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# HHS Travel Policy Manual

Edition #: **2018-Q4**  
Fiscal Year 2018  
Q4: July, August, September



Approved by the Agency Senior Travel Official  
September 10, 2018

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## **Foreword**

This edition of the HHS Travel Policy Manual is an update of the HHS Travel Policy Manual originally published January of 2012 and updated November 1, 2014.

This document has contemporary navigation features including:

- (1) word and phrase search;
- (2) page number navigation;
- (3) scrolling; and
- (4) topic by topic navigation from the Table of Contents.

The current HHS Travel Policy Manual is to provide users with the complete source of the Department’s management policies and procedures regarding travel and transportation procedures. Topics addressed in the Manual include, but are not limited to, Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel, Relocation Allowances, Interagency Personnel Agreements (IPAs), Travel and Transportation Expenses connected with the death of certain employees, and Acceptance of Payments of Travel Expenses from Non-Federal Sources (Sponsored Travel).

The HHS Travel Policy Manual is intended for use by HHS Employees, invitational travelers, consultants, and others authorized to travel on behalf of the Department. Please note that the words “employee” and “traveler” are the same for the purpose of this policy and in alignment with the Federal Travel Regulation definition of “employee.”

# 1. Plan of the HHS Travel Policy Manual

## 1.1 General Information

### 1.1.1 Purpose

This section describes the scope, organization, development, maintenance, and distribution of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Travel Policy Manual, hereafter referred to as the HHS Travel Policy Manual.

### 1.1.2 Scope and Organization

The HHS Travel Policy Manual is intended to provide users with a single authoritative reference to Department financial management policies and procedures regarding travel and transportation expenses. This includes, but is not limited to: Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel, Relocation Allowances, Interagency Personnel Agreements (IPAs), Travel and Transportation Expenses connected with the death of certain employees, and Acceptance of Payments of Travel Expenses from Non-Federal Sources (Sponsored Travel).

The HHS Travel Policy Manual is intended for use by HHS Employees, invitational travelers, consultants, and others authorized to travel on behalf of the Department. (See Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) §301-1.2 for definition of “employee.” The FTR is located in Volume 41 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR); it can also be accessed on the General Services Administration (GSA) website.

### 1.1.3 Development and Maintenance

#### 1.1.3.1 Authority

The material published in the HHS Travel Policy Manual is developed under the delegated authority of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration (ASA).

It is published and maintained by the Program Support Center (PSC).

#### 1.1.3.2 Supplemental Guidance

When supplemental policy or guidance is issued by the Department, each Operating Division (OpDiv) and Staff Division (StaffDiv) must ensure that the information is distributed to the appropriate staff. Supplemental guidance will be published on the PSC website. These updates clarify provisions and the requirements outlined in the HHS Travel Policy Manual and serve as timely updates to the manual. Always check the PSC website for the most up-to-date information related to HHS Travel Policy.

Furthermore, every OpDiv/StaffDiv must adhere to Departmental policy and guidance but may choose to implement it in a more restrictive manner within its own OpDiv/StaffDiv. Individual OpDiv/StaffDiv travel policies, that have been provided, can also be found on the PSC website.

#### 1.1.3.3 Effective Dates

The date of issue appears at the top of each page of the HHS Travel Policy Manual. The date of issue is the effective date of the material on the page, unless a different effective date is specified in the text.

#### 1.1.3.4 Distribution

This Travel Policy Manual is intended primarily for the use of HHS employees who travel as well as for offices that provide travel services, authorize or approve travel, perform related functions, and/or examine or audit travel expenses. An electronic version of the Travel Manual is posted on the PSC website.

## **1.2 HHS Travel Policies**

The purpose of this section is to define the relationship between the Government-wide FTR and the HHS Travel Policy Manual, and to provide a readily accessible copy of the most recent HHS delegations of travel authority.

### **1.2.1 Federal Travel Regulation – FTR**

HHS travel policies for employees (not including commissioned officers of the Commissioned Corps, U.S. Public Health Service (Corps), unless specified otherwise at the beginning of the section) are governed by the FTR, which is issued by the GSA. The FTR implements statutory requirements and Executive Branch policies for travel performed or conducted by Federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel at Government expense. The FTR is located on GSA's website.

### **1.2.2 Commissioned Corps Policies and Per Diem**

Travel policies and per diem rates for Commissioned Corps officers of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) are governed by the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR). The Per Diem, Travel, and Transportation Allowance Committee (PDTATAC) issues the JTR. As of October 1, 2014, the Joint Federal Travel Regulations, Volume 1 (JFTR) and the Joint Travel Regulations, Volume 2 (JTR) were consolidated into one volume, titled the Joint Travel Regulations. The HHS Assistant Secretary for Health is the designated USPHS Principal to serve on the PDTATAC, which is chartered under the Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO). The JTR is available at DTMO's website.

The Assistant Secretary of Health (ASH), or its designee, is responsible for developing and issuing travel and relocation (Permanent Change of Station (PCS)) policy for Corps officers to supplement the JTR. Corps policies are published in separate documents that are not part of the HHS Travel Policy Manual. Travel guidance for commissioned officers of the Public Health Service can be found on the Commissioned Corps website.

However, certain sections of this Travel Manual, by their terms, govern travel by Commissioned Corps officers as well as by civil service employees. Any operational or travel concerns of the Corps should be directed to the Office of the Surgeon General, U.S. Public Health Service, Director, Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness, (Attn: PDTATAC MAP Member), 1101 Wootton Parkway, Plaza Level, Suite 100, Rockville, MD 20852-1061.

### **1.2.3 Collective Bargaining Agreements**

Employees of HHS who are covered under a Collective Bargaining Agreement may have certain entitlements covered under their Agreement. Employees should check with their Union Representative to determine if they are covered under a particular Collective Bargaining Agreement. If an employee is covered, the Union Representative can provide information on what entitlements are included under the Agreement.

### **1.2.4 HHS Travel Policy Manual**

The HHS Travel Policy Manual is the official documentation of Department-wide supplemental policy and guidance to the FTR for HHS civilian employees.

Many provisions of the FTR require agencies to develop specific internal policies, procedures, and systems to administer the regulations. The HHS Travel Policy Manual provides supplemental policy and guidance on key FTR provisions where a Department-wide, standard supplemental policy is deemed appropriate. OpDiv/StaffDivs may then augment the FTR and/or Department level policy with their own supplemental policy guidance, which must be consistent with the FTR and the Department's policy requirements. Note that OpDiv/StaffDivs may choose to implement certain policies in a more restrictive manner.

The HHS Travel Policy Manual focuses on the financial management policies pertaining to travel, as governed by the FTR. The FTR and the HHS Travel Policy Manual do not address travel by contractors or grantees. Contractors can use the E-Gov Travel Service (ETS) as travel preparers and reviewers but may not approve travel or use the ETS to travel in support of their contract.

