Change of Station (TCS).

The traveler's approving official must determine whether the long-term assignment is treated as a TCS or an extended TDY assignment. Travelers on extended TDY assignments cannot claim any entitlements provided under PCS regulations (e.g., shipping household goods, moving expenses for family members, mileage for a second vehicle). Travelers should refer to the [DOI PCS Handbook](#) or [347 DM 302, DOI FTR Implementing Instructions](#) for guidance on relocation travel.

Travelers on extended TDY assignments must adhere to the guidelines associated with TDY travel. All extended TDY assignments must be approved on Trip-by-Trip authorizations. At a minimum, the employee must file a travel voucher once every 30 calendar days for the travel-related costs associated with the extended TDY assignment, but Bureaus may require travelers to file vouchers more frequently. For guidance on the required documentation for extended assignments, see [Section 7.4.1](#).

Employees who are scheduled to complete extended TDY assignments must document the terms of their per diem reimbursement and return travel prior to beginning the assignments. Bureaus may also establish forms or methods for documenting these approvals.

### 7.2 Travel Expenses during Extended TDY Assignments

#### 7.2.1 Traveling To and From Extended TDY Assignment

Bureaus should reimburse travelers for any of the following costs incurred during travel to and from the location of the extended TDY assignment:

- Transportation costs for travel to the TDY station to begin the assignment;
- Transportation costs to travel home at the conclusion of the assignment;
- Lodging costs up to 55 percent of the locality rate, unless a higher rate is justified and documented;
- M&IE allowance at 55 percent of the locality rate, unless a higher rate is justified and documented;
- Transportation and per diem for return travel under the approved schedule. The traveler must obtain approval on the frequency of official return travel prior to the beginning of the extended TDY assignment.

A traveler may be authorized to travel to and from an extended TDY assignment using common carrier, GOV or POV, whichever is most advantageous to the Government. If a traveler is authorized to travel by GOV or POV, the traveler is eligible for Lodgings-plus per diem

reimbursement for en route travel days. Travelers are required to perform travel to and from their assignment locations in accordance with all TDY regulations and guidance. Travelers should average 350 miles or 8 hours a day during en route travel performed by GOV or POV. If travel by common carrier is determined to be advantageous to the Government, but the traveler elects to travel by POV as a personal preference, Bureaus must limit reimbursement to the constructive cost associated with the available common carrier transportation. For guidance on the cost comparison that the traveler must complete in this situation, see [Section 4.1.4](#).

### **7.2.2 Calculating Per Diem Reimbursement during Extended TDY Assignment**

The per diem reimbursement rate for travelers on extended TDY assignments is 55 percent of the maximum allowable rate for the locality rounded up to the next whole dollar amount (e.g., a rate of \$61.25 is rounded up to \$62), unless a different rate is fully justified and approved prior to the beginning of the assignment. The reduced rate begins on the first day of official duty for the extended TDY assignment; the per diem rate is not reduced for en route travel days to and from the extended TDY site and the official duty station. If the circumstances of the assignment require a higher or lower rate, the approving official may pre-authorize a different rate if a justification is included with the travel authorization.

Generally, per diem reimbursement is reduced for extended TDY travel because travelers can obtain long-term lodging and meals at reduced costs (e.g., extended stay hotel rates, lodging with kitchen facilities) or they receive lodging and meals from the Government at nominal cost. If authorizing a per diem reimbursement rate other than 55 percent for an extended assignment, the approving official must consider the options for lodging and meals available to the traveler. The appropriate rate must be documented prior to travel. Bureaus should establish policy to indicate the appropriate approval level for increasing the per diem reimbursement rate for extended TDY assignments above 55 percent of the locality rate. In general, the increase above the 55 percent is only done for lodging.

#### **Household Goods and Personal Effects**

Travelers on extended TDY assignments are not eligible for reimbursement of the costs associated with shipping or transporting household goods or personal effects. A traveler authorized to travel by POV, who chooses to rent a truck or trailer to transport personal effects and household goods, may not claim reimbursement for the rental. Travelers who are authorized to travel by common carrier may be authorized excess baggage to accommodate additional personal effects (e.g., clothing) because of the length of the assignment. The approving official must establish appropriate baggage limitations on a case-by-case basis and document the allowable expenses on the travel authorization.

#### **Per Diem Reimbursement**

If a traveler on extended TDY assignment cannot obtain long-term lodging at reduced rates, the approving official should authorize a reimbursement rate higher than 55 percent of the daily locality rate. The increase must be documented and approved prior to the beginning of the assignment. The official should also authorize that the reduced rate of 55 percent will go into effect when long-term accommodations become available, as appropriate. Travelers must attempt to locate lodging at 55 percent of the locality rate, and must document a minimum of three lodging rates when requesting approval for a different rate. If a traveler obtains lodging at less than 55 percent of the locality rate, the traveler's Bureau should only reimburse the traveler for the actual cost of lodging.

Lodging receipts are required to support reimbursement. If no lodging expense is incurred (e.g., lodging is obtained from the Government, or a friend or family member), a lodging allowance is not reimbursable and the employee can only claim the authorized reduced rate for M&IE.

### **Transportation Reimbursement**

Travelers may be authorized to use GOVs, POVs, taxis, rental cars or public transportation while on extended TDY assignments.

## **7.3 Tax Implications of Extended TDY Assignments**

### **7.3.1 When Extended TDY Assignments are Taxable**

If a traveler is on an extended assignment in one TDY location for the majority of one year or longer, any reimbursement provided to the traveler is considered income, regardless of the duties that the employee performs (see the [Internal Revenue Service \(IRS\) Publication 463](#) for additional information). Bureaus must report all reimbursements as income paid to the traveler from the point it can be reasonably determined that an assignment will exceed 365 days. Additionally, if a traveler's official duties require a series of short assignments to the same location that together span the majority of one year or longer, these trips are considered one taxable indefinite assignment. Supervisors should not break long-term travel assignments into shorter period trips or adjust assignment durations for the purpose of changing tax implications. An employee who takes vacation or breaks from an extended TDY assignment for fewer than 45 days or performs TDY at an alternate location for fewer than 30 days is still considered to be on extended TDY assignment and will be taxed accordingly.

For taxation purposes, the IRS defines two types of extended assignments: temporary (non-taxable) and long-term/indefinite (taxable). Both types of assignments are described below.

#### **Temporary (Non-Taxable)**

If an assignment is expected to last less than one year, and is completed in less than a year; the assignment is temporary and travel expense reimbursements are not taxable.

#### **Long-term/Indefinite (Taxable)**

Extended TDY assignments considered long-term/indefinite are taxable as follows:

- If an assignment in a single location is expected to last more than one year, or there is no realistic expectation that it will last less than one year, the assignment is indefinite and reimbursements are taxable for the duration of the assignment;
- If an assignment in a single location is initially expected to last less than one year (temporary), but it is then determined that the assignment will last longer than one year, then the tax status changes from temporary (non-taxable) to indefinite (taxable) on the date this determination is made, not retroactively. Travelers and their supervisors must promptly report adjustments to assignment duration;
- If an employee has a realistic expectation that travel will last more than one year, but the assignment ends up lasting less than one year, the assignment is considered indefinite and all reimbursements pertaining to that assignment are taxable.

The following table illustrates when travel expense reimbursement is taxable:

<i>Expected Length of Assignment</i>	<i>Actual Length of Assignment</i>	<i>Type of Assignment</i>	<i>Taxability of Travel Expenses</i>
Less than one year	Less than one year	Temporary	Not Taxable
Unable to determine if it will be more or less than one year	One year or longer	Indefinite	Taxable from day one
Over one year	Over one year	Indefinite	Taxable from day one
Over one year	Less than one year	Indefinite	Taxable from day one
Less than one year	Longer than one year	Indefinite	Taxable from day it is determined the assignment will extend past one year

The IRS determines when breaks in time at a TDY location are long enough to be considered a break in taxability. The IRS has held to the position that if a person performs TDY travel at one location, on and off, for one year or more and the majority of their time is spent at the TDY location then they are considered on an indefinite assignment and any travel reimbursements received are taxable.

Any tax obligations incurred by a traveler as a result of subletting a residence while on extended TDY assignment are solely the obligation of the traveler.

It is recommended that any employee who is assigned an extended TDY assignment to one location for a year or more in duration consult with a tax professional to ensure that they understand their income tax obligations. The obligation to pay appropriate taxes are the responsibility of the employee and all federal tax laws are administered by the IRS.

**Note: It is the responsibility of the employee and their supervisor to determine when an extended TDY assignment will be indefinite and taxable. Failure to show on the travel authorization or to report to the Bureau finance office, that a TDY assignment is indefinite will have adverse effects on the taxes the Bureau finance office reports for the employee through payroll and may cause the employee to be default on their Federal, State and Local tax obligations.**

### **7.3.2 Understanding Income Tax Reimbursement Allowance (ITRA)**

When a traveler requests reimbursement for taxable extended TDY travel, the Bureau finance office will add to the voucher claim an amount known as a withholding tax allowance (WTA); this allowance is an estimate of taxes owed and intended to reimburse the majority of the taxes the traveler will owe on their taxable reimbursement. At the end of the tax year the employee will be required to file a claim for ITRA.

The ITRA is designed to offset the true tax implications associated with completing an extended TDY assignment during a tax year. The ITRA reimbursement is approximately equal to the taxes paid in the prior tax year and the taxes due on the ITRA in the upcoming tax year. The



allowance is considered taxable income and is subject to the same tax withholding as other income (income and employment taxes, including FICA and Medicare). Travelers cannot claim reimbursement for any employment taxes that are withheld. The ITRA reimbursement is included on the traveler's W-2 as taxable income for the tax year payment was received. DOI will not issue lump sum payments for the ITRA.

### **7.3.3 Identifying Documentation Required to Substantiate ITRA Claim**

The DOI does not accept Federal or State income tax returns as supporting documentation for ITRA claims; travelers should not send tax returns to a Department or Bureau finance office. Travelers must provide the following documentation to substantiate ITRA claims:

- Travel vouchers;
- ITRA Certification; and
- Copy of the W-2(s). Travelers can contact their payroll offices to request duplicate copies.

### **Timeline for ITRA Claim Submission**

Bureaus will send notifications regarding ITRA filing deadlines and forms to all employees who have been on taxable extended TDY assignments during the year. ITRA claims are typically due in March or April and processed no later than August 30. Travelers must file ITRA claims annually for taxable travel. The reimbursement allowance will offset the additional taxable income resulting from travel reimbursements as reported on a traveler's W-2 Form(s) for the year.

### **7.3.4 Understanding ITRA Calculations**

The ITRA is calculated by the same method used for relocation income tax allowance (RITA) reimbursement. The Bureau official who calculates the reimbursement must first determine the appropriate Federal, State and local marginal tax rates. The official should refer to the [marginal tax tables for the RITA tables](#).

The official must consider any excess per diem payments. If a traveler is authorized a higher per diem rate (i.e., actual expense reimbursement), the amount of per diem in excess of the locality rate is considered a withholding tax allowance for the ITRA calculation.

If a traveler was issued any excess payment for WTA for a tax year, the traveler's Bureau is responsible for collecting those excess payments. If the traveler was not issued enough WTA during the year to offset their Federal, State and Local taxes, a payment for that amount of taxes owed will be issued. The Bureau may need to issue corrected W-2 or 1099 Forms in some instances.

## **7.4 Documentation Requirements for Extended TDY Assignments**

### **7.4.1 Documenting Extended TDY Assignment Reimbursement**

#### **Travel Authorizations**

The Bureau sponsoring the extended TDY assignment must authorize the assignment on a Trip-by-Trip authorization. A traveler must obtain a new travel authorization each fiscal year. The traveler must confirm the travel dates in ETS, clearly state that the trip is an extended TDY assignment, identify whether or not the trip is indefinite and attach a copy of the documentation

supporting the per diem reimbursement rate and schedule for return travel (e.g., Per diem Justification form).

### **Travel Vouchers**

Each travel voucher that an employee files during an extended TDY assignment must include all expenses that the employee incurs during the period covered by that voucher. The traveler must submit a travel voucher at least once every 30 days. The traveler may submit vouchers more frequently with the concurrence of the approving official or if required by Bureau policy. The traveler must submit the final travel voucher within 5 business days of completing the extended assignment.

Travelers must file travel vouchers in compliance with the Department's TDY travel policy. For additional information about travel authorizations, see [Section 1.3](#) and for travel vouchers, see [Section 1.4](#).

### **7.4.2 Documenting Interruptions to Extended TDY Assignments**

Bureaus may provide reimbursement to travelers to offset costs associated with certain types of interruptions that occur during extended TDY assignments. The two most common types of interruptions are: 1) return travel to an employee's residence or official duty station for health and well-being or official purposes; and 2) directed TDY travel to an alternate location for official purposes.

#### **Return Travel for Health and Well-Being**

During an extended TDY assignment, the Bureau may reimburse costs associated with limited return travel to the residence or official duty station for the traveler's health and well-being. Travelers may claim reimbursement for transportation which is determined to be most advantageous to the Government and en route travel costs from the extended TDY assignment location to the residence or official duty station and for the return to the extended TDY assignment location at the supervisor's discretion, based on work demands and personal considerations. The traveler is not eligible for per diem reimbursement for time spent at the residence or official duty station.

The traveler and the approving official should determine and document the appropriate frequency and duration for this type of return travel prior to the beginning of the assignment. Generally, the approving official may authorize one return trip every four weeks for the duration of the extended assignment; however, he or she may amend the TA and authorize shorter or longer intervals between return trips, as circumstances apply.

Travelers are encouraged to check out of lodging at the extended TDY assignment location during return travel to the residence or official duty station, whenever possible and advantageous to the government. Receipts are required to support reimbursement of this expense. Dual lodging is not allowable when a traveler is on leave.

Travelers may choose to return to their residences or official duty stations more often than authorized on non-workdays at their own expense. In this case, the traveler may not claim reimbursement for per diem, transportation or any other expenses associated with the return trip.

### **Directed TDY Travel for Official Purposes**

Directed travel is travel that is advantageous to the Government. There is no limit on the frequency of directed travel, but the travel must have an official purpose. Bureaus may not use directed return travel to "break up" an extended TDY assignment into shorter trips for the purpose of increasing an employee's per diem reimbursement. As with return travel, travelers are encouraged to check out of lodging at the extended TDY assignment location, whenever feasible and cost effective.

If a traveler is directed to travel to an alternate TDY location (i.e., not the official duty station), the traveler is reimbursed at the full locality per diem rate for the alternate location. The approving official may, with justification, determine that the reduced per diem rate is still sufficient, in which case the traveler would receive 55 percent of the per diem rate for the alternate TDY location. Bureaus may authorize use of a rental car at the alternate TDY location in order to allow the employee to accomplish official business. The employee must obtain pre-authorization in order to obtain a rental car.

### **Annual Leave during Extended TDY Assignments**

Travelers on extended TDY assignments are not eligible for per diem or dual lodging reimbursement when on approved leave (i.e., annual, credit hours or compensatory time) for more than one-half of the daily prescribed work hours in a given day (e.g., four hours for a standard eight-hour work day). Travelers are not eligible for per diem reimbursement on non-workdays (e.g., holidays and weekends) when on approved leave the day before and the day after the non-workday for more than one-half of the prescribed working hours.

Policies on "use or lose" annual leave and restoration of annual leave apply to travelers on extended TDY assignments - leave may be restored only if not used because of public exigencies, sickness or administrative error. Bureaus may not restore unused annual leave solely for the purpose of maintaining an employee's entitlement to per diem reimbursement.

### **Sick Leave during Extended TDY Assignments**

Bureaus may reimburse travelers on extended TDY assignments for per diem expenses for up to 14 calendar days if they are incapacitated by illness or injury not caused by their own misconduct. If a traveler must interrupt or discontinue an extended TDY assignment because of serious injury or illness experienced by the traveler or a member of the traveler's immediate family, the traveler is responsible for notifying the approving official as soon as possible. The traveler should try to obtain pre-approval to incur costs associated with such an interruption, whenever possible.

### **Early Termination of Extended TDY Assignment**

If the Government terminates an extended TDY assignment, the traveler may claim reimbursement for any penalties associated with early cancellation of lodging leases. This does not include charges for damages to lodging accommodations caused by the traveler. The travelers should attempt to enter into long-term lodging commitments with built-in flexibility when possible; these types of commitments may eliminate some of the costs associated with assignment termination.

## 8 Travel Charge Card Rules

This section provides a summary of the Department's travel-related charge card policies. Employees should also refer to the [DOI Integrated Charge Card website](#) for comprehensive policies governing charge card use.

### 8.1 Payment of Travel Expenses with the Government Charge Card

#### 8.1.1 Identifying Required Method of Payment for Official Travel Expenses

Charge cards used for travel-related expenses are referred to as Government charge cards with the travel business line. Travelers are responsible for complying with the [DOI Charge Card Policy](#), Department's TDY policy, as well as their Bureau's policies when using the charge card to pay for TDY-related expenses.

Unless a charge card is not accepted or the employee is granted an exemption from the use, employees should use Government charge card to pay for official TDY travel-related expense.

Employees should limit all charges made to the charge card to the authorized reimbursable amount. If an employee exceeds the reimbursable amount for any centrally-billed expense, the employee must reimburse the Bureau for the excess cost through the Bureau's collections process.

#### Obtaining a Government Charge Card

Employees who are expected to perform official travel are required to apply for a DOI Government charge card with the travel business line. An employee who carries a delinquent account balance from a previous Government charge card must repay the balance before a new card is issued. During the charge card application process, the employee must complete web-based cardholder training and authorize a credit worthiness evaluation.

#### 8.1.2 Understanding Exceptions to Mandatory Use of the Charge Card

It is not always possible or practical for travelers to use the Government charge card for official travel expenses. The expenses below are exempt from DOI's requirement to use the charge card. While the employee should still use the charge card to pay for these expenses when possible, these expenses do not require additional approvals or formal exemption requests:

- Expenses incurred at a vendor that does not accept the Government charge card;
- Tips;
- Meals;
- Expenses incurred by an employee who has an application pending for the charge card;
- Expenses incurred by an individual on invitational travel;
- Expenses incurred by a new appointee for a period of 30 days after appointment; and
- Interviewee's travel expenses, excluding transportation.

Employees may initiate official requests for other possible exceptions to DOI's mandatory use of the charge card policy. Exemption requests must be approved by a Program Assistant Secretary. If granted an exemption, the employee may use personal funds (i.e., cash or personal charge card) or a travel advance to pay for official travel expenses. Additionally, the employee may still use the Government charge card for official travel expenses on a voluntary basis.

### **8.1.3 Understanding Limitations on Allowable Charge Card Use**

Travelers may only use Government charge cards to pay for costs associated with their own pre-authorized travel expenses; employees may not use charge cards to pay for unauthorized or personal expenses. In addition, travelers shall not use the Government charge card to pay for group meals. Travelers may not use their Government charge card to pay for another traveler's expenses, meals, lodging, transportation, etc.

### **8.1.4 Understanding Responsibility for Payment**

Employees must comply with the terms and conditions of the cardholder agreements. An employee is required to submit payment for the full balance on the charge card by the statement due date each month. Employees and their supervisors should review the statements prior to submitting payment.

If a traveler has not received reimbursement for the costs listed on a travel voucher by the statement due date, the traveler must pay the balance on the Government charge card with personal funds. However, if reimbursement was not issued within 30 calendar days of the Bureau's receipt of an accurate and complete travel voucher, the Bureau must issue the traveler the two following late payment fees:

- a) General late fee at a flat rate as prescribed by department policy. This fee is not reported as income on the traveler's W-2 Form, since the IRS considers the fee to be compensation for the use of money.
- b) Any late fees that could have been imposed by the charge card vendor for late payment of the bill. In contrast to the general late fee, these fees are considered income and must be reported on the traveler's W-2 Form.

## **8.2 Alternative Payment Methods for Travel Expenses**

### **8.2.1 Understanding Allowable ATM Cash Withdrawals**

Employees who have charge cards with ATM privileges may use their cards to make cash withdrawals up to 5 days prior to the beginning of official TDY travel and while in travel status. Travelers are not authorized take an ATM cash withdrawal after completing TDY assignment. Travelers' withdrawals are limited to the pre-authorized allowance for M&IE, plus reimbursable expenses paid with personal funds.

### **8.2.2 Understanding Allowable Use of the Travel Advance**

A travel advance is a direct deposit given to a traveler who does not qualify for the charge card, does not have ATM privileges, or is awaiting issuance of a charge card or is traveling to an area where the charge card is not widely accepted. Bureau policies govern the circumstances under which a travel advance will be issued. The purpose of a travel advance is to assist a traveler in defraying the travel-related costs that must be paid with personal funds. Travel advances are limited to the amount required to pay for travel expenses for the official trip up to 30 days. A traveler requiring a travel advance must complete the [Advance of Funds Application and Account Form \(SF-1038\)](#), obtain their supervisor's approval, and submit this form to their Bureau finance office for coordination and processing at least two weeks prior to the TDY travel departure date.

Travelers must repay travel advances within 30 days of completing TDY travel; travelers may not receive additional travel advances until all previous advances have been repaid. Delinquent advances are reported to the IRS as taxable income.

### **8.2.3 Paying for Travel Expenses with Personal Funds**

Except common carrier transportation, lodging and rental car, travelers may pay for any travel expense with personal funds when a vendor does not accept the Government charge card or when using the charge card is not practical. If cash is required to pay for travel-related expenses, travelers should make an ATM withdrawal with the charge card instead of using personal cash, whenever possible.

**Note: If an employee or traveler uses personal funds to pay for official common carrier transportation in excess of \$100, a waiver may be granted to allow the use of personal funds. The approval must be based on documented inability to use the Government charge card or in instances where the charge card was not accepted. The authority to approve reimbursement of common carrier expense purchased with personal funds will be in accordance with Bureau delegations of authority.**

## Appendix A: Glossary of TDY Travel Terms

This glossary includes definitions for the TDY travel terms referenced in this policy. Travelers and travel arrangers can also refer to the FTR, Part 300-3, for a comprehensive [Glossary of Terms](#).

Term	Definition	Reference
<i>Actual Expense</i>	Method of per diem reimbursement that allows travelers to claim per diem costs in excess of the prescribed locality rate.	<a href="#">Section 2.7</a>
<i>Approving Official</i>	An employee designated by the Bureau who is at least one level above the traveler and has the authority to approve TDY travel and travel-related costs. This person must have fiduciary authority over travel related appropriated funding and he or she may have pecuniary liability for improper approval and use of travel related appropriated funds.	<a href="#">Section 1.4.2</a>
<i>Blanket Travel Authorizations</i>	Authorizations that allow employees to perform multiple trips without obtaining trip-specific approval (e.g., Limited Open).	<a href="#">Section 1.3.2</a>
<i>Business Class</i>	A premium class of accommodations offered by airlines and trains that falls between coach and first class in cost and amenities.	<a href="#">Section 4.2.3</a>
<i>Camp Rate</i>	A type of reduced per diem rate established by the land management Bureaus to pay for the travel expenses of employees who must eat and lodge at nonconventional facilities.	<a href="#">Section 2.6.2</a>
<i>City Pair Airfare</i>	A fare offered by a U.S. air carrier under contract with GSA. City Pair airfares are fully refundable, discounted rates provided to Government employees performing official TDY travel.	<a href="#">Section 4.2.2</a>
<i>Coach Class</i>	The basic class of accommodations offered by airlines and trains; generally, the lowest-cost fare available.	<a href="#">Section 4.2.3</a>
<i>Common Carrier</i>	Commercial air, train, bus, ship and local transit transportation services.	
<i>Conference</i>	A meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium or event where employees gather to discuss issues or obtain training related to official duties.	<a href="#">Section 6.1.1</a>
<i>Continental United States (CONUS)</i>	The 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia.	
<i>Cost Comparison</i>	Documentation of the costs associated with the constructive and anticipated itineraries for a TDY trip. The constructive itinerary considers the most advantageous mode of travel; travelers may only incur	<a href="#">Section 4.1.4</a>

	costs up to the constructive cost documented in the comparison.	
<i>Department</i>	The Department of the Interior (DOI).	
<i>Dual Lodging</i>	Reimbursement for lodging at two different TDY locations during the same period. Travelers can only be reimbursed for dual lodging if they attempted to cancel the first reservation after learning of a change to TDY travel plans.	<a href="#">Section 2.2.1</a>
<i>E-Gov Travel Service (ETS)</i>	ETS is a planning and documentation system interface for TDY travel; employees are required to use ETS to book official TDY travel.	<a href="#">Section 1.2</a>
<i>Emergency Travel</i>	Emergency travel occurs when a traveler is in TDY status and becomes incapacitated by a serious or life-threatening illness or injury, a member of the traveler's immediate family dies or contracts a serious illness or a disaster that directly impacts the traveler's home occurs or is reasonably expected to occur.	<a href="#">Section 3.2</a>
<i>Employee</i>	An individual who receives a salary from DOI.	<a href="#">Section 1.1.2</a>
<i>Extended TDY Assignment</i>	A trip of 30 consecutive calendar days or longer at one location, which is farther than 50 miles from both the traveler's residence and official duty station, but is not considered a TCS.	<a href="#">Section 7</a>
<i>FedRooms</i>	A GSA program that provides Government employees with discounted lodging rates within the maximum rate for each TDY location. The program provides certain benefits and flexibility for employees who perform TDY travel.	<a href="#">Section 2.2.1</a> <a href="#">FedRooms website</a>
<i>First Class</i>	The highest class of accommodation offered by a common carrier in terms of cost and amenities.	<a href="#">Section 4.2.3</a>
<i>Foreign Air Carrier</i>	An air carrier that does not hold a certificate issued by the United States under 49 U.S.C. § 41102.	<a href="#">Section 4.2.7</a>
<i>Full Coach Fare</i>	A coach fare available to the general public on the date that the travel was planned for the time the travel occurred. The full coach fare determines the reimbursement for travel on a Government aircraft.	<a href="#">Section 4.11.3</a>
<i>Furnished Meal</i>	A meal provided to a traveler by the lodging establishment; these meals are factored into the daily lodging rate as a distinct cost. Travelers must reduce their M&IE reimbursement by the amount associated with each furnished meal.	<a href="#">Section 2.3.2</a>
<i>Government Aircraft</i>	An aircraft that the Government owns, leases, charters or rents.	<a href="#">Section 4.11</a>



<i>Government-Owned Vehicle (GOV)</i>	A vehicle owned by an agency, assigned or dispatched to an agency from the GSA Interagency Fleet Management System, or leased by the Government for a period of 60 days or longer from a commercial source.	<a href="#">Section 4.6</a>
<i>Immediate Family</i>	Members of an employee's household, including spouse, domestic partner, children of the employee or the employee's spouse/domestic partner, dependent parents and dependent brothers/sisters. Approving officials may expand this definition when authorizing emergency travel on a case-by-case basis.	<a href="#">Section 3.2.2</a>
<i>Incapacitating Illness/Injury</i>	An illness or injury that occurs suddenly and requires the employee to interrupt or discontinue TDY travel, either temporarily or permanently.	<a href="#">Section 3.2.1</a>
<i>Income Tax Reimbursement Allowance (ITRA)</i>	An allowance provided to travelers on extended TDY assignments to offset the tax implications associated with completing the assignments.	<a href="#">Section 7.3.2</a>
<i>Internal Meeting</i>	A meeting that focuses on overseeing program activities. The attendees of an internal meeting are primarily Government employees with few, if any, non-Government attendees.	<a href="#">Section 6.1.1</a>
<i>Interviewee</i>	An individual who is being considered for employment by DOI.	<a href="#">Section 1.5.2</a>
<i>Invitational Traveler</i>	An individual who travels once or infrequently on behalf of DOI.	<a href="#">Section 1.5.1</a>
<i>Letter of Identification</i>	A letter provided to a contractor by DOI to assist the contractor in obtaining reduced fares and rates offered to Government travelers.	<a href="#">Section 1.5.3</a>
<i>Local Travel</i>	Travel that does not meet the requirements of TDY travel because it is either short in duration or close in distance. Employees performing local travel are not entitled to per diem reimbursement.	<a href="#">374 DM 201-1 Local Travel Policy</a>
<i>Lodgings-plus Per diem</i>	DOI's default method of reimbursement for lodging expenses and M&IE that a traveler incurs while in TDY status.	<a href="#">Section 2.5</a>
<i>Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&amp;IE) Allowance</i>	A daily allowance provided to travelers in TDY status to pay for the cost of reasonable meals and travel-related expenses. A traveler receives the full M&IE rate for the locality while in TDY status, except on travel days, when the rate is reduced to 75% of the locality rate.	<a href="#">Section 2.5.2</a>
<i>Mileage Reimbursement Rate</i>	A GSA issued rate provided to a traveler when traveling by POV for official travel. The mileage reimbursement rate accounts for costs associated with fuel, maintenance, depreciation, taxes and insurance.	<a href="#">Section 4.7.2</a>

<i>Miscellaneous Expenses</i>	Expenses that are directly related to TDY travel but do not fall under the main cost categories of transportation, lodging or M&IE reimbursement.	<a href="#">Section 5</a>
<i>Official Deviation/Directed Travel</i>	An adjustment to a travel itinerary when a traveler in TDY status receives direction to perform official travel at another TDY location.	<a href="#">Section 7.4.2</a>
<i>Official Duty Station</i>	The location where an employee regularly performs official duty. If an employee travels regularly, the official duty station is considered the location where the work activities of the employee's position are based.	
<i>Official Travel</i>	TDY travel approved on an official travel authorization that takes an employee away from the official duty station or other authorized point of departure to a TDY location. Official travel also includes return travel from a TDY location and travel between TDY locations.	
<i>Outside of the Continental United States (OCONUS)</i>	Alaska; Hawaii; and the U.S. Territories, including American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.	
<i>Per diem</i>	The per diem allowance (also referred to as subsistence allowance) is a daily payment, instead of reimbursement for actual expenses, of lodging (excluding taxes), meals, and related incidental expenses.	<a href="#">Section 2</a>
<i>Permanent Change of Station (PCS)</i>	The process that an employee completes to permanently relocate from one official duty station to another.	<a href="#">DOI PCS Handbook</a>
<i>Personal Deviation</i>	A traveler performs personal travel in conjunction with an official trip that impacts the cost of transportation or duration of the trip.	<a href="#">Section 1.3.7</a>
<i>Premium Accommodations</i>	First class or business class accommodations on a common carrier. An approving official must pre-authorize premium accommodations and may only do so under limited circumstances.	<a href="#">Section 4.2.3</a>
<i>Privately-Owned Vehicle (POV)</i>	Any vehicle (e.g., automobile, motorcycle, aircraft, boat) owned/leased by the employee, rather than the Government or a rental car company that is operated by an employee for official Government business.	<a href="#">Section 4.7</a>
<i>Prudent person rule</i>	A requirement that travelers must exercise the same care when incurring official travel expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling at personal expense.	<a href="#">Section 1.1.3</a>
<i>Receipt</i>	A document which typically shows the date and time a purchase was made, items bought, amount of purchase price and totals, the name and location of store/entity where the purchases were made. In addition, a receipt can include supplemental information such as the method	<a href="#">Section 1.4.1</a>

	of payment used and other relevant sales-related information.	
<i>Reduced Per diem</i>	A per diem rate below the maximum locality rate for the pre-authorized TDY location, which is authorized in advance of travel by the approving official. Reduced per diem is generally associated with extended TDY assignments (trips 30 days or longer in duration) and lodging in nonconventional facilities (camp rates).	<a href="#">Section 2.6</a>
<i>Space Available Travel</i>	Travel on a Government aircraft that has already been scheduled for an official purpose with seats available.	<a href="#">Section 4.11</a>
<i>Special Conveyance</i>	Commercially rented or hired modes of transportation other than POVs and GOVs.	<a href="#">Section 4.8</a>
<i>Temporary Change of Station (TCS)</i>	An alternative to an extended TDY assignment. TCS is travel required to complete relocation to a new official duty station for a long-term assignment, and subsequent return travel to the previous official duty station once the assignment is complete.	<a href="#">DOI PCS Handbook</a>
<i>Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel</i>	TDY travel is any official travel that is farther than 50 miles from both the employee's commuting residence and permanent duty station.	<a href="#">Section 1.1.1</a>
<i>Travel Advance</i>	Prepayment of travel expenses paid to a traveler through direct deposit. Travel advances are provided to employees who do not qualify for charge cards, do not have ATM privileges, are awaiting issuance of charge cards or are traveling to areas where charge cards are not widely accepted.	<a href="#">Section 8.2.2</a>
<i>Travel Arranger</i>	An employee who books, documents and adjusts travel reservations on behalf of invitational travelers.	
<i>Travel Authorizations</i>	The forms used to approve official TDY travel and travel-related expenses. These forms are created and approved in ETS.	<a href="#">Section 1.3</a>
<i>Travel Vouchers</i>	The forms used to approve travelers for reimbursement of travel-related expenses. These forms are created and approved in ETS.	<a href="#">Section 1.4</a>
<i>Travel Management Center (TMC)</i>	DOI TMCs, Duluth Travel and El Sol Travel, are responsible for assisting travelers with booking and adjusting travel itineraries.	
<i>Trip-by-Trip Authorization</i>	A travel authorization that allows an employee or group of employees to take one specific official TDY trip. Travelers must obtain Trip-by-Trip authorizations for conferences, trainings, foreign travel, donated travel, invitational travel and extended TDY assignments.	<a href="#">Section 1.3.2</a>

<i>United States (U.S.)</i>	The 48 contiguous States, the District of Columbia and States and areas defined under the term “Non-Foreign Area.”	
---------------------------------	--	--

**Temporary Duty Travel Policy – Amended Version 3**  
**Appendix 1 – Matrix of Policy Changes**

August 31, 2018

Section Number	Section Title	Policy Changes
1	Introduction	Provides clarification regarding applicability of the policy.
1.1.1	Introduction – Defining TDY Travel	Modifies the definition of TDY travel and removes reference to pre-authorization of travel which was confusing and redundant.
1.1.1	Introduction – Defining TDY Travel	Modifies explanation of how travelers make claims.
1.1.3	Introduction – Understanding Responsibility for Travel Related Costs	Amends prudent person rule description to detail traveler liability should they use or claim unauthorized or unnecessary travel expenses.
1.2.1	Introduction – Understanding ETS	Provides a better definition of ETS.
1.2.2	Introduction – Defining the Federal Travel Management Program	Removes reference to restricting travel system access for travel by contractors; Adds reference to replace it.
1.3.7	Introduction – Booking Combined Official and Personal Travel	States that per diem cannot be reimbursed if a person takes leave for more than half of their scheduled work day.
1.4.1	Introduction – Understanding Travel Vouchers	Modifies receipt submission requirements for voucher claims to reduce unnecessary burden.
1.4.1	Introduction – Understanding Travel Vouchers	Adds reference that hard copy travel vouchers may be needed to document approval of travel for invitational travelers.
1.4.2	Introduction – Defining Approving Officials Responsibilities	Requires approving officials to ensure centrally billed travel expenses are not reimbursed to the traveler.
1.4.2	Introduction – Defining Approving Officials Responsibilities	Clarifies responsibilities of the traveler, approving official and certifying official related to travel voucher claims.
1.4.3	Introduction – Defining Timelines for Travel Claims	Removes reference to Certifying Officials and defines requirement to pay a late penalty fee to the traveler when the travel voucher is not paid within 30 days of submission.
1.4.4	Introduction – Disallowing Travel Claims	States requirement to return a voucher for erroneous voucher submission.
1.5.1	Introduction – Understanding Invitational Travel	States that invitational travelers may also be given access to a declining balance card if the travel expenses are expected to exceed \$50.
2.1.4	Per Diem Expenses – Determining Eligibility for Per Diem on Leave or Non-Workdays during TDY Travel	Removes reference to DOI TDY Cost Comparison Form and it changes the requirement for per diem ineligibility when leave is taken from 4 or more hours to more than half of the scheduled work day.
2.2.1	Per Diem Expenses – Obtaining Lodging for TDY Travel	Details traveler considerations when selecting lodging.
2.2.1	Per Diem Expenses – Obtaining Lodging for TDY Travel	States that Bureaus may identify emergency and other situations where the traveler may book lodging directly with an establishment.
2.2.2	Per Diem Expenses – Understanding Types of Lodging	States that home rental service providers, such as, Airbnb and Trovit are considered non-conventional lodging.

<b>Section Number</b>	<b>Section Title</b>	<b>Policy Changes</b>
2.5.2	Per Diem Expenses – Determining Allowable M&IE Reimbursement Rate	Emphasizes that M&IE is based on TDY location.
2.6.1	Per Diem Expenses – Reducing Per Diem during TDY Assignment	Removes note which restates approving official’s responsibilities for evaluating travel needs as it is redundant.
2.7.1	Determining Eligibility for Actual Expense Reimbursement	Emphasizes that actual expense per diem reimbursement must be authorized on the travel authorization prior to the trip.
2.7.2	Per Diem Expenses – Requesting Actual Expense Reimbursement	Allows for actual expense per diem to be claimed without prior approval before the trip when travel is to a Presidentially Declared Disaster Area.
2.7.2	Per Diem Expenses – Requesting Actual Expense Reimbursement	States that a traveler’s lodging preference is not a reason to incur an actual expense lodging cost.
3.1.1	Extenuating Circumstances for Travel – Understanding Allowable Expenses	Changes documentation requirements for accommodation of a special need.
3.2.2	Extenuating Circumstances for Travel – Determining When Emergency Travel is Necessary	Removed the reference to “Defining Family for employee emergency travel purposes” and replaced it with Determining when emergency travel is necessary, and guidance to not be solely family centric.
3.2.4	Determining Allowable Expenses when Illness or Injury Occurs	Added "reservations" to provide clarity to authorization to approve adjusting existing lodging.
4.1.1	Transportation Expenses – Identifying and Authorizing Allowable Travel Expenses	Added to be in compliance with the FTR policy. Defines preferred methods of transportation as Common Carrier Transportation, Government Owned Vehicle (GOV), Commercial Rental Car and Personally Owned Vehicle (POV), in order of preference.
4.1.2	Transportation Expenses – Selecting Most Advantageous Mode of Transportation	States that when an automobile is determined to be the most advantageous method of transportation that the order of preference for the type of automobile are in order: GOV, Special Conveyance (Rental Car) and POV.
4.1.2	Transportation Expenses – Selecting Most Advantageous Mode of Transportation	States that the traveler is responsible for any excess cost incurred when using a vehicle type other than what is authorized, and that a cost reconstruction must be completed when the traveler uses a POV for personal convenience.
4.1.4	Transportation Expenses – Creating Cost Comparisons	Removes traveler’s requirement to provide certain data in addition to their cost comparison.
4.1.4	Transportation Expenses – Creating Cost Comparisons	Tasks Bureaus with ensuring centrally billed personal travel expenses are not charged to the Government charge card.
4.2.2	Transportation Expenses – Using Contract City-Pair Airfare and Non-Refundable Fares	Simplifies the language for using city pair fares. Emphasizes use of capacity controlled City-Pair fares; States that the cost of using any other fare is limited to the cost of the City-Pair fares, unless an allowable exception not related to cost exists for not using the City-Pair fare.
4.2.2	Transportation Expenses – Using Contract City-Pair Airfare and Non-Refundable Fares	States that any additional cost associated with using a third party entity to book airfare is the responsibility of the traveler.

<b>Section Number</b>	<b>Section Title</b>	<b>Policy Changes</b>
4.2.2	Transportation Expenses – Using Contract City-Pair Airfare and Non-Refundable Fares	States that non-refundable fare reservations must be approved within 24 hours or the airline will cancel the reservation.
4.2.3	Transportation Expenses – Selecting Appropriate Class of Airline Accommodations	Changes for booking of premium class travel in ConcurGov, and requires that the reasons for the upgrade and the approval of use must be shown on the travel authorization prior to travel.
4.2.5	Transportation Expenses – Selecting Among Airlines that Offer Same Fare	Clarifies the factors that must be considered when selecting similar airfares from different airlines.
4.2.6	Transportation Expenses – Changing or Cancelling Ticketed Airfares	Changes rules for cancelling and changing ticketed airfare when TDY travel changes, clarifying traveler’s responsibilities.
4.4.2	Transportation Expenses – Selecting Appropriate Class of Ship Accommodation	Section removed.
4.4.3	Transportation Expenses – Determining Appropriate Use of U.S. Flag Ships	Section removed.
4.6.3	Transportation Expenses – Understanding Appropriate Use of GOV	Adds a new rule that requires passengers assigned to a GOV to use that as their primary mode of TDY transportation. Travelers who choose to drive POV may not be reimbursed any mileage cost.
4.6.3	Transportation Expenses – Understanding Appropriate Use of GOV	States that the travel approving official must designate an official driver when multiple travelers are assigned to a GOV as transportation to a TDY site.
4.7.1	Transportation Expenses – Determining Allowable Use of POV	Added a new consideration (availability of rental car agency near duty station) whether POV should be authorized.
4.7.1	Transportation Expenses – Determining Allowable Use of POV	Clarifies preference of GOV and rental over POV to comply with FTR policy.
4.7.2	Transportation Expenses – Calculating POV Mileage Reimbursement	Clarifies rules on allowable POV mileage for claim.
4.7.3	Transportation Expenses – Using POV as Personal Preference	States requirement to show the authorized mode of transportation on the travel authorization and to show alternative modes of transportation which are used for personal preference on the travel voucher.
4.7.3	Transportation Expenses – Using POV as Personal Preference	Added to comply with FTR change which requires cost comparisons when a person is authorized to use a rental car but uses a POV for personal reasons. Removes language requiring approving officials to sign cost comparisons prior to official travel and removes the requirement that the comparison must be attached to the authorization.
4.8	Transportation Expenses – Determining Appropriate Use of Special Conveyances	Removes both the requirement to pre-approve special conveyances and considerations for approving officials.
4.10.2	Transportation Expenses – Selecting Appropriate Rental Car	Removes requirement to select the least costly upgraded vehicle size as it is redundant with other policy.
4.10.3	Transportation Expenses – Determining Reimbursement for Premium Services and Assistive Technologies	Allows for use of Automated Toll Payment Systems for rental cars in specified situations.

<b>Section Number</b>	<b>Section Title</b>	<b>Policy Changes</b>
4.10.4; 4.10.5	Transportation Expenses – Determining Reimbursement for Rental Car Insurance; Following Accident Procedures	Changes rules on claims for property damage to require submission of tort claims to the traveler’s Bureau.
4.10.6	Transportation Expenses – Understanding Liability for Unauthorized Use of Rental Vehicle	Emphasizes that the DTMO has the final authority under the Government Rental Car Agreement to determine if theft or damage were the result of irresponsible or negligent use of a rental car.
4.10.8	Use of Transportation Network Companies	FTR change allows for the use of TNC’s for TDY travel.
5.1	Miscellaneous Expense – Identifying Allowable Miscellaneous Expenses	Removes requirement to pre-authorize all miscellaneous expenses, however recommends including expected expenses on the travel authorization.
5.1	Miscellaneous Expense – Identifying Allowable Miscellaneous Expenses	Added certain expenses which are frequently requested but not reimbursable because they are for personal use and not related to official travel. Removed safe fees from the list of non-reimbursable expenses.
5.3	Miscellaneous Expense – Understanding Communications Policies	Describes reasons for allowed purchase and use of calling cards.
5.3	Miscellaneous Expense – Understanding Communications Policies	Prohibits reimbursement of personal phone calls unless they are directly related to their official travel.
Section 6	Conference Related Travel	Removed the references to conference planning requirements that are discussed in a separate policy document FMM 2015-010.
Section 8	Travel Charge Card Rules	Removed reference to the integrated charge card in the travel policy, and changes the title of the chapter/part. With the implementation of Smart Pay 3 DOI will no longer use an integrated card product.