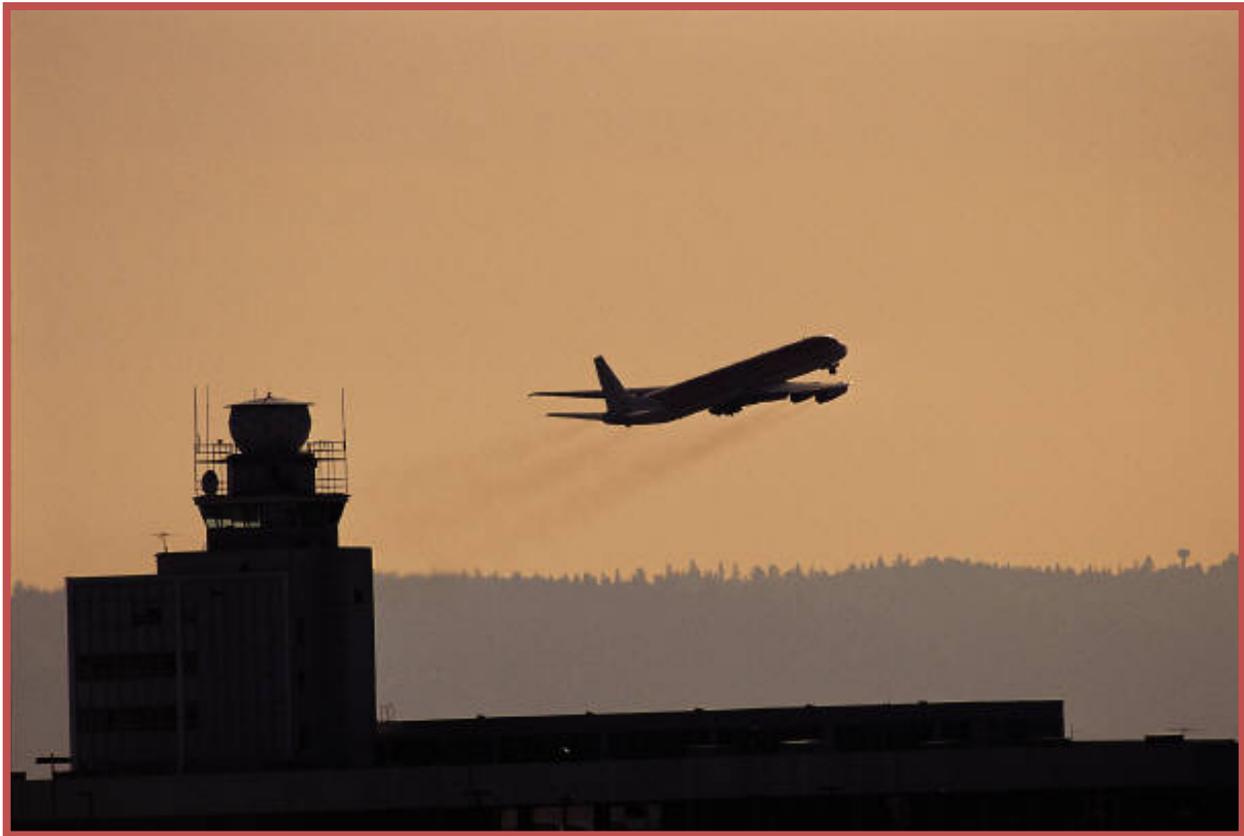


U.S. Department of the Interior
Temporary Duty Travel Policy



Amendment Version 1.0

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1 Introduction

This section introduces temporary duty (TDY) travel and includes guidance on the eligibility for TDY travel allowances, E-Gov Travel Service (ETS), pre-travel authorizations, travel vouchers for post-travel reimbursement claims and the different types of TDY travel.

1.1 Temporary Duty Travel Allowances

1.1.1 Defining TDY Travel

This policy provides guidance to Department of the Interior (DOI, the Department) employees and other individuals performing or administering 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 Travel 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 Travel 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 more than 50 miles from both the employee's permanent duty station and commuting residence.</p> <p>Note: The definition of TDY travel is not contingent upon per diem entitlement.</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 must refer to 347 DM 200, DOI FTR Implementing Instructions for DOI's local travel policy.</p>
<i>How is it approved?</i>	<p>The traveler must have a valid travel authorization prior to performing TDY travel. See Section 1.3 for guidance on travel authorizations.</p>	<p>Employees must follow their Bureau's policy for local travel to ensure local travel expenses will be paid.</p>

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	TDY Travel	Local Travel
<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. See Section 4.7.2 for additional information on POV mileage reimbursement.	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 costs 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>	The traveler must create a travel voucher in ETS to claim reimbursement for TDY travel. See Section 1.4 for guidance on travel vouchers.	The traveler must file a Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business (SF-1164) to request reimbursement of local travel. The traveler <u>may not</u> use ETS to submit a claim for local travel reimbursement.

1.1.2 Understanding Eligibility for TDY Allowances

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

- The DOI employee traveling on official business in one of the following ways:
 - Individual who is directly employed by DOI, regardless of status or rank;
 - Expert or consultant who is paid on a daily (when-actually-employed) basis; or
 - Invitational traveler who is serving with pay at \$1 a year.
- Invitational traveler serving without pay, e.g., conference speakers, committee members, etc.
- Employees completing employee emergency travel because of an interruption of official travel for an incapacitating illness or injury or a personal emergency. See [Section 3.2](#) for guidance on employee emergency travel.
- Law enforcement or investigative employees and members of their families traveling as a result of a threat directly associated with their official duties. See [Section 3.3](#) for additional information about this type of travel.
- Interviewees performing pre-employment interview travel.

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](#)

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- Transportation expenses: [Section 4](#)
- Miscellaneous expenses: [Section 5](#)

Note: The reference to DOI Bureaus applies to Bureaus and all large DOI entities, including Offices.

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 in excess of pre-authorized or appropriate expenses with their 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 travel costs, travelers must also consider less expensive alternatives to travel, such as teleconferencing, web conferencing or video conferencing. When travel is necessary, employees must 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.
- 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 travel.

1.1.4 Using Promotional Benefits Earned during TDY Travel

Travel vendors may offer promotional benefits (e.g., frequent flyer miles, hotel points) to travelers who perform TDY travel. 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
- There is no additional cost 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 provides DOI employees with an automated planning and documentation interface for 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 official 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

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Business Management System (**FBMS**). Bureaus must be able to aggregate travel expenditures (e.g., per diem, transportation, rental car expense, 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 these actions. 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.

Employees are allowed to reserve lodging directly with vendors in the following circumstances:

- Pre-arranged lodging to attend conferences, training, or meetings;
- From establishments which cannot be found in the ETS or through the travel management center (TMC) and offer rates at or below the GSA locality rate;
- Travel is pre-approved; however the exact lodging location is unknown at the time of departure, e.g., when traveler is performing field work;
- While en route, it is discovered that the previously booked lodging establishment is substandard or unsafe and other suitable lodging must be obtained immediately; and
- Emergency situations.

It is never allowable to reserve and purchase TDY lodging or transportation with third party vendors, e.g., Travelocity, Expedia, etc. 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 still be reserved with DOI's TMC.

Transportation on small airlines or with bush pilots must be arranged through the appropriate TMC. Arranging transportation directly with the airlines must not be done 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. See [Section 1.5](#) for additional information on non-employee TDY travel.

Bureaus must not use ETS to process local travel claims. For local travel claims, use [SF-1164](#).

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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:

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

The Department and its Bureaus cannot offer the benefits of the travel management program to contractors. Contractors must travel in accordance with the terms of their contract and are prohibited from using the DOI travel management program.

1.3 Travel Authorizations

1.3.1 Defining Purpose of Travel Authorization Process

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 funding on these costs,
- Commits DOI to pay for authorized travel expenses that are incurred in compliance with Federal and Department travel policy, once signed by an approving official,
- 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
- Track 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 emergency response travel, which is categorized under the trip purpose code – Special Agency Mission. 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 must 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

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the traveler follows the prudent person rule and completes the trip using the most cost-effective route and mode of transportation.

Approving officials and travelers must also support DOI's effort to reduce its carbon footprint by focusing on minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, whenever possible and cost-effective. 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. If a traveler plans to combine official and personal travel, or take leave during a TDY trip, the approving official must provide guidance, advance approval, and ensure that the Government will not incur any additional cost because of the combined trips. See [Section 1.3.7](#) for information on combined official and personal travel.

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:
 - ***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.
 - ***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 the use of premium class transportation be authorized on a blanket authorization, unless it meets the criteria associated with a medical condition or physical disability – see section 4.1.1 for travel in premium class accommodations and 4.2.3 for a list of exceptions.

1.3.3 Defining Minimum Standards for Travel Authorizations

Bureaus may only authorize travel when necessary, effective and economical. Travel authorizations must include the following information:

- Name of the traveler(s),
- Trip purpose of travel,
- Detailed description of the reason for the travel,
- TDY location(s) of the trip,
- Approximate date(s) of the trip,

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- Any conditions or limitations that apply to the authorization, such as:
 - Use of other than coach-class service on common carrier transportation;
 - Use of a foreign air carrier;
 - Use of reduced fares for group or charter arrangements;
 - Use of cash to pay for common carrier transportation;
 - Use of extra-fare train service;
 - Travel by ship;
 - Use of a rental car;
 - Use of a Government aircraft;
 - Payment of a reduced per diem rate;
 - Payment of actual expense per diem;
 - Travel expenses related to employee 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;
- Certification statement that travel is performed in the interest of the Government and the use of telephone or video conferencing could not be used to satisfy this requirement,
- Appropriate Bureau or office line of accounting information (e.g., source of funds for the trip),
- Authorized method of transportation to the TDY location, and
- Approving official's signature. Approving official 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.

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. See [Section 6](#) for additional information on conference travel.
- **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. See [5 CFR 410](#) for additional information on training-related travel.

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- **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 must attempt to coordinate travel and arrange lodging for invitational travelers through ETS, when possible. See [Section 1.5.1](#) for additional information on invitational travel.
- **Travel Received From Non-Federal Source (Donated Travel).** 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. See [Section 1.6.2](#) for additional information on travel funded by a non-federal source.
- **Extended TDY Assignments.** See [Section 7](#) for additional information on TDY trips of 30 consecutive calendar days or longer made to one destination.

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 identifier (see Training Attendance below). Examples: Traveler participates 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.
- **Entitlement Travel¹ (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. Examples: 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 (USC) 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 CFR 410.404](#), which states that “agencies may sponsor an employee’s attendance at a conference as a developmental assignment under section 5 USC 4101, when:

¹ Entitlement travel is included with relocation travel for reporting purposes.

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- (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 USC 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 section on Conference Attendance). Examples: 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. Examples: Employee's day-to-day operational or managerial activities, as defined by the agency, to include, but not be limited to hearings, site visit, information meeting, 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. Examples: 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.

1.3.6 Identifying Travel-Related Expenses that Require Specific Authorization or Pre-Approval

The following travel arrangements require specific authorization or prior approval:

- 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.

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In addition to a specific authorization, the following travel arrangements require advance written authorization:

- Travel expenses related to attendance at a conference,
- Acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source for travel expenses, and
- Use of reduced fares for group or charter arrangements.

Bureaus must implement appropriate policy and procedures for the above requirements.

1.3.7 Booking Combined Official and Personal Travel

When combining official and personal trips, 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. The traveler must then submit the cost breakdown to the approving official to document the intent to combine official and personal travel. Travelers should consider using the DOI TDY Constructive Cost Comparison Form to document the cost breakdown. Bureaus may establish other 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. 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 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 (GSA Contract City Pair fares, rental cars, etc.), discounts, or services for the personal portion of the trip.
- Do not claim per diem reimbursement for any of the following:
 - A day that the traveler takes more than four hours of leave.
 - Additional travel days to or from the TDY location resulting from the personal portion of the trip.
 - Additional days at the TDY location when a trip is extended for personal purposes.

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1.4 Travel Claims for Reimbursement

1.4.1 Understanding Travel Vouchers

A traveler or travel arranger will create a travel voucher in ETS after the conclusion of a TDY trip. Travel vouchers must account for all allowable travel-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;
 - ATM fees
 - Laundry and dry cleaning at a professional laundry facility;
 - Printing expenses associated with official travel, (i.e., printing boarding passes at hotels);
 - Currency conversion fees;
 - Meals reimbursed under the Actual Expense method;
 - Itemized receipt for every authorized expense of \$75 or more, excluding M&IE for which a traveler receives Lodgings-Plus per diem reimbursement; and
 - Charges associated with using hotel phones or personal cellular phones for official business. Government phones, issued Government calling cards, and cell phones are the preferred methods for communication while on TDY assignment.

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 must 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, such as airfare, rental car, lodging, and cash advances are included as documentation;
- Lodging rates on the travel voucher have been adjusted to reflect actual rates paid (lodging taxes paid are reflected as a separate line item);

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- Per diem M&IE reimbursement for the first and last day of travel reflect 75% of the locality rate; and
- Constructive cost comparison along with supervisory approval for alternative travel is filed with the travel voucher, if applicable.

A traveler 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. Travelers are responsible for providing as complete a record of TDY trips as possible. 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.

1.4.2 Defining Approving Officials' Responsibilities

Generally, the same approving official who approved the travel authorization is responsible for approving the travel voucher. Bureaus may designate a different approving official to review travel claims, as necessary. The designated approving official must be authorized to approve the use and expenditure of 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;
- 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, approving officials must ensure that prior to approving the travel 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 approving official is ultimately responsible for the validity of the travel voucher and must ensure compliance with Department and Bureau policy.

1.4.3 Defining Timeline for Travel Claims

The traveler must submit the travel voucher within 5 business days of completing a TDY trip. Bureaus must issue reimbursement within 30 calendar days of receiving a complete and accurate travel voucher. 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 on why it could not be approved as submitted. The traveler must correct and resubmit the voucher within 5 business days of receipt.

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

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If travel voucher claims are not submitted within 30 calendar days of completing the TDY trip, travelers will be reminded to submit the claim. If after 45 calendar days from completing a TDY trip a traveler still has not filed a travel voucher claim, bureau finance offices may implement remediation action to ensure a claim is filed. This may include correspondence with the employee's supervisor, charge card suspension or administrative action.

1.4.4 Disallowing Travel Claims

Reimbursement for travel claims will be 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 travel claim, the traveler must be notified and a detailed explanation for the rejection must be provided. Bureaus must set policy regarding appeals of disallowed travel claims; the policy must include an appeals process and timeline.

1.5 Invitational and Contractor Travel

1.5.1 Understanding Invitational Travel

Invitational travel is a trip authorized for individuals who are either not employed or employed intermittently in Government service, per [5 U.S.C. 5703](#). Travel allowances authorized for invitational travelers are the same as those authorized for DOI employees TDY travel. Travel performed by a DOI employee for another Bureau or Federal Government agency is not considered invitational travel under this definition. Instead, this arrangement is reimbursable travel that must be performed under a reimbursable support agreement (RSA). See [Section 1.6.3](#) for more information on RSAs.

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. See Section 1.5.2 for guidance on pre-employment interview travel.
- Volunteer directed to perform TDY travel for official purposes. Volunteers must reference Bureau policies on volunteer subsistence and appropriate TDY travel.
- Former Federal Government employee or other individual being honored at an awards ceremony. The individual's spouse or family member attending the awards ceremony may also be considered an invitational traveler. Bureaus must set policy on the attendance of a family member at an awards ceremony paid at Government expense.
- Family member or attendant traveling with an employee with 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).

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- 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 governmental agency, private company or non-profit organization).
- Employee is performing travel entirely outside of the United States and the travel is being paid by a foreign government. See Office of International Affairs policy for additional information on approvals required for foreign travel.

An invitational traveler must have a travel authorization prepared and approved by the office sponsoring the travel prior to the beginning of a trip. See [Section 1.3](#) for guidance on travel authorizations. For those Bureaus that do not process invitational travel using ETS, the traveler must prepare the travel authorization ([Form DI-1020](#)). The office sponsoring the travel 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 the traveler should receive a cash advance and must assist the traveler in completing the [Advance of Funds Application and Account \(SF-1038\)](#).

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

In addition to the standard travel voucher procedures, explained in [Section 1.4](#), the sponsoring Bureau must collect any travel advances concurrent with processing the travel 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. In addition, the advanced amount must be reported as taxable income to the traveler. Bureaus shall 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 for the travel 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).

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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 travel 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 interest of the Government. Letters of identification must 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 Another Agency

1.6.1 Defining Travel Funded by Non-Federal Source or Another Agency

This section includes guidance on travel sponsored by a non-Federal source, intra-Governmental travel 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 travel does not create a conflict of interest or compromise the integrity of the mission.

Non-Federal sources sponsor travel of DOI employees in the following three ways: 1) by offering advanced payment; 2) by offering payment after travel occurs (which is only acceptable if allowed by specific statutory authority); 3) or through 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

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book the trip in accordance with their Bureau's policies and processes and submit a travel 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); **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 a payment in kind arrangement. Under this arrangement, the sponsoring non-Federal source provides transportation, food, lodging and other travel-related services instead of issuing payment to the Government for these items. A payment in kind arrangement 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 costs 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 will 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 must not be accepted and reimbursement will be made by means 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 that it is appropriate 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 must use ETS to obtain cost estimates and document the 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 concurrence. The estimate must 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

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- 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. 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 travel authorization and obtain approval prior to travel.

The traveler must perform travel in accordance with their Bureau's policies; the one exception is payment for transportation. The buying Bureau may purchase the traveler's transportation on a Government corporate charge card and reduce the ITA by the amount associated with the transportation. If the buying Bureau uses a Government corporate charge card to cover the cost associated with 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 the 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.

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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 travel voucher to their Bureau for reimbursement.

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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 a traveler must travel more than 50 miles from their residence or official duty station and be in TDY status for 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 official travel 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 must obtain pre-travel approval to claim per diem for the locations where lodging is obtained. Bureaus must 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 travel. 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 or official duty station. The designated Bureau 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 must 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 must verify all seasonal workers' places of residence for their terms of service. Bureaus must 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.

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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:

- Rest periods under circumstances in which rest periods are acceptable and allowed by law.
- Cases in which employees may return to their official duty stations on non-workdays.
- Cases in which per diem rates will be reduced.
- When it is appropriate to provide per diem allowances to travelers performing official travel within 50 miles, but not less than 30 miles, of their official duty stations or residences.
- When actual expense reimbursement is appropriate on a case-by-case basis and the appropriate rate for that reimbursement.
- When employees may claim the full M&IE allowance even 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 of fewer 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 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. 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.

During an authorized rest stop, the per diem reimbursement rate is determined by the rest stop location (see [Section 2.5](#) for guidance on locating lodging and M&IE rates). 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.

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 must authorize a 24-hour rest stop at an intermediate point, when possible, or upon arrival at the TDY location.

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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 the day of the official business trip.

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

If a traveler is combining official and personal travel, 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 and Bureaus must review combined official and personal trips to ensure that the official business 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. See [Section 1.3.7](#) for additional information on combined official and personal travel. See [Section 4.1.4](#) for information on cost comparisons or refer to the DOI TDY Cost Comparison form.

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 approving official may authorize return travel for official purposes when an employee's return to the residence or official duty station is advantageous to the Government (e.g., to perform official business related to the employee's permanent assignment). There is no limit on the frequency of directed return travel for official purposes, but Bureaus may not use directed return travel to break up an extended TDY assignment into shorter trips in order to increase an employee's per diem reimbursement or avoid IRS Code requirements pertaining to the taxability of extended TDY per diem reimbursements for assignments which are expected to last more than 365 days.
- ***Return Travel to Limit Cost.*** When an employee's return to the residence or official duty station will result in substantial cost savings as compared to remaining at the TDY location, the approving official may authorize a return trip (e.g., 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 to perform return travel 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 must determine the appropriate frequency for return travel to maintain the employee's

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health and well-being prior to the onset of the assignment. The frequency of the authorized 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, shorter or longer intervals between return trips may be authorized. See [Section 7.4.2](#) for additional information on return travel during extended TDY assignments.

For the days spent traveling to and from the residence or official duty station, an employee will claim 75 percent of the maximum locality M&IE rate (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 to 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 lease terms, lodging may be claimed during the time period that they return to the official duty station. The traveler must perform a cost analysis to ensure that a term period lease is more advantageous when compared to extended or traditional lodging 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 return 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 must occur immediately upon knowledge of the employee's eminent permanent assignment to his or her TDY location, and the employee must be given at least 6 weeks at his or her old duty station to prepare for reassignment. Employees are no longer eligible for TDY per diem reimbursement once they officially report to their new official duty station. See the [DOI PCS Handbook](#) for additional information on allowable relocation expenses, including temporary quarter's reimbursement.

2.2 Lodging Costs

2.2.1 Obtaining Lodging for TDY Travel

Travelers must follow the prudent person rule when obtaining lodging for TDY travel and consider the least expensive lodging available that facilitates successful completion of the official purpose of the trip. If lodging costs exceed the per diem rate for the pre-authorized TDY location and the traveler did not obtain pre-travel approval to use the Actual Expense method of reimbursement, the difference is not a reimbursable expense; therefore, the traveler must assume the cost and pay for the difference with personal funds.

When obtaining commercial lodging, travelers must book reservations through ETS or the TMC; and use FedRooms rates, 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.

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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 the traveler cannot plan lodging for all TDY locations in advance (e.g., investigations with unknown itineraries, emergency travel, multiple TDY locations requiring ground transportation with stop-over locations that may vary because of terrain, weather, etc.); or
- Pre-arranged lodging is found to be substandard or unsafe.

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 website (e.g., Travelocity, Expedia, etc.) to book lodging is never allowable.

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 (i.e., dual lodging); however, the traveler must receive authorization for dual lodging prior to incurring any additional lodging costs. Bureau officials will 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 lodging 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 to a TDY site for a period of 30 days or more. Apartments may be rented, as well, and are recommended if the lease period 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. Examples of

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these 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. Travelers must provide receipts to justify claimed amounts. 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, RV), the traveler may not claim lodging reimbursement while staying at the secondary residence.
- ***Nonconventional Lodging.*** A traveler may claim costs associated with staying at a nonconventional lodging establishment, such as a camp, when it is advantageous to the Government or conventional lodging is unavailable. See [Section 2.6.2](#) for additional information on camp rates.

2.2.3 Understanding Lodging Taxes and Tax Exempt Status

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

When travelers are performing official business at TDY locations that will not exempt Government employees from paying lodging taxes, Bureaus may reimburse lodging taxes as follows.

- ***For CONUS and non-foreign OCONUS travel:*** The traveler must claim lodging taxes as a separate miscellaneous expense item on the travel voucher; lodging taxes are not included in the traveler's M&IE allowance. If lodging costs exceed the established reimbursement rate and the traveler pays the difference with their personal funds, Bureaus must limit reimbursement for lodging 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 room 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), resulting in loss of the deposit, the traveler must repay 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).

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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., 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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Calculate travel day M&IE allowance:
\$34.50 (Travel day per diem rate: $\$46.00 \times 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 meal amount (i.e., the traveler is not required to reduce the M&IE allowance). Travelers must document these instances when submitting a travel voucher. The required documentation for such cases is a narrative

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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 appropriate 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 that travelers incur while on TDY status.

2.5.1 Determining Allowable Lodging Reimbursement Rate

When overnight lodging is required, the traveler may claim the actual lodging cost up to the maximum allowable lodging 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 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 upon 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. The GSA provides 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 not dependent on the cost of meals consumed or type of incidental expenses. However, travelers must note the following exceptions:

- 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 (see [Section 2.3](#) for additional information on meal costs).
- 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:

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- 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 traveler extends a TDY trip 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 for a TDY trip. 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:

1. 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).
2. 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)

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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 TDY 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).

When a traveler is on an extended TDY assignment and can obtain a reduced lodging rate or prepare meals in extended-stay lodging, the per diem rate will be automatically reduced to 55 percent of the locality rate, unless a higher rate is justified. See [Section 7](#) for information on authorizing and documenting extended TDY travel.

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 must 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 beyond 30 days (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 set its own camp rates. Bureaus will 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 set a minimum amount for reimbursing incidental expenses on reduced per diem rates.

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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. Therefore, claims for actual expense reimbursement, i.e., reimbursement in excess of the prescribed locality per diem rate. 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 this justification with the travel authorization and voucher.

Bureaus may authorize travelers to claim 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 of the United States, 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 TDY travel. The only exceptions to this requirement are performing emergency travel and return travel due to a Presidential declaration of a natural or human disaster at a TDY location.

When submitting justification for actual expense reimbursement, travelers must document that at least three lodging establishments were researched. The traveler must include the documented research to support the requested actual expense reimbursement with the travel authorization. A traveler's lodging preference is not an acceptable reason to authorize actual expense reimbursement. When seeking approval for actual expense reimbursement for M&IE, the traveler must also include a justification for exceeding the prescribed M&IE rate. The approving official must validate the traveler's research prior to authorizing actual expense reimbursement.

2.7.3 Authorizing Actual Expense Reimbursement

Approving officials may authorize actual expense reimbursement only when the expenses 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).

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If a Bureau has documented multiple instances in which travelers were unable to obtain lodging or meals under the established per diem rates, the Bureau must notify the DOI Travel Lead 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 must require a higher level of approval for reimbursement exceeding 150 percent of the locality per diem rate. The maximum actual expense reimbursement rate 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:

1. 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.
2. The approving official authorizes a 150% actual expense reimbursement rate for Meg's trip.
3. After her trip, Meg submits a claim for reimbursement based on the actual costs that she incurred and substantiates these costs with receipts.

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3 Extenuating Circumstances for Travel

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

3.1 Travel of Employee with Disability or Special Need

3.1.1 Understanding Allowable Expenses for TDY Travel of Employee with Disability or Special Need

When an employee with a disability or special need travels on TDY assignment, the employee is eligible to claim reimbursement for pre-approved travel expenses associated with reasonable accommodations. The employee must submit a current medical statement written by a competent medical authority documenting the disability or special need. The employee must re-certify the medical statement on an annual basis, unless the disability or special need is permanent and confirmed in the medical statement. The employee must obtain approval on this documentation prior to travel to be eligible for reimbursement of the expenses related to the disability or special need.

Bureaus may pre-authorize an employee with a disability or special need to claim reimbursement for any of the following expenses incurred during TDY travel:

- Transportation costs incurred by a medical attendant or a family member acting as a medical attendant who must travel with the employee. A competent medical authority must justify the need for a medical attendant; 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 provided during travel 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 must consider less expensive alternatives (e.g., "bulk-head" seating; providing two coach class seats instead of one business class seat). Refer to [Section 4.2.3](#) for additional information on premium class travel.

A traveler may not claim reimbursement for costs associated with a disability or special need that are incurred when not in TDY status on the travel voucher. 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 will 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

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exempt employees from submitting medical certifications for visible physical conditions.

- Additional travel expenses directly related to accommodating an employee's disability or special need for the purpose of completing official travel.

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 Employee Emergency Travel

3.2.1 Understanding Employee Emergency Travel

Employee emergency travel is travel that 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.

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

3.2.2 Defining "Family" for Employee Emergency Travel Purposes

When defining "family" for the purpose of reimbursing TDY expenses in employee emergency travel situations, approving officials must consider the following factors on a case-by-case basis:

- Extent of the emergency,
- Relationship between the employee and the 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 of the need to interrupt or discontinue a TDY trip because of a personal emergency as soon as possible. Travelers must obtain approval

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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 generally 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

Bureaus may provide reimbursement for the following expenses when a traveler interrupts official TDY travel because of an illness or injury:

- 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 must complete a cost comparison of the per diem reimbursement versus return travel to the employee's residence, taking into consideration the employee'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.

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Bureaus may not provide reimbursement for the following expenses when a traveler's illness or injury interrupts official TDY travel:

- Emergency transportation or medical care costs,
- Any transportation or per diem expenses that the employee incurs while receiving treatment at a medical facility,
- Other than en route per diem expenses when an employee opts to return to the official duty station, and
- Per diem expenses for a family member or medical attendant to travel to or accompany the employee from the TDY location.

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

Bureaus with multi-year funding (2 year and no-year funding) may continue to authorize travel from these funds as long as a sufficient fund balance is available to cover the travel expenses. The authorized travel must be for the purpose for which the funds were appropriated. Bureaus and Offices that do not have multi-year funding must not arrange or plan travel which will require tickets to be issued on or after October 1 until a continuing resolution or appropriation providing funding 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 actually 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 either the Centrally Billed Charge Card account or the 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 travel approving officials must work closely with their budget offices to ensure travel arrangements do not create obligations exceeding 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) must seek direction from their supervisor on whether it is necessary return to the permanent duty station.

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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 Period of Conflict

As a general rule, travel to areas overseas with possible conflict must always be mission-critical, and should be avoided whenever possible. Employees planning to commence travel to or through such areas must contact their supervisor and bureau or Departmental 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 must contact their immediate 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's 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 must 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 will the Bureau take to protect the individuals involved?
- Where will the temporary living accommodations be and how long will the individual(s) stay in the temporary accommodations?
- How will the Bureau reevaluate the threat and how frequently? Is there a period after which the Bureau will evaluate whether relocation is more appropriate than temporary accommodations?

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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 must weigh the costs and benefits of a PCS against temporary accommodations. The official must 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 threat. 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
- 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.

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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.

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/ext/public/site/FTR/file/Chapter301p031.html/category/21868/#wp1090887>

3.6.5 Documenting Subsistence Expenses

Threatened law enforcement or investigative employees must document subsistence expenses and must submit claims for 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. Bureaus may extend the period of reimbursement beyond 60 days if the approving official reviews the situation and documents the need for an extension.

After the initial period, Bureaus must reevaluate payment of transportation and subsistence expenses every 30 days, unless the approving official determines that reevaluation is required more frequently.

3.6.7 Obtaining Travel Advance for Transportation and Subsistence Expenses

A threatened law enforcement or investigative employee must work with the approving official to determine whether it is appropriate to obtain a charge card with adjusted advance limits or travel advances to cover transportation and subsistence expenses. 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 3.3.4](#). 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.

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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) involved, Bureaus may waive the receipt requirement on a case-by-case basis.

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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 for approved official business. When making travel arrangements, travelers must consider using the least expensive mode of transportation and class of accommodations to accomplish the TDY mission.

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 means possible. 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:

- Common carrier (aircraft, train, bus, ship or local transit system);
- GOV;
- POV; and
- Special conveyance (e.g., taxi or commercial rental car).

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); pre-approval is always required to travel in premium class accommodations at Government expense.

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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.

- **Common carrier airfare:** For official business that is 250 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 will 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 for use by the traveler; the traveler must act timely to reserve a GOV.

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 travel authorization clearly states that the traveler is approved to incur travel costs up to the constructive cost that is documented in the comparison. The traveler must cover any excess cost with personal funds.

4.1.3 Traveling by Most Direct Route

Government travelers are required to use the most direct, commonly traveled route to perform official travel unless pre-approval is obtained to deviate from that route for official business. When a traveler uses another route as a personal preference, the traveler must create a cost 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 travel authorization clearly states that the traveler is approved to incur travel costs up to the constructive cost documented in the comparison. The traveler must cover the excess cost with personal funds.

4.1.4 Creating Cost Comparisons

A traveler must submit a cost comparison as supporting documentation with the travel authorization when any of the following situations apply:

- Take a mode of transportation other than the one that is most advantageous to the Government.
Note: En route travel by automobile of 350 miles or 8 hours per day is assumed in "fly vs drive" comparisons.
- Take a route other than the most direct route.
- Combined official and personal travel.

Travelers are encouraged to use the DOI TDY Cost Comparison Form; however, Bureaus may establish and use different formats of comparisons. Travelers must have an approved comparison prior to incurring any travel-related costs. Estimated costs used in the constructive and preferred itineraries must be obtained from the ETS or the TMC. The comparison must be approved by the approving official. The traveler must upload a copy of the approved comparison with the travel authorization. In addition to calculating the total

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cost associated with each itinerary, the traveler must itemize any of the following costs, when applicable:

- Per diem
- Overtime or compensatory time (if comparing modes/methods of transportation)
- Lost work time (if comparing modes/methods of transportation)
- Actual transportation costs
- Total distance of travel
- Number of TDY locations
- Number of travelers

Bureaus may define additional costs that need to be itemized in accordance with Bureau risk plans and policies.

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 relates directly 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.

Travelers may not charge the Government any expenses incurred from the personal portion of a combined official and personal trip.

Prior to the approval of their travel authorization, travelers are required to upload the comparison containing the estimated costs into Concur/CGE. Upon completion of their trip, travelers must reconcile the estimated costs appearing on their comparison to the actual costs incurred and upload a final comparison (along with their required receipts) into Concur/CGE with their travel voucher. Costs appearing on the final comparison will be used to reimburse the travel expenses.

4.2 Air Travel

4.2.1 Understanding Basic Requirements for Air Travel

The following are three basic requirements for traveling by commercial aircraft to accomplish official travel. 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 airfares for official air travel if no identified exception exists. If a City-Pair airfare is not used when one is available, the Bureau

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will limit reimbursement to the price of a City-Pair ticket, unless the use of a non-contract fare is based on a mandated travel schedule to meet mission requirements or a lower cost non-contract fare was approved in advance and approved changes to travel cause an increase due to changing the flight. Travelers must look for lower cost capacity-controlled coach class contract fares, which are designated by a 3-character code ending in 'CA' (other than YCA.). The first character may differ by airline, e.g., MCA, QCA, VCA, etc. If such fares are not available, the traveler will then locate unrestricted coach class contract fares (YCA).

Employees must book transportation through ETS or by calling the TMC; the use of third party booking services is prohibited. If a traveler lives within commuting distance of two or more airports, the traveler must use the airport that will enable completing the TDY travel in the most expeditious manner while considering the direct route of travel and cost.

Travelers may not use contract City-Pair airfares for the personal portion of a combined official and personal trip. Contractors may also not use contract City-Pair airfares; see [Section 1.5.3](#) for additional information on contractor travel.

Exceptions to Use of City-Pair Fares

Bureaus may authorize the use of a non-contract carrier in any of 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, 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 are 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 flights scheduled departure time. It is imperative that travel authorizations are approved in a timely manner, since the approved travel 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.**

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Non-Refundable Fares

Travelers must use caution when purchasing non-refundable fares due to the significant fees associated with changing or cancelling a non-refundable ticket. Before purchasing a non-refundable fare, travelers must 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 authorized to use a non-contract fare?
- Are you confident that your official business trip will occur without any schedule changes?
- Are you a frequent traveler (i.e., travel three or more times per year)?

If a non-refundable fare is cancelled or rescheduled, the airline will issue a voucher for the price of the non-refundable fare in the traveler's name for use on a future flight. This voucher is valid for 12 months and cannot be transferred to another person. These airline vouchers may only be used by employees 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.

4.2.3 Selecting Appropriate Class of Airline Accommodations

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

- ***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 when incurring official travel expenses and are expected to use economy / coach class accommodations for official domestic and international travel. Exceptions to this rule are extremely limited.

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*² 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.

² Definition per 41 CFR 301-10.121 and FTR 301-10.121, Subpart B – *What classes of airline accommodations are available?*

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Under special circumstances, approving officials may authorize other than economy / coach class travel at the Government's expense. The official must use discretion 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 through the TMC. The traveler must provide approval documentation to the TMC before booking and attach the documentation to the travel voucher in ETS.

First Class Accommodations

All requests for first class travel incurred at Government expense 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 accommodations 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 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 urgent trip, that the reason the trip cannot be postponed and how a delay would endanger the mission. The explanation must describe when the travel requirement became known and when travel was scheduled, including reasons for failure to make advance travel 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 must consider alternatives before authorizing first class accommodations.
- Exceptional security circumstances require the use of first class accommodations (e.g., use of economy / coach class would endanger the life of the traveler).
- 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.

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The Bureau Associate Director of Administration or their equivalent must approve the use of business class in lieu of first class for the above circumstances, 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 the following day. Total flight time does not include time spent at the originating or final arrival airport. If authorized for other than coach class accommodations, the traveler is not eligible for a rest stop en route or upon arrival.
 - Bureaus must authorize a rest stop or rest period in lieu of authorizing business class accommodations, when feasible.
- Use results in overall cost savings for the Government (e.g., avoiding significant lost productive time while awaiting coach class accommodations).

Economy Plus

Bureaus must 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 this exception in the travel authorization.

4.2.4 Understanding Reduced Group or Charter Fares

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

4.2.5 Selecting Among Airlines that Offer Same Fare

If two or more different airlines offer the same fare, travelers must consider the following when choosing between the fares:

- Does the timing of the flights differ? Will this difference impact the overall cost of the trip? If so, the traveler must pick the fare that would result in a lower overall cost.
- 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 may cancel or change ticketed airfares if directed for official business. The traveler is responsible for ensuring that the Government is properly credited for any cancellations or changes to the airfare.

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

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- ***Ticketed airfare is cancelled:*** Notify the TMC and obtain a receipt showing the amount due as a refund. The traveler must retain a copy of this receipt in accordance with their Bureau's Government charge card policy. Credits can take between 6 and 8 weeks to appear on the charge card statement.
- ***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 retain a copy of this receipt in accordance with their Bureau's Government charge card policy.
- ***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 must 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 unused tickets, coupons or other evidence of refund due to the Government in the travel voucher and submit the documents to the Bureau within 30 days of the date associated with the refund.

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 USC 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 the 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.

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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 reimbursed in full 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 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.

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Use of Foreign Air Carriers

A traveler who travels by a foreign air carrier must book the airfare through the TMC and include a justification for the use of a foreign air carrier with 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 service 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 coach and slumber coach accommodations for overnight train travel. If a train only offers two classes of accommodations, the lowest offered is considered coach class.
- **Extra-fare train:** A high-performance train that charges an increased fare when compared to "Regional" train 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 accommodations 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 any of 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 proposed 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 accommodations 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.

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4.3.2 Travel by Train as Personal Preference

If travelers choose to travel by train rather than air due to personal preference or a documented fear of flying, reimbursement will be limited to the constructive cost of traveling by air (using the lowest-cost City-Pair airfare 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.

4.4.2 Selecting Appropriate Class of Ship Accommodations

Accommodations on ships vary according to deck levels and are defined as follows:

- **Lowest first class:** The least expensive class of reserved accommodations available on a ship (may be referred to as coach class).
- **Other than lowest first class:** All classes above the lowest first class (e.g., a suite).

Travelers must use lowest first class accommodations when traveling by ship for official travel. Bureaus may authorize the use of other than lowest first class accommodations in any of the following cases:

- Lowest first class and another ship are not available to complete the official purpose of the trip in time.
- Special need or disability of a traveler must be accommodated. The traveler must provide current medical documentation supporting the request for premium class accommodations.
- Exceptional security circumstances require the accommodation.
- Official mission of the trip requires the accommodation.

4.4.3 Determining Appropriate Use of U.S. Flag Ships

Unless the mission of the trip requires the use of a foreign flag ship, the traveler must use a U.S. flag ship, whenever available. The traveler must pay any cost associated with the unauthorized use of a foreign ship with personal funds.

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 must 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 must 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.

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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 TDY 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 official 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. The traveler must include an explanation for incurring the transportation cost 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 must 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 must weigh the following advantages:

- Full utilization or availability of GOVs,
- Lower cost, and
- The 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 that will be incurred while using the GOVs.

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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 administrative and criminal liability 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:

- 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.

4.6.4 Following Accident Procedures

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

1. Stop immediately and take steps to prevent another accident from occurring 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. Complete SF-91 Operator's Report of Motor Vehicle Accident (form is located in the vehicle).
6. Notify the fleet manager and immediate supervisor as soon as possible.
7. If the vehicle is unsafe or cannot be driven, have it towed to the nearest service station.

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

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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. Travelers must obtain pre-authorization on a travel authorization to perform TDY travel by POV.

The approving official must 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)
- Does the distance of the travel make common carrier transportation unreasonable (i.e., does the time in travel extend arrival at the TDY location beyond an acceptable period)?
- Are all GOVs reserved or otherwise unavailable?
- Is the schedule for common carrier transportation between the points of travel incompatible with the traveler's 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 must review their personal insurance policies, as some policies exclude use of POVs to perform official business. When employees must travel by automobile, GOVs must be used, whenever possible, to avoid personal liability for official travel. Travelers may not claim reimbursement for additional insurance coverage purchased in order to use a POV for official travel. The cost of insurance is factored into the POV mileage reimbursement rate.

4.7.2 Calculating POV Mileage Reimbursement

When a POV is authorized as the primary mode of transportation for TDY travel, the traveler may claim mileage reimbursement 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 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 travelers are authorized to use GOVs, reimbursement for POV mileage to travel from their residences to the offices or GOV pick-up locations may be claimed.

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If two or more employees are traveling to the same TDY location and they choose to travel 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 to travel by POV on their travel authorizations and calculate mileage reimbursement by multiplying the distance traveled by the applicable mileage rate. Authorized mileage rates are available in the [GSA POV Mileage Reimbursement Rate table](#).

4.7.3 Using POV as Personal Preference

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 an automobile for personal preference, the traveler must attempt 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 by the traveler 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 have the approving official sign 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 GOV mileage rate. This rate is the lower of the two GSA mileage reimbursement rates. 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 Taxi or Other Special Conveyance:

When travelers elect to travel to common carrier terminals from their residences or official duty stations by POV instead of 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 for the same trip. Travelers can use a taxi fare estimating tool, such as (<http://www.taxifarefinder.com>), to estimate the cost of round-trip taxi fares.

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When travelers elect to use POV instead of a special conveyance or local transit at the TDY location, reimbursement will be for the mileage cost of using POVs and additional expenses, up to the constructive cost of using the available special conveyance or local transit.

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

Travelers may not claim reimbursement for the following expenses associated with travel 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 and commercial rental cars 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. Travelers must obtain pre-approval for the use of special conveyances, whenever possible.

When authorizing the use of special conveyances, the approving official must consider the following:

- Does the distance of the trip make common carrier transportation unreasonable?
- Is a GOV available?
- Is the TDY location in a remote area where common carrier or local transport systems are not available or practical?
- Would the use of a special conveyance be more environmentally friendly?

When a traveler is authorized a special conveyance, the following costs may be reimbursed:

- Rental fees
- Gasoline and oil
- Rental of a garage, hangar or boathouse
- Feeding and stabling of horses
- Per diem expenses incurred by the operator

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- Ferry fees and tolls

4.9 Use of Taxis and Shuttle Service

4.9.1 Determining Appropriate Use of Taxis and Shuttle Service

Travelers must 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 official 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 must 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 must only use taxis when the use of courtesy transportation would adversely affect the trip or unduly extend the travel time.

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

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 taxi or shuttle drivers, when a rental car is not obtained. Bureaus may reimburse tips of 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 only 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.

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The approving official must 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 must share one rental car, whenever feasible.
- When TDY travel is performed in remote locations or local transportation is not available, travelers may need rental cars for obtaining their own 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

Travelers must obtain rental cars using the ETS system or TMC to 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 must consider the location of the pick-up and drop-off points. The Government charge card must be used to pay for the costs associated with rental cars (e.g., rental, fuel).

When authorized a rental vehicle, the traveler must rent a compact size car. When approving vehicle upgrades, the approving official must authorize the least costly vehicle size that will meet the traveler's needs. 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 must 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.

A traveler may use a rental car upgrade coupon or other promotional benefit for vehicle size upgrade only when the promotion cannot be used for a free day rental or reduction in daily rental rate.

Note: If the intended use of the rental car is for off-paved roads, the traveler must inform the rental car company of this intention 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 EZ Pass toll payment

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systems. These items are rarely needed to accomplish official travel. Therefore, the costs associated with these services are not reimbursable, see below for limited exceptions.

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 must be prepared to provide fuel receipts upon request at the rental car return.

GPS

GPS is 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 should avoid using automated toll payment systems (e.g., EZ Pass, FasTrak, EXpressToll, TollTag, etc.) any time the device is optional. Tolls should be paid using cash and claimed on the travel voucher. The cost of renting an automated toll payment device is not generally an allowable expense. If a road does not include a cash toll option, the traveler should use another route, when possible. If an alternate route is not practical, the approving official may authorize the cost of renting an automated toll payment device on a case-by-case basis. The traveler must include an explanation for the cost in 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

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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 properly damage or injury claims exceed the provided insurance coverage, the rental car company shall file an additional claim with the traveler's agency. 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 must ensure that the insurance covers potential liability for property damage, personal injury and death to third parties. Bureaus must 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, must 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.

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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 traveler's personal insurance company, the traveler must 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, 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 any use of the vehicle for 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.

4.11 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 travel by aircraft is required, the traveler must use a Government aircraft, whenever available.

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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. See DOI Office of the Solicitor policy for definitions of these types of 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

Travel on 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 and flight information for two years.

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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 official Government business (e.g., use of services, technologies, payment methods) during a TDY trip. The majority of anticipated miscellaneous expenses must be pre-approved and included on the travel authorization. Travelers may incur certain unexpected expenses, which may be added to the travel voucher without prior authorization. The lists below indicate which expenses must be pre-approved, and which may be added directly to the travel voucher.

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

- Services of guides, interpreters or drivers.
- Services of typists, data processors or stenographers.
- Services of a medical attendant traveling with an employee with a special need or disability.
- Fees associated with traveler's checks, money orders or certified checks.
- Excess baggage charges when the traveler is checking additional bags or bags over the airline's weight limit for the purpose of transporting Government equipment or other items required to fulfill the official purpose of the trip.
- Rental of conference center or hotel room for meetings or other official business.
- Valet parking fees (only allowable when valet service is the only parking available or is necessary to accommodate an employee's documented special need or disability).
- Transportation or storage of property required for the official purpose of the trip.
- 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.
- Expenses related to foreign travel, including:
 - Commissions on conversion of foreign currency.
 - Passport and visa fees, including fees for a required physical examination that the traveler could not obtain at a Government facility. Reimbursement for such fees may include transportation costs if the medical facility is located more than 50 miles from the traveler's official duty station and residence.
 - Costs of photographs for passports and visas.
 - Foreign country exit fees.
 - Costs of birth, health and identity certificates.
 - Charges for inoculations that the traveler cannot obtain from a Federal dispensary.
 - Medical Evacuation Insurance for travel to destinations that do not have Western standard medical facilities within a reasonable distance of the TDY location.

Travelers may **add** the following miscellaneous expenses directly to the travel voucher:

- Fees charged by the TMC for official travel.
- ATMs fees for withdrawals using a Government charge card (e.g., access fees).
- Baggage charges for one bag up to the allowable weight limit.

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- Lodging taxes when lodging is authorized and the vendor will not honor tax exempt status.
- Lodging fees, including energy surcharge, reservation fees, deposits and lodging resort fees when the vendor will not waive them for Government travelers.
- Use of computers, printers, fax machines, scanners or the internet for official business. Travelers may only claim reimbursement for internet usage charges when required to use the internet as a part of their official duty (e.g., research, checking work-related email).
- Telephone calls and communication services for official business. Travelers must use Government-provided services for official communications when available.
- Laundry and dry cleaning expenses for CONUS trips longer than four consecutive nights.
- Tips associated with transportation (e.g., tips for shuttle drivers).

The following expenses are ***not*** reimbursable as miscellaneous expenses:

- Fees charged by the TMC for the personal portion of a combined official and personal trip,
- Lodging taxes or surcharges for lodging in foreign locations (see Section 5.1.5),
- Laundry or dry cleaning expenses for OCONUS non-foreign or foreign travel (see Section 5.1.5),
- Security fees charged by hotels or motels for the use of safes, and
- 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. Such access cards are a personal expense and are not necessary for official travel.

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 set a higher level of approval for miscellaneous expenses for official TDY travel, if necessary.

5.3 Understanding Communications Policies

Travelers are expected to use Government telephones or Government-issued prepaid calling cards for long-distance calls while on official travel. Prior to the beginning of the trip, a traveler's supervisor is responsible for assisting the traveler in obtaining a calling card. The calling card must be in the traveler's name; travelers must not share calling cards. If a calling card is lost, stolen or otherwise compromised, the traveler must report the incident to the vendor's toll free number. Bureaus cannot hold travelers responsible for unauthorized calls made by unknown third parties.

Travelers must observe the following communications policies when on TDY travel status.

- ***Official business calls:*** Travelers must use Government telephones or Government-issued prepaid calling cards for long-distance business calls while on official travel,

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whenever possible. Travelers must only make phone calls that are necessary for official business.

- **Personal calls home:** When official travel requires overnight lodging, travelers are allowed to make brief daily personal calls at Government expense. These calls must be made using the most cost-effective method (Government-issued prepaid calling card).
 - In limited circumstances, when a traveler did not obtain a Government prepaid calling card, the traveler may be reimbursed on a case-by-case basis for calls charged to hotel rooms or personal charge cards. Reimbursement will be limited to the constructive cost of using a calling card, which is currently \$0.02 per minute. Personal calls home may not be excessive in duration, and travelers are allowed 15 minutes per day. The traveler must provide an explanation that justifies reimbursement of personal calls home in the travel voucher. Forgetting to obtain a Government-issued calling card is not an acceptable justification for reimbursement.
 - Travelers must not use Government cell phones for daily personal calls.
 - Personal calls that travelers make during duty hours on Government phone systems must not adversely affect the performance of official duties or the organization's work performance.

5.4 Understanding Reimbursement for Baggage Fees

Bureaus may reimburse expenses related to baggage 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 must only authorize excess baggage fees for travelers carrying Government equipment or materials required for the official purposes of travel. If excess baggage is necessary, travelers should consider using airlines with lower baggage fees if the overall cost of the trip will be lower and the fare is otherwise allowable.
 - Approving officials may not authorize excess baggage fees for travelers to bring personal items (e.g., golf clubs) on TDY travel. If travelers bring these items on TDY trips, they must cover the baggage fees with personal funds.
- 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 must avoid the need to pay checked baggage fees and use only carry-on luggage for necessary cloths and hygiene items.

5.5 Determining Eligibility for Laundry Reimbursement

Approving officials may authorize travelers to claim laundry or dry cleaning expenses as miscellaneous expenses when incurred during CONUS TDY trips that are four consecutive nights or longer in duration. Officials should use discretion when authorizing these expenses

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and consider the tradeoff between reimbursing laundry or dry cleaning expenses and excess baggage fees.

Travelers may only claim reimbursement for laundry or dry cleaning expenses when incurred during the TDY trip; travelers may not claim the reimbursement for laundry expenses incurred on the last day of a TDY assignment. In order to receive reimbursement, the traveler must include receipts for any laundry or dry cleaning performed at a professional laundry facility with the travel voucher. Bureaus may also reimburse travelers for reasonable expenses incurred for coin-operated laundry. Travelers must 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 separate 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.

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6 Conference Planning and Related Travel

This section includes guidance for DOI employees planning or attending conferences. For additional information on conferences, see the PFM website: <http://www.doi.gov/pfm/policy.cfm>.

6.1 Guidance for Conference Attendees

6.1.1 Defining Terms

A **conference** is defined by the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) as a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or event that involves attendee travel. When evaluating plans for or attendance to any conference involving travel, management must use the most conservative approach in determining the purpose of the conference.

Conference attendees may or may not be in travel status. DOI employees who travel to attend a conference must obtain a Trip-by-Trip authorization. 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 reviews, identifying lessons learned or review of 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 must 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 reimbursement, 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 reimbursement 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 must 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 BPA or held by the conference planner under a block reservation.
- **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

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not required to reduce M&IE allowances for light refreshments. If an attendee has a special dietary need, the attendee must inform the facility of the special need prior to arriving at the conference.

Trip Purpose in ETS:

Correctly identifying the purpose of employee travel is important for reporting and monitoring conference related expenses and activities. The Department's travel management system utilizes various "trip purpose codes." For the purpose of this policy, the following is guidance provided by GSA to uniformly categorize conference related travel expenses:

- Mission (Operational) purpose codes - Travel to a particular site in order to perform operational or managerial activities. Travel to attend a meeting to discuss general agency operations, review status reports, or discuss topics of general interest. Employees participating in such operational or managerial events must record the travel purpose code as Mission (Operational). Examples of Mission Operational travel would include the following: Employee's day-to-day operational or managerial activities, to include, but not be limited to: hearings, site visit, information meeting, inspections, audits, investigations, and examinations.
- Training Attendance purpose codes - Travel in conjunction with educational activities to become proficient or qualified in one or more areas of responsibility. 5 USC 4101 (4) states that '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.
- Conference Attendance purpose codes: Travel performed in connection with a prearranged meeting, retreat, convention, seminar, or symposium for consultation or exchange of information or discussion. Managers and supervisors must consider all factors when distinguishing between conference and training attendance and use the appropriate identifier. Examples of Conference Attendance travel would include the following: To participate in a planned program as a speaker/panelist or other form of presentation, host, planner, or other designated to oversee the conference or attendance with no formal role, or as an exhibitor. Employees attending events that fit this definition and have not been recorded in either Mission (Operational) or Training Attendance purpose codes must be reported as Conference Attendance purpose code.

6.1.3 Reimbursing Advanced Payment of Conference Registration Fees

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

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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 of the first day of the conference.

6.2 Guidance for Conference Planning, Internal Controls and Reporting

The rules on conference planning, approval, spending, internal controls and reporting are detailed and do not fall exclusively under the rules of the FTR. Bureaus are directed to refer to the DOI conference policy in FMM 2015-010, for specific guidance. The following is a list of some of the major changes and elements of DOI's conference business process iterated in FMM 2015-010:

- OMB policies and the current appropriations acts require senior management review and reporting based on cost rather than attendance. The revised guidance eliminates defining large meetings as having 30 or more attendees.
- Requirements for senior management review and approval of DOI's conferences will be based on estimated cost:
- The guidance tiers authorization to allow conference approval in the following manner:
 - Bureau Directors to approve conference spending up to \$40,000 (estimated cost);
 - Assistant Secretary Policy, Management and Budget to approve spending of \$40,000 to \$100,000 (estimated cost); and
 - Deputy Secretary to approve \$100,000 and more.
- If post conference analysis determines that actual costs are significantly higher than estimates, that bureau's authority to approve conference spending will be reduced to \$20,000.
- FMM 2013-024, Authorization and Reporting Guidance on Conference-Related Activities and Spending required senior management approval of attendance at local externally hosted conferences when 15 or more persons were attending, regardless of whether travel costs were incurred. This requirement is no longer valid. If a local conference involves no travel costs, an approval request is not required, regardless of estimated cost. However, if there is any travel cost at all and the estimated cost is above \$40,000, a Departmental approval request is required.
- In compliance with statutory requirements and OMB policies, the Department is committed to reporting actual costs associated with each conference. Actual conference costs are to be reported for hosted meetings costing \$20,000 or more and all conferences costing \$100,000 or more.
- The guidance establishes a threshold of \$10,000 for conference sponsorships, under which senior Departmental management approval is not required. Authorization of sponsorship spending of \$10,000 or more requires approval by the Deputy Secretary.

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- The guidance also establishes a new streamlined approval process for conferences meeting certain criteria.
- For additional detail on rules affecting conference planning, approval and reporting please refer to [FMM 2015-010](#).

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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 defined as 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. See [Section 7.4.1](#) for guidance on the required documentation for extended assignments.

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. Employees must use the Extended Assignment - Per Diem Justification form to document the required research and approvals. Bureaus may also establish other forms or methods of documenting these approvals.

7.2 Travel Expenses during Extended TDY Assignments

7.2.1 Traveling To and From Extended TDY Assignment

Bureaus must 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

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from their assignment locations in accordance with all TDY regulations and guidance. Travelers must 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. See [Section 4.1.4](#) for guidance on the cost comparison that the traveler must complete in this situation.

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, 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 must establish the appropriate approval level for increasing the per diem reimbursement rate for extended TDY assignments beyond 55 percent of the locality rate.

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 must 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 must 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 must 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

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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. When a traveler is authorized to use a POV, the traveler is not eligible to claim mileage around the extended TDY assignment location (e.g., for daily commute from temporary residence to TDY work location) as it is non-deductible commuting expenses per IRS regulation. The traveler may only claim mileage reimbursement for travel to the TDY location and approved return travel to the residence or official duty station.

7.3 Tax Implications of Extended TDY Assignments

7.3.1 Determining 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 must 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.

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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.

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

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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 must 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](#) and the [RIT tax table\(s\)](#).

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).

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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. See [Section 1.3](#) for additional information about travel authorizations and [Section 1.4](#) for travel vouchers.

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 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 transportation costs incurred during authorized return travel are considered taxable.** 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 must 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 cost effective. Bureaus may authorize dual lodging as needed on a case-by-case basis. 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.

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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 must 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 must 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.

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8 Travel Regulations with Charge Card Implications

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](#) and the [Integrated Charge Card Program Policy Manual](#) 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

DOI participates in the GSA SmartPay2 program. The GSA program provides employees Government charge cards (charge card) to pay for authorized travel-related expenses while on TDY assignments. 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 must use Government charge cards to pay for most official TDY travel-related expenses. However, the Government charge card must be used when procuring the following centrally-billed items:

- Common carrier transportation;
- Lodging; and
- Rental cars and fuel.

Employees must 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 integrated 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 must 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;
- Laundry or dry cleaning;
- Parking;
- Local transit system;
- Taxi or Shuttle;
- Tips;
- Meals;

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- Official phone calls, when a Government calling card or prepaid calling card is not available for use in accordance with DOI and Bureau policy;
- 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, e.g. fuel costs when the rental vehicle is authorized on another traveler's Travel Authorization, lodging, etc. Travelers may obtain ATM advances to pay for the cost of meals during TDY trips.

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 must 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:

1. General late fee at the prevailing Treasury rate when the calculated payment is \$1.00 or greater. 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.
2. 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.

The employee may be subject to disciplinary action ranging from a written warning to termination of employment, depending upon the severity of the situation, if the employee does not comply with DOI's charge card policy.

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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.

Travelers who make ATM withdrawals will typically be charged ATM fees. To claim reimbursement for these fees, travelers must include ATM receipts with their travel vouchers.

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 must 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 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 retained by Office or Bureau Associate Directors with concurrence by Bureau Finance Officers.

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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.	Section 2.7
<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.	Section 1.4.2
<i>Blanket Travel Authorizations</i>	Authorizations that allow employees to perform multiple trips without obtaining trip-specific approval (e.g., Limited Open).	Section 1.3.2
<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.	Section 4.2.3
<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.	Section 2.6.2
<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.	Section 4.2.2
<i>Coach Class</i>	The basic class of accommodations offered by airlines and trains; generally, the lowest-cost fare available.	Section 4.2.3
<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.	Section 6.1.1
<i>Conference Lodging Allowance (CLA)</i>	An allowance of up to 125% of the maximum lodging rate for the locality where a conference is held. The CLA is only applicable for conferences of 30 or more attendees.	Section 6.3.2
<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	Section 4.1.4

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Term	Definition	Reference
	mode of travel; travelers may only incur 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.	Section 2.2.1
<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.	Section 1.2
<i>Employee Emergency Travel</i>	Employee 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.	Section 3.2
<i>Employee</i>	An individual who receives a salary from DOI.	Section 1.1.2
<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.	Section 7
<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.	Section 2.2.1 FedRooms website
<i>First Class</i>	The highest class of accommodation offered by a common carrier in terms of cost and amenities.	Section 4.2.3
<i>Foreign Air Carrier</i>	An air carrier that does not hold a certificate issued by the United States under 49 USC 41102.	Section 4.2.7
<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.	Section 4.11.3
<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.	Section 2.3.2
<i>Government Aircraft</i>	An aircraft that the Government owns, leases, charters or rents.	Section 4.11

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Term	Definition	Reference
<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.	Section 4.6
<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.	Section 3.2.2
<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.	Section 3.2.1
<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.	Section 7.3.2
<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.	Section 6.1.1
<i>Interviewee</i>	An individual who is being considered for employment by DOI.	Section 1.5.2
<i>Invitational Traveler</i>	An individual who travels once or infrequently on behalf of DOI.	Section 1.5.1
<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.	Section 1.5.3
<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.	DOI Local Travel Policy
<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.	Section 2.5
<i>Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&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.	Section 2.5.2
<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.	Section 4.7.2

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Term	Definition	Reference
<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.	Section 5
<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.	Section 7.4.2
<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.	Section 2
<i>Permanent Change of Station (PCS)</i>	The process that an employee completes to permanently relocate from one official duty station to another.	DOI PCS Handbook
<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.	Section 1.3.7
<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.	Section 4.2.3
<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.	Section 4.7
<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.	Section 1.1.3

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Term	Definition	Reference
<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 of payment used and other relevant sales-related information.	Section 1.4.1
<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).	Section 2.6
<i>Space Available Travel</i>	Travel on a Government aircraft that has already been scheduled for an official purpose with seats available.	Section 4.11
<i>Special Conveyance</i>	Commercially rented or hired modes of transportation other than POVs and GOVs.	Section 4.8
<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.	DOI PCS Handbook
<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.	Section 1.1.1
<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.	Section 8.2.2
<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.	Section 1.3
<i>Travel Vouchers</i>	The forms used to approve travelers for reimbursement of travel-related expenses. These forms are created and approved in ETS.	Section 1.4
<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.	

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Term	Definition	Reference
<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.	Section 1.3.2
<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.”	