## **1.2.5 Personnel Policies**

Personnel policies, including when employees are in travel status, are outside the scope of the HHS Travel Manual and the policy purview of PSC. HHS managers and employees should seek the guidance of their servicing personnel office for policies pertaining to pay, compensatory time off for travel (CTT), other compensatory time, personnel benefits, requirements for overseas assignments (such as cost of living allowances and hardship pay differentials), administering leave, and other personnel actions involving employees in travel status. For information related to CTT, please visit the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) website or contact appropriate Human Resources personnel.

## **1.3 HHS Delegations of Authority for Administering Travel – Roles and Responsibilities of Delegated and other Travel Personnel**

### **1.3.1 HHS Delegations of Authority for Administering Travel**

The ASA, with authority from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, has established the Delegations of Authority for Travel. The delegation includes the authority to authorize and approve the following for OpDiv/StaffDiv personnel located at Headquarters and in the Regions. The following authorities may be re-delegated to the lowest level deemed appropriate including the Authorizing/Approving Official (AO) (See Section 1.3.7 for additional information on the roles and responsibilities of the AO):

- Domestic Travel
- Foreign Travel – See Chapter 6 International Travel
- PCS/Relocation – See Chapter 12 Relocation Allowances
- Advance of Funds – See Section 3.3 Travel Advances
- Travel Expenses Relating to Missing Persons
- Travel Expenses Relating to Deceased and Injured Employees and Deceased Dependents – See Section 5.4.4 Emergency Travel while on TDY
- The Use of Non-contract Air Carrier – See Section 4.1.5 Mandatory Use of Contract Fares and When Contract Fares May Not Be Used
- The Use of Cash to Purchase Domestic Passenger Transportation in Excess of \$100
  - Emergency Domestic Transportation – See Section 4.1.4.1
- Approval of Doubtful Claims of \$25 or less

Due to the high visibility of the authorities below, and the likelihood of continued Congressional and public inquiries (Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests) of these types of authorizations, re-delegations should be at a level that will ensure adequate review of the need for these requests. This includes the Senior Travel Official (STO), a centrally appointed role, or the employee's supervisor.

- Actual Expense Allowance (AEA) – See Section 5.1.3.5 Actual Expense Allowance
- Acceptance of Payment in Cash or In-Kind to Cover Travel Expenses – See Chapter 7 Acceptance of Payment of Travel Expenses from a Non-Federal Source
- Approval of Premium Class Travel (Other than Coach Class) – See Section 4.1.6 Coach Class and Other than Coach Class Upgrades
- The Use of Cash to Purchase Domestic Passenger Transportation in Excess of \$100
  - Non-emergency Domestic Transportation – See Section 4.1.4.1

#### **1.3.1.1 Responsibilities of the Delegated Official(s)**

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As management officials are empowered with these delegated authorities, there must also be corresponding accountability. In accordance with the FTR, these individuals must be “aware of how the authorized travel will support the agency’s mission ... knowledgeable of the employee’s travel plans and/or responsible for the travel funds paying for the travel involved.” See FTR §301-71.104. The delegated officials will be required to maintain necessary records to respond to any internal audits or external inquiries from Congress and control agencies regarding these approvals. These officials should also be required to timely report any incident that could potentially cause criticism or have a negative impact on this Department or the Secretary.

Furthermore, the authorities for Premium Class (Other than Coach Class) and non-Federal Sponsored Travel both have external reporting requirements associated with them and the ASA, via PSC, retains the Departmental reporting responsibility for these requirements. Additional information regarding these reports may be found in Sections 2.2 and 2.3.

As a matter of Departmental policy, no official shall authorize or approve his or her own travel. Another designated official from within the organization must be identified for this purpose.

### **1.3.1.2 Waiver(s) of HHS Travel Policy**

A request for a waiver from any of the policies addressed in the HHS Travel Policy Manual that require authorizing an allowance, due to exceptional circumstances, such as religious observances or another exigency (e.g., statutory requirement) that are not specifically addressed in the HHS Travel Policy Manual, require a formal request to be submitted by the OpDiv/StaffDiv STO to the Agency Senior Travel Official (ASTO) for submission to the ASA.

The request should be sent 30 days in advance to the ASTO for review. The ASTO will determine if the request for a waiver will be submitted to the ASA on behalf of the STO. These requests cannot be to waive any policy contained in the FTR, JTR, or policy that supersedes the HHS Travel Policy Manual.

### **1.3.2 Responsibilities of the Assistant Secretary for Administration (ASA)**

The ASA is responsible for ensuring that employees comply with the FTR and HHS travel policy. This responsibility may be delegated to the level deemed appropriate, as referenced in Section 1.3, HHS Delegations of Authority for Administering Travel; however, this does not relieve the ASA of the ultimate responsibility for enforcing Departmental travel policy.

The ASA responsibilities include but are not necessarily limited to:

1. Authorizing a per diem allowance (Lodging, Meals & Incidental Expenses), within the local transportation (formerly local travel) area, due to religious observances or another exigency (e.g., statutory requirement) in accordance with Section 4.2.2.4 Exceptions Authorized at the Agency Senior Travel Official (ASTO) and Assistant Secretary for Administration (ASA) Level.
2. Review and approve all requests for Government Aircraft (Charter Aircraft) that require approval in conjunction with the Office of General Counsel (OGC). Approval to travel on government aircraft requires pre-authorization and approval by the ASA, OGC, and the ASTO. Requests for the use of government aircrafts should be submitted as far in advance as possible to PSC for review, approval, and submission to the ASA. See Section 4.1.9 Government Aircraft for additional information.
  - a. Travel on government aircraft includes aircraft that an agency owns, borrows, operates as a bailed aircraft, or hires as a Commercial Aviation Service (CAS), to carry Federal and non-Federal travelers.

### **1.3.3 Responsibilities of the Agency Senior Travel Official (ASTO)**

In accordance with FTR Bulletin 14-08 "Designation of Agency Senior Travel Officials," and Executive Order 13589, HHS has designated the Director of PSC Transportation Services as the HHS ASTO.

Duties of the ASTO include but are not limited to:

1. Providing authoritative interpretation of Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) as it applies to the agency and developing agency-wide travel management policies, programs, and procedures tightly aligned with the FTR.

2. Working to set performance measures, monitor and evaluate vendor performance for travel programs and services, and align vendor performance to achieve agency-wide goals. Researches best practices and recommends actions to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and user satisfaction of travel services and programs.
3. Working to direct and manage agency-wide travel programs, including ETS, the Travel Solutions Schedule, air, lodging, rental cars, and other travel-related programs, to obtain economy and efficiency.
4. Negotiating target results, milestones, and project and financial plans.
5. Oversees the development of travel program requirements, based upon market research, customer agency needs, and commercial and Government best practices.
6. Oversees conference-related travel, and in conjunction with applicable agency personnel, including CIO offices, works with any related systems that assist in the monitoring and evaluation of such travel.
7. Conducts analyses and briefs other senior level agency executives on travel management performance, trends, and issues. In coordination with applicable agency personnel, including financial officials, works to integrate financial management operations and policies with those of the agency travel office.
8. Serves as liaison to GSA on travel programs, policy, regulations, resources, and information concerning travel management.
9. Participates in projects, special analyses, and studies with key stakeholders, including the Office of Management and Budget, General Accountability Office, Congress, and other public and private sector individuals, organizations, or agencies on matters related to travel management.
10. Approve all emergency and non-emergency travel for senior Departmental officials, including OpDiv/StaffDiv Heads.
11. Approve travel expenses greater than \$25,000 for a single trip, per traveler. Travel expenses greater than \$25,000, must be approved by the STO, prior to submission to the ASTO for approval.
  - a. The approval requests shall be sent to PSC Transportation Services for review at least 30 days prior to the travel date of departure. The ASA still retains the authority to approve travel greater than \$25,000 and may exercise it at any time.
  - b. Even though a traveler has an approved Travel Authorization in the E-Gov Travel System (ETS), the traveler must not depart on his/her trip until he/she receives written approval from the ASTO. Traveling without approval from the ASTO will prevent the reimbursement of expenses incurred and subject the traveler to Human Resource action.
12. The ASTO shall review and approve all requests for per diem within the local transportation (formerly local travel) area due to Reasonable Accommodation or those that do not meet Section 4.2.2.2 Exceptions Authorized at the OpDiv/StaffDiv Level (80 Mile Rule) including Emergencies and Disaster Responses covered under the Stafford Act.
13. The ASTO shall review and approve all requests for Government Aircraft (Charter Aircraft) that require approval by the ASA and/or Office of General Council (OGC). Approval to travel on government aircraft requires pre-authorization and approval by the ASTO and the ASA. Requests for the use of government aircrafts should be submitted as far in advance as possible to PSC TS for review, approval, and submission to the ASA. See Section 4.1.9 Government Aircraft for additional information.
  - a. Travel on government aircraft includes aircraft that an agency owns, borrows, operates as a bailed aircraft, or hires as a CAS, to carry Federal and non-Federal travelers.

### **1.3.4 Responsibilities of OpDiv/StaffDiv Heads**

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OpDiv/StaffDiv Heads are responsible for ensuring that employees comply with the FTR, the HHS Travel Policy Manual, and OpDiv/StaffDiv policy. This responsibility may be delegated to the Senior Travel Official (STO) who is a full-time Federal employee at the Senior Executive Service (SES) level or equivalent and who, for purposes of serving as STO, reports directly to the OpDiv/StaffDiv Head. The designation of the STO must be reported to the ASA and the ASTO.

However, this does not relieve the OpDiv/StaffDiv Head of the ultimate responsibility for enforcing Departmental travel policy.

Duties of the OpDiv/StaffDiv Head include but are not limited to:

1. Approve conferences over \$75,000. This responsibility cannot be re-delegated; See Section 1.5.2 Conference Approval Prior to the Obligation of Funds for additional information.
2. Designating the Senior Travel Official; see Section 1.3.5 Designation and Responsibilities of the OpDiv/StaffDiv Senior Travel Official (STO) for additional information.

### **1.3.4.1 OpDiv/StaffDiv Travel Management Programs**

HHS OpDiv/StaffDivs are responsible for providing a travel management program for their employees, in conjunction with PSC, that will include travel management services, commercial passenger transportation services, and travel payment system services. OpDiv/StaffDivs are responsible for establishing and communicating supplemental policies and procedures to govern the use of these travel management, transportation, and payment services, as appropriate. OpDiv/StaffDiv travel management and payment systems should provide for the procurement of travel services through the Government-issued travel charge card offered via PSC and the GSA SmartPay contract; see Chapter 10 Government Contractor-issued Travel Charge Card including Travel and Transportation Legislative Requirements for additional information.

### **1.3.4.2 OpDiv/StaffDiv Management Controls**

Each OpDiv/StaffDiv must establish a system of management controls to ensure that:

1. Travel vouchers are reviewed appropriately and timely by knowledgeable AOs;
2. Approved travel vouchers are forwarded to finance offices on a timely basis electronically through the ETS;
3. Employees are notified promptly of any disallowed claims, with a detailed explanation as to why the claim was disallowed;
4. An official process is established and communicated to employees about appealing a disallowed claim. If an employee disagrees with the appeals decision, the OpDiv/StaffDiv will advise the employee of his/her right to request review of the claim by the Civilian Board of Contract Appeals (CBCA) in accordance with the CBCA's instructions on its website. CBCA will not hear appeals from bargaining unit members unless the applicable collective bargaining agreement explicitly and clearly excludes a travel/relocation matter from the negotiated grievance process (See *Matter of Julio Gagot-Mangual*, GSBCA No. 16117-TRAV) and;
5. Procedures are established by approving offices to meet documentation retention requirements for travel vouchers and supporting documentation in accordance with General Records Schedule 9, Travel and Transportation Records, issued by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For example, travel orders, original vouchers, and supporting documents covering passenger transportation and per diem charges must be maintained for six (6) years and three (3) months after the voucher has been paid. Use of scanned electronic images for receipts meets the six (6) years and three (3) months requirements for Schedule 6 Accountable Officers' Accounts Records. The original receipts must be kept by the traveler for two (2) years in accordance with the HHS Records Management Schedule as approved by NARA in schedule DAA-0468-2011-0001 in July 2011.

### **1.3.5 Designation and Responsibilities of the OpDiv/StaffDiv Senior Travel Official (STO)**

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Each OpDiv/StaffDiv Head shall designate a STO, who is a full-time Federal employee at the Senior Executive Service (SES) level or equivalent and who, for purposes of serving as STO, reports directly to the OpDiv/ StaffDiv Head. The designation of the STO must be reported to the ASA and ASTO.

The ASA has designated an Office of the Secretary (OS) Staff Divisions STO(s), who for purposes of serving as the OS StaffDiv STO, reports directly to the ASA, while providing support to the StaffDivs.

An authority listed as STO only, in the HHS Travel Policy Manual, may not be re-delegated. The STO responsibilities include but are not necessarily limited to:

1. Reporting directly to the OpDiv/StaffDiv Head on all matters related to travel policy, programs, and practices;
2. Serving as the principal liaison between PSC, the OpDiv/StaffDiv, and the subordinate components within the OpDiv/StaffDiv on all matters regarding travel policy, programs, and practices;
3. Communicating travel related policy and operational information to all travelers, AOs, and Federal Agency Travel Administrators (FATAs) in the OpDiv/StaffDiv;
4. Reviewing and approving where appropriate all Other than Coach Class (First, Business, and Premium) accommodations traveler requests;
5. Conducting appropriate oversight within the OpDiv/StaffDiv of all travel related matters and adherence to travel policy;
6. Timely filing and certifying the accuracy of reports of travel activity required by law, regulation, or Departmental policy;
7. Designating a Lead FATA (See Section 1.3.10) for the OpDiv/StaffDiv. The Lead FATA must be reported to the ASTO;
8. Designating a Lead Agency/Organization Program Coordinator (A/OPC) for the Travel Charge Card. The Lead AOPC must be reported to the ASTO; and
9. Reviewing conference requests between \$20,000- \$75,000, if delegated the authority under Section C of the HHS Policy on Use of Appropriated Funds for Conferences and Meeting Space. This responsibility cannot be re-delegated; See Section 1.5.2 Conference Approval Prior to the Obligation of Funds for additional information.

In fulfilling this role, the STO will be required to attend information sharing meetings and sessions to discuss travel policy, its application, and matters related to travel programs and practices.

### 1.3.5.1 Additional Responsibilities

In addition, the responsibilities of the STO include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

1. Review and, if appropriate, approve travel expenses greater than \$10,000 and up to \$25,000 for a single trip<sup>3</sup> per traveler. Travel expenses greater than \$25,000 for a single trip, after being considered appropriate by the STO, must be submitted to the ASTO for approval. The approval requests shall be sent to PSC for review 30 days prior to the travel date of departure. The ASA still retains the authority to approve travel greater than \$25,000 for a single trip and may exercise it at any time.
  - a. Even though a traveler has an approved Travel Authorization in the E-Gov Travel System (ETS<sup>5</sup>), the traveler must not depart on his/her trip until he/she receives written approval from the ASTO. Traveling without approval from the ASTO will prevent the reimbursement of expenses incurred and subject the traveler to disciplinary action.
  - b. The authority to approve travel greater than \$25,000 per a single trip may only be re-delegated to the Deputy STO; if there is no Deputy STO, it may only be re-delegated to an official who directly reports to the STO.
2. Review and, if appropriate, approve their respective OpDiv/StaffDiv Head's non-emergency travel.

- a. As a matter of Departmental policy, no official shall authorize or approve his or her own travel. Another designated official from within the organization must be identified for this purpose.
  - b. The authority to approve OpDiv/StaffDiv Head travel may only be re-delegated to the Deputy STO; if there is no Deputy STO, it may only be re-delegated to an official who directly reports to the STO.
3. Review and, if appropriate, approve the use of Other than Coach-Class travel only when the use of Other than Coach Class travel is consistent with Departmental policy and the FTR.
- a. When a medical condition is used as a justification for the use of Other than Coach Class travel, no such approval shall be given until such time as the traveler files, with the STO, a certification from an appropriate medical professional that the traveler's medical condition warrants the use of Other than Coach Class travel. The medical professional must be someone other than the traveler, an employee subordinate to the traveler, or the STO. Please refer to Section 4.1.6 and Section 5.4.5 of this Travel Manual.

The designation of the STO does not relieve the OpDiv/StaffDiv Head of the ultimate responsibility to ensure that employees comply with all elements of the Department's travel policy, and that the OpDiv/StaffDiv's travel program and practices are designed and followed to achieve the requirements of the Department's travel policy.

### **1.3.6 Designation and Responsibilities of the OpDiv/StaffDiv Deputy Senior Travel Official (Deputy STO)**

Each OpDiv Head may designate a Deputy STO, who is a full-time Federal employee. The designation of the Deputy STO must be reported to the ASTO.

The Deputy STO will support the STO and handle those responsibilities of the STO, which can and are re-delegated to them. All re-delegations to the Deputy STO must be reported to the ASTO.

An authority listed as STO only, in the HHS Travel Policy Manual, may not be re-delegated to the Deputy STO.

### **1.3.7 Responsibilities of the Authorizing Official/Approving Official (AO) (Approver)**

As a matter of Departmental policy, no official shall authorize or approve his or her own travel. Another designated official from within the organization must be identified for this purpose.

The Civilian Board of Contract Appeals (CBCA) has established that an employee subject to the FTR, including the AO, is responsible for knowledge of those regulations as referenced by the CBCA. *See In the Matter of Jeffrey L. Troy*, GSBCA 16072-RELO. An AO's lack of knowledge of the applicable regulations will not justify reimbursement for expenses that are not authorized by statute, regulation, the HHS Travel Policy Manual, and OpDiv/StaffDiv policy.

Therefore, in order to meet this obligation, AOs are required to take the necessary training for the use of the ETS, which includes both Approver and Traveler training. In addition, GSA provides web-based training on the FTR for a nominal fee. More information can be found on GSA's website.

In addition, the AO must review and sign the travel authorization and voucher to confirm the authorized travel and submitted expenses. Per FTR 301-71.201, the AO must have full knowledge of the employee's activities related to the travel. The AO must also ensure:

1. The claim is properly prepared in accordance with the pertinent regulations and OpDiv/StaffDiv procedures;
2. The types of expenses claimed are authorized and allowable expenses per the FTR, the HHS Travel Policy Manual, and OpDiv/StaffDiv policy;

3. The amounts claimed are accurate; and
4. The required receipts, statements, justifications, etc. are attached to the travel claim, or the travel claim includes scanned electronic images of such documents.

Justifications in the ETS (Pre-Audits) should contain detailed information, which allows the AO to substantiate the request.

### 1.3.8 Responsibilities of the Funds Certifier/Certifier/Certifying Official

The Funds Certifier is responsible for ensuring that funds are available for the estimated cost of the Travel Authorization, and that the appropriate obligations are made in the OpDiv/StaffDiv financial system of record. They may also ensure that the funds are still available when the corresponding voucher is submitted, and that the funds are appropriately de-obligated and liquidated depending on the specific transaction and per OpDiv/StaffDiv policy.

In addition to verifying that funds are available, the Certifying Officer is also required to verify that commitments and obligations are valid, in accordance with laws and regulations, and have all required documents to support them.

Certifying Officers can be held personally accountable and individually responsible for verifying that the Federal Government payments within their jurisdiction are legal, proper, and correct. If any payment certified is found to be illegal, improper, or incorrect, the Certifying Officer may be held individually responsible for reimbursing the Federal Government for that payment.

Title 31 of the United States Code (U.S.C.) Section 3528 states that Certifying Officers are:

1. Responsible for any errors in certified payments;
2. Responsible for making sure that the facts presented in certified documents for payment are complete and accurate;
3. Responsible for illegal, improper or incorrect payments made by the Federal Government because they have made false, inaccurate or misleading certifications; and
4. Responsible for any payments made that are prohibited by law and that do not represent legal obligations under the appropriations or funds involved.

However, the Code also states that Certifying Officers may be relieved from liability by the Comptroller General if:

1. They based their certifications on official records;
2. They exercised due diligence in performing their duties; and/or
3. They had no personal knowledge of any illegal, improper, or incorrect payments and could not be expected to uncover them in the reasonable performance of their legal duties.

### 1.3.9 Responsibilities of the Traveler

HHS travelers have a number of responsibilities in connection with official government travel. These responsibilities are no less important than their responsibilities for carrying out their other job assignments. Travelers need to be aware of all the rules and regulations, including those contained in the FTR and the HHS Travel Policy Manual, as well as particular OpDiv/StaffDiv policies which govern official travel and how they pertain to the individual traveler.

The CBCA has established that an employee subject to the FTR is responsible for knowledge of those regulations as referenced by the CBCA in *See In the Matter of Jeffrey L. Troy, GSBCA 16072-RELO*. A traveler's lack of knowledge of the applicable regulations, therefore, will not justify reimbursement for expenses that are not authorized by statute, regulation, or per the HHS Travel Policy Manual and OpDiv/StaffDiv policy.

Therefore, in order to meet this obligation, travelers are required to take the necessary training for the use of the ETS, which includes Traveler training. In addition, GSA provides web-based training on the FTR for a nominal fee. More information can be found on GSA's website.

The traveler also has the responsibility to do the following:

1. Prepare, or have the travel preparer create, a travel authorization in the ETS prior to departing on travel.
2. Ensure all necessary travel expenses are properly pre-approved on the travel authorization. Justifications in the ETS (Pre-Audits) should contain detailed information, which allows the AO to substantiate the request.
3. Use the designated Travel Management Center (TMC)<sup>ii</sup> to make ALL travel reservations (air, rail, lodging (hotel), and rental car, etc.). Review the travel itinerary or invoice for accuracy and receive the ticketed itinerary or invoice from the TMC at least 2 days prior to departure. If the traveler does not receive a ticketed itinerary, then he/she does not have a ticket to travel.
4. Use Contract City Pair fares, unless one of the exceptions for using non-contract carriers is met.
5. Use the appropriate per diem rate based on the TDY location (e.g., where the work is being conducted).
6. Use the Government Contractor-Issued Travel Charge Card for all official expenses while on TDY, including obtaining a cash travel advance, unless an exemption from use of the travel charge card has been granted or the traveler is an infrequent traveler.
7. Pay travel charge card bills on time (regardless of voucher reimbursement status) in accordance with the cardholder agreement.
8. Obtain all proper receipts and submit them with the travel voucher. Receipts are required for all lodging -- including hotel taxes -- air, rail transportation, phone calls, internet fees, laundry, baggage fees, ATM fees, rental vehicle, regardless of amount and any single item that exceeds \$75. However, travelers may be required to provide receipts under \$75 on case-by-case basis at the request of the AO, as allowed by the FTR in section 301-52.8. Original receipts must be kept by the traveler for two (2) years.
9. Submit voucher claims promptly within five (5) working days (or every 30 days if you are on long-term TDY) from completion of travel, and be sure to sign the travel voucher.
10. Incur all necessary official travel expenses in a prudent (fiscally responsible) manner.

### **1.3.10 Responsibilities of the (Lead) Federal Agency Travel Administrator (FATA)**

HHS FATAs have a number of responsibilities in connection with official government travel. These responsibilities are no less important than their responsibilities for carrying out their other job assignments. FATAs need to be aware of all the rules and regulations, including those contained in the FTR and the HHS Travel Policy Manual, as well as particular OpDiv/StaffDiv policies, which govern official travel and how they pertain to the individual traveler. Please consult with your OpDiv/StaffDiv for additional information on the assigned responsibilities.

The CBCA has established that an employee subject to the FTR is responsible for knowledge of those regulations. See *In the Matter of Jeffrey L. Troy*, GSBGA 16072-RELO. A FATA's lack of knowledge of the applicable regulations, therefore, will not justify reimbursement for expenses that are not authorized by statute, regulation, or per the HHS Travel Policy Manual and OpDiv/StaffDiv policy.

Therefore, in order to meet this obligation, FATAs are required to take the necessary training for the use of the ETS, which includes Traveler, FATA, and Approver training. In addition, GSA provides web-based training on the FTR for a nominal fee. More information can be found on GSA's website.

Responsibilities of the FATA include but are not limited to:

1. The Lead FATA and/or FATA designation denotes specific permissions and authority in the ETS. Depending on the OpDiv/Staff Div's configuration, a FATA may be able to:
  - a. Establish document routing based on organization and type of action.
  - b. Manage the flow of travel documents such as rejects, unsubmitted vouchers, pending documents, etc.
  - c. Track the obligation and expenditure of travel funds.
  - d. Perform administrative setup functions necessary to use the ETS.
2. A Lead FATA is designated by each OpDiv/StaffDiv STO to serve as the primary Subject Matter Expert (SME) and Advisor for travel issues, including operational use of the ETS as well as OpDiv/StaffDiv policy application and interpretation. Designation of the Lead FATA is reported to the ASTO by the STO.
3. The Lead FATA serves as the primary escalation point for other FATAs within the OpDiv/StaffDiv.
  - a. The Lead FATA must understand and support the interaction of the travel system with all other systems (such as Financial or HR) and understand the unique organizational structure and needs of the OpDiv/StaffDiv, as defined by the OpDiv/StaffDiv.
  - b. The Lead FATA is responsible for the general training on the roles and responsibilities of the OpDiv/StaffDiv FATAs in their area of responsibility, as defined by the OpDiv/StaffDiv.
  - c. The Lead FATA supports the identification, production, and distribution of travel reporting needs for their OpDiv/StaffDiv, as defined by the OpDiv/StaffDiv.

The following Table provides a list of possible roles and responsibilities for the Lead FATA/FATA.

**Table 1 – Lead FATA/FATA Roles and Responsibilities**

Primary Tasks	Sub-Tasks
1. Primary contact for all non-lead FATA's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Oversight of non-lead FATA activity including the monitoring of that activity.</li> <li>b. Responsible for providing input together with the STO/DSTO in OpDiv/StaffDiv FATA selection process</li> <li>c. Organize training of organizational FATAs and ensuring qualification requirements are maintained</li> <li>d. Partner with PSC in the completion of OpDiv/StaffDiv reorganizations</li> <li>e. Control, maintain, and update Routing List and Conditional Routing at the OpDiv/StaffDiv level including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Premium Class authorization</li> <li>ii. Actuals Exist authorization</li> <li>iii. Notification of Foreign Travel (NFT) authorization</li> <li>iv. Advance Exist Authorization</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2. SME's on OpDiv/StaffDiv use of ETS and policy interpretations; primary interpreter of FTR & HHS Travel Policy for the OpDiv/StaffDiv, as defined by the OpDiv/StaffDiv	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Reviewing current OpDiv/StaffDiv travel policies and any anticipated changes that may be needed in the ETS</li> <li>b. Assessing the impact on current policies and procedures (gap analysis)</li> <li>c. Determining changes in job roles and responsibilities due to any travel procedures</li> <li>d. Updating policies and procedures to improve and streamline travel processes</li> </ul>
3. Understanding current and future OpDiv/StaffDiv business processes	
4. Configures OpDiv/Staff specific ETS requirements as defined by the agency STO/Deputy STO and permitted by the system administrators	
5. Main communications point of contact for the ETS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The primary OpDiv/StaffDiv pipeline for the accurate flow of information between PSC and the Lead FATA's organization</li> <li>b. Development and keeping motivated the internal teams that are essential for the success and support of the ETS</li> <li>c. Developing and sharing pertinent communications and feedback with Super Users</li> <li>d. Analyzing and communicating information collected from end-user feedback sessions and be able to communicate these needs to PSC.</li> <li>e. Organize and facilitate regularly scheduled OpDiv/StaffDiv meetings with PSC; the purpose of which is to keep the organization updated on travel-related changes and plans</li> </ul>
6. Ensuring completion and the maintaining of the required level of training for all non-lead FATAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Defining and executing a training plan to support OpDiv/StaffDiv employees</li> <li>b. Defining and executing a set of activities to perform related to leadership, vision, and culture change</li> <li>c. Conducting a training needs analysis for the FATA's OpDiv/StaffDiv</li> </ul>
7. Understand OpDiv/StaffDiv financial system interfaces with the ETS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Work with financial system site support teams within the OpDiv/StaffDiv</li> <li>b. Possess working knowledge of financial system troubleshooting systems available at the OpDiv/StaffDiv level</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Be familiar with troubleshooting travel system error messages, their meaning, and the action necessary to resolve them</li> </ul>
<p>8. Reports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Must be able to interpret reports provided by PSC and their impact to the OpDiv/StaffDiv business processes such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Travel System reject resolutions</li> <li>ii. Financial System exceptions/pending action</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Must be proficient in executing travel system report that product useful reporting tools for OpDiv/StaffDiv leadership with minimum assistance</li> </ul>

## 1.4 Travel Planning

This section emphasizes the need to plan travel assignments. The travel of HHS employees can be effectively applied to program goals if it is planned, coordinated, and managed. This section also references and supplements guidance in the FTR related to planning for conferences involving TDY travel.

### 1.4.1 Travel Planning General Policy

HHS AOs, in accordance with the FTR and HHS travel policy, will limit the authorization and payment of travel related expenses to only those that are necessary to accomplish the HHS mission in the most economical and effective manner. Official business travel requires proper authorization. The terms “travel authorization” and “travel order” are used interchangeably in the HHS Travel Policy Manual.

#### Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

FTR Part 301-71: Agency Accountability Requirements, Subpart B, Travel Authorization

AOs should take the following actions to both contain travel costs and to accommodate the travel needs of the employee when planning for official travel:

1. Conduct business via telephone, teleconference, telepresence, or videoconference in lieu of the more costly travel alternatives, when possible.
2. Use Government-owned or Government-provided meeting facilities, when available.
3. Identify opportunities to reduce costs in selecting a particular conference location and facility (e.g., through the availability of lower rates during the off-season at a site with seasonal rates).
4. Notify the traveler far enough in advance to allow time for necessary travel arrangements. In turn, the traveler must notify the travel planner in the most expeditious manner of the anticipated itinerary and corresponding requirements.
5. Require that travel in Government-owned, commercially rented and/or privately-owned automobiles be used when advantageous to the Government.
6. Obtain the required prior authorization for a rental car, for TDY and local transportation (formerly local travel). (See Chapter 4, Passenger Travel and Allowances.)
7. Require the use of shuttle bus and/or mass transit service to the maximum extent possible.
8. Review travel itineraries in order to:
  - a. Combine functions that can be carried out by one employee or by fewer employees than originally scheduled;
  - b. Combine multiple assignments in one trip to a certain geographical area; and

- c. Coordinate the schedules for trips of several employees so that they can use one rental vehicle rather than several.
9. Hold meetings at reasonably central locations to minimize travel costs.
10. Hold meetings in facilities that will accommodate employees with special needs.
11. Hold meetings in smoke-free facilities.

## 1.4.2 Conference Planning Involving Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel

The HHS Policy on Promoting Efficient Spending: Use of Appropriate Funds for Conferences and Meeting Space, Food, Promotional Items, and Printing and Publications, issued by the Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources (ASFR) and updated on December 16, 2013, must be followed. For additional information, please see the Office of Grants and Acquisition Policy and Accountability website.

Additional information regarding conference attendance while on TDY can be found in Section 1.5 of the Travel Manual.

### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-74, Conference Planning

#### 1.4.2.1 Use of FEMA-Approved Accommodations for Conferences

When an OpDiv/StaffDiv sponsors or funds a conference or event, in its entirety or in part, it must be held at a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-approved facility in accordance with 15 U.S.C. 2225a. FEMA publishes a list of hotels/motels that meet fire and life requirements of the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990. Federally funded meetings and conferences must not be held in properties that do not comply with this law, unless a written waiver is granted for a particular event based upon a public interest need. The following guidance applies to the use of FEMA-approved accommodations:

1. Heads of OpDiv/StaffDivs or their delegated officials are responsible for making a determination on an individual-case basis that a waiver of the requirement to use FEMA-approved accommodations for a particular conference is necessary and in the public interest. Such a waiver must be in writing.
2. Each OpDiv/StaffDiv that provides Federal funds through contracts or grants to non-Federal entities is responsible for notifying awardees of this requirement.

#### 1.4.2.2 Selection of Smoke Free Conference Sites

Whenever possible, HHS strongly encourages individuals responsible for planning meetings and conferences to make every attempt to schedule these events in communities that have adopted a comprehensive smoke-free policy. This smoke-free policy shall not be used in a manner inconsistent with the Competition in Contracting Act of 1984, Public Law 98-369, or any applicable regulation.

Agencies should make all appropriate efforts to conduct business and host or sponsor conferences in space controlled by the Federal Government, wherever practicable and cost-effective.

#### 1.4.2.3 When the Majority of Participants are Local

When the majority of the meeting participants are from the same metropolitan area, the meeting location should be held within the metropolitan area in order to minimize the cost of per diem and transportation. Meetings may be held outside the metropolitan area under the following circumstances:

1. When another location provides needed facilities or equipment not readily available (or available only at a high cost) in the immediate area;

2. When it can be established that isolation of the participants from the immediate area is necessary for accomplishment of the meeting's purposes; or
3. When the purpose of the meeting is centered on a specific geographical location.

#### **1.4.2.4 When the Majority of Participants are from Various Locations**

When the attendees are from various locations, consideration should be given to a site which is reasonably central to the majority of participants in order to equalize travel time. Meetings controlled by Regional and other field offices should always be held within that Region's or field office's boundaries. There are two exceptions to these rules:

1. Meetings to be attended by the Secretary or the Deputy Secretary may be held in Washington, even if this is not a central location for the majority of attendees; and
2. Where an exception has been granted by the OpDiv/StaffDiv Head or the STO.

Additionally, consideration should be given to coordinating the timing of the HHS meeting to coordinate with already-scheduled professional meetings, seminars, or workshops, which the participants will be attending.

#### **1.4.2.5 Meetings of Advisory Councils and Committees**

Meetings of advisory councils and committees that involve travel are generally subject to the FTR requirements for conference planning. Meetings must be held at reasonable times and at places that are accessible to members of the public, including accommodations for persons covered by the Rehabilitation Act. Whenever feasible, meetings must be held in Government facilities or in places involving the least expense to the Department.

#### **1.4.2.6 Appropriateness in Terms of Public Perception**

It is not Department policy to automatically rule out any particular location as a meeting site. However, it is the responsibility of all who approve meeting sites and attendance at meetings to avoid the impression that Federal funds are being used inappropriately. Accordingly, meeting sponsors shall not hold meetings at resort or vacation destinations unless that area is the location best suited for the meeting in terms of program needs and cost factors.

### **1.4.3 Light Refreshments at an Official Conference**

Employees should consult with the Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources (ASFR), Office of Grants and Acquisition Policy and Accountability (OGAPA) regarding the use of appropriated funds for food. Guidance can be found in the following Memorandum: *HHS Policy on Promoting Efficient Spending: Use of Appropriated Funds for Conferences and Meetings, Food, Promotional Items, and Printing and Publications*, which is available at OGAPA's website.

The provision of light refreshments is not a travel cost. It is a conference administrative cost (similar to reserving a conference room and equipment) and needs to be authorized through standard procurement processes. As a result, it is HHS policy that an employee must not order or pay for light refreshments for a conference using the travel charge card. Furthermore, an employee may not submit a claim for reimbursement of personal expenses incurred to pay for light refreshments at a conference via a travel voucher.

This section of the HHS Travel Policy Manual does not address when other legal authorities, such as the Government Employees Training Act (5 U.S.C. 4109-4110) and the Government Employees Incentive Awards Act (5 U.S.C. 4501-4506) authorize the provision of food at conferences, meetings, etc., regardless of the travel status of the employee. HHS offices that are hosting official conferences (whether or not involving employee travel) should consult with their OpDiv/StaffDiv Acquisition Officers for advice and assistance in procuring conference space, equipment, and/or food, as needed and appropriate, and when and how to charge registration fees for the cost of these items. Guidelines for procuring and paying for these items are outside the scope of the FTR and this Travel Policy Manual.

## **1.5 Attendance at Conferences**

This section describes the procedures for authorizing attendance at conferences, administrative meetings, and other events. This section applies to all civilian employees and individuals representing the Department including the Commissioned Corps. These guidelines apply to trips that are to domestic, domestic non-foreign, and international locations.

### 1.5.1 Definition of Conference

In accordance with the Office of Grants and Acquisition Policy and Accountability's *HHS Policy on Use of Appropriated Funds for Conferences and Meeting Space*, the following definitions apply:

#### **Conference:**

OMB Memorandum M-12-12 employs, and HHS has adopted, the following definition for a conference from the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR):

“A meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or event that involves attendee travel. The term “conference” also applies to training activities that are considered to be conferences under 5 CFR 410.404.”

This term is clarified, based on the common Merriam Webster dictionary meanings of a conference, seminar, and symposium, as follows:

- **Conference:** “a formal meeting in which many people gather in order to talk about ideas or problems related to a particular topic (such as medicine or business) usually for several days, or a formal meeting in which a small number of people talk about something.”
- **Symposium:** “a formal meeting at which experts discuss a particular topic”
- **Seminar:** “a meeting in which you receive information on and training in a particular subject, or a class offered to a small group of students at a college or university.”

Therefore, (1) meetings and events falling within the plain meaning of conference, symposium, and seminar where attendees travel, and (2) training activities that are considered to be conferences under 5 CFR 410.4041, are also considered conferences for the purposes of this policy.

A list of typical HHS meetings and events that are not considered conferences is provided at 1.5.1.1 below. These, and similar OpDiv/StaffDiv-specific events, are exempt from the request and approval and reporting requirements of OGAPA's policy. In applying this list, OpDiv/StaffDivs must use caution in determining which meetings and events are not conferences to ensure compliance with M-12-12. Notwithstanding this distinction, such meeting and events must still represent an efficient and effective use of taxpayer funds and be able to withstand public scrutiny.

#### 1.5.1.1 Exceptions and Clarifications to Definition of Conference

The following events are not considered conferences under this policy:

In accordance with Section 1.5.1 of the policy, the following meetings and events are not considered conferences and are exempt from the request, approval, and reporting requirements of the policy. They are based on the travel purpose codes as outlined in Appendix C to Chapter 301 of the FTR. Therefore, any travel authorized for such meetings/events should apply the relevant codes (travel to conferences should be coded as Conference - Other Than Training).

#### **Mission (Operational):**

- Federal employees day-to-day operational or managerial activities that may, in certain circumstances, involved limited travel.
- Hearings such as before governing oversight boards, appeals boards, courts, etc.

- Site and Technical Assistance visits of a specific site or series of sites to fulfill a specific program's oversight or assistance requirements.
- Inspections of a specific site or series of sites to fulfill a specific program's oversight requirements.
- Audits to fulfill a specific oversight or enforcement requirements.
- Investigations to fulfill a specific oversight or enforcement requirement.
- Examinations to fulfill a specific oversight or enforcement requirements.
- National / Federal Advisory Council meetings governed under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).
- General staff meetings that are a daily or regular occurrence and within the normal course of business [that may in certain instances involve limited travel], such as a meeting that takes place bi-weekly to discuss the previous week's events and/or where certain employees from another region attend to weigh in on the specific topic.

**Special Agency Mission:**

- Program Review/Kickoffs if with a specific grantee or contractor regarding a specific program, grant, or contract.
- Peer Review meetings if conducted to fulfill a statutory requirement to review grant application.
- Evaluation Panel meetings if conducted to fulfill regulatory requirement to evaluate contractor proposals.
- Solicitation / Funding Opportunity Announcement Review Board meetings between the awarding agency and only those individuals selected to serve on a particular review board.
  - Industry Days, Pre-solicitation, and Pre-proposal conferences, to the extent they involve official federal attendee travel, are considered conferences.
- Tribal Compact or Contract Negotiation meetings if held with one Tribe or Confederation of Tribes regarding that Tribe's specific compact or contract.
- Trade or Third-Party/International Negotiations regarding a specific agreement.
- Scientific meetings with a specific investigator or investigating team regarding a specific item, area of scientific inquiry, or public health need.
- Security missions conducted for specific, programmatic purposes.
- Emergency response/recovery such as civil, natural disasters, evacuation, catastrophic events.
- Technical assistance or regulatory oversight or monitoring meetings to fulfill a specific program's oversight, monitoring, or training requirements such as to send subject matter experts to state, local, and international sites to provide and share expertise in disease intervention, public health practices, research, etc.

**Training (Non-Conference):**

- Evaluations such as to fulfill a specific program's oversight or monitoring requirements.
- Assessments such as to fulfill a specific program's oversight or monitoring requirements.

- Classroom or instructor based certification and/or job training of federal staff to become proficient or qualified in one or more areas of responsibility.
- Classroom or instructor based certification and/or job training of federal staff to receive instruction or education, in scientific, professional, technical, mechanical, trade, clerical, fiscal, administrative, or other fields.

## **1.5.2 Conference Approval Prior to the Obligation of Funds**

Meetings and events that are not considered conferences (see Section 1.5.1.1 for examples) are exempt from the request and approval requirements below. For a definition of Conference Expenses and Funds, please see the *HHS Policy on Use of Appropriated Funds for Conferences and Meeting Space*.

### **1.5.2.1 Conferences Held by HHS (Including by Contract, etc.)**

Prior to the obligation of funds by any means including contract (including modification such as option exercise) or purchase order, purchase card, inter- or intra-agency agreement, Tribal contract or compact, etc., to support a conference (whether for internal or external purposes, or a combination thereof), the requesting office must obtain approval from the officials designated below:

- Total expenses to HHS estimated less than \$20,000: Approval shall be in accordance with the OpDiv/StaffDiv's standard operating procedures.
- Total expenses to HHS estimated from \$20,000 to \$75,000: Approval is required by the OpDiv/StaffDiv Head, or a direct report.
- Total expenses to HHS estimated in excess of \$75,000: Approval is required by the OpDiv/StaffDiv Head (non-delegable), and then submitted to the Office of Grants and Acquisition Policy and Accountability (OGAPA) for approval by the Deputy Secretary.
- Total expenses to HHS estimated in excess of \$475,000: Approval is required by the OpDiv/StaffDiv Head (non-delegable), and then submitted to the OGAPA for approval by the Deputy Secretary and the Secretary. OMB M-12-12 prohibits expenses in excess of \$500,000 on a single conference unless waived by the Secretary for exceptional circumstances.

For a conference that is funded by two or more HHS appropriations, the respective Executive Officers of the OpDiv/StaffDivs funding the conference shall designate a lead sponsoring office (based on the office with the highest total expected cost) to ensure that the single request submitted to OGAPA includes all expenses to be incurred by all OpDiv/StaffDivs reasonably expected to participate in or attend the conference.

In cases where an OpDiv/StaffDiv is planning a series of conferences, the OpDiv/StaffDiv may submit a single request (e.g. Class Approval) for a group of individual events that are in excess of \$75,000 each. To the extent that the cost of the individual events is less than \$75,000 each, the approval requirements are within the OpDiv/StaffDivs' approval thresholds.

As applicable, requests requiring the Deputy Secretary's or Secretary's approval shall be submitted no later than 30 calendar days prior to the date funds are to be obligated, or no later than 90 calendar days prior to the start of the conference – whichever date is earlier.

### **1.5.2.2 Conferences Funded through Grants and Cooperative Agreements**

Prior to the obligation of funds to award a grant or cooperative agreement where the primary purpose of the award is to support a conference, whether or not there are expected to be federal attendees, the sponsoring office must obtain approval from the officials designated below:

- Total expenses to HHS estimated less than \$75,000: Approval is in accordance with the OpDiv/StaffDiv's standard policies, procedures, and/or practices.

- Total expenses to HHS estimated from \$75,000 to \$475,000: Approval is required by the OpDiv/StaffDiv Head (non-delegable), and then submitted to the OGAPA for approval by the Deputy Secretary.
- Total expenses to HHS estimated in excess of \$475,000: Approval is required by the OpDiv/StaffDiv Head (non-delegable), and then submitted to the OGAPA for approval by the Deputy Secretary and the Secretary.

In determining the total expenses to HHS for the conference and submitting a request, OpDiv/StaffDivs shall include the total amount of the grant related to the event and any estimated federal attendance or participation costs to be funded by HHS (such as travel, registration fees, contract support, exhibit costs, etc.).

As applicable, requests requiring the Deputy Secretary's or Secretary's approval shall be submitted no later than 30 calendar days prior to the date funds are to be obligated, or no later than 90 calendar days prior to the start of the conference – whichever date is earlier.

### **1.5.2.3 Attendance at Conferences Held by Other Organizations or Federal Agencies (Non-HHS Conferences)**

OpDiv/StaffDivs must submit data to PSC on projected requests to attend non-HHS conferences. This data collection is currently performed via data call, and will transition to the use of the Conference Tracking and Approval (CTA) application. PSC will use this data and support the requirement to obtain the appropriate level of approval for attendance at, and support of, Non-HHS Conferences.

Prior to the obligation of funds, the appropriate approval must be obtained as follows for each individual conference and includes all conference and travel costs:

- Total expense to HHS estimated at or below \$75,000: PSC will inform the relevant OpDiv/StaffDivs that Departmental approval is not necessary, and enter the conference and assigned attendance totals in the travel system.
  - OpDivs/StaffDivs have the discretion to delegate approval, such as to the designated STO, when the total expense to an individual OpDiv/StaffDiv is at or below \$75,000.
- Total expense by an individual OpDiv or StaffDiv estimated in excess of \$75,000: Approval is required by the OpDiv/StaffDiv Head (non-delegable), and then submitted to PSC for review and submission to OGAPA. OGAPA will process the request for the Deputy Secretary's approval, or the Secretary's if over \$475,000, and inform PSC of the approval. PSC will enter the conference and assigned attendance totals in the travel system.
- Total expense to HHS (for two or more OpDiv/StaffDivs) estimated in excess of \$75,000: PSC will prepare and send a combined request to OGAPA. OGAPA will process the request for the Deputy Secretary's approval, or the Secretary's if over \$475,000, and inform PSC of the approval. PSC will enter the conference and assigned attendance totals in the travel system.
  - When an individual OpDiv/StaffDiv's cost is in excess of \$75,000, this combined request will be accompanied by the OpDiv/StaffDiv Head's signed request.

To ensure timely aggregation of costs and approval processing, data must be made available by each OpDiv/StaffDiv regarding their projected Non-HHS conference attendance no later than 90 days before the start of the conference.

### **1.5.2.4 Meeting Space (For Other than Conferences)**

OpDiv/StaffDivs must conduct meetings in space controlled by the Federal Government whenever practicable and cost effective. Therefore, OpDiv/StaffDivs shall establish internal policies and procedures to approve the obligation of funds for non-Federal meeting space.

### 1.5.3 General Policy

In accordance with Department policy, the delegated AO should consider the following criteria in determining whether attendance at meetings is appropriate:

1. Attendance is for official purposes and is consistent with the policies and best interests of the Department.
2. Attendance is concerned with an authorized Department program or with an activity in which the Department has an interest, and it would be advantageous to the Government to have one or more Department representatives in attendance.
3. The number of representatives does not exceed:
  - a. The minimum necessary to serve the Department's interest, and
  - b. The limits established within this Section.
4. Selection does not arbitrarily favor one sponsoring organization over another.
5. Expenses for attendance are fully justified and fully covered by any established monetary limitations.

### 1.5.4 Attendance at Conferences

The attendance of Federal employees at conferences will be scrutinized to ensure attendance is necessary and appropriate.

The approval levels set-forth in Section 1.5.2 Conference Approval Prior to the Obligation of Funds from the *Health and Human Services' (HHS) Policy on Promoting Efficient Spending: Use of Appropriated Funds for Conferences and Meeting Space* (Section 1.3) supersedes the previous rule of 20 per OpDiv/StaffDiv and 50 for all of HHS previously listed in the 2012 HHS Travel Policy Manual.

To ensure compliance with the FY 2013 Appropriations Act, the Departmental approval threshold based upon the number of attendees, has been replaced by dollar value thresholds as outlined in Section 1.5.2 above.

#### 1.5.4.1 Compliance with the E-Gov Travel System Procedures<sup>iii</sup>

##### Traveler Responsibilities

When creating a Travel Authorization for Conference Attendance, all HHS Travelers and Travel Preparers must use the Trip Purpose of "Conference" and then select a conference from the list of available conferences in the ETS. Travelers and/or Travel Preparers must select the conference that the traveler will be attending and not select a different conference just to complete the travel authorization. If a specific conference is not available, they must contact their Travel Administrator to have the conference loaded into the ETS.

The conference must be loaded into the ETS before the Authorization can be approved. Travelers and Travel Preparers may not circumvent this policy by selecting a different Trip Purpose in the ETS in order to process a Travel Authorization. Failure to follow this policy may result in not being able to attend the conference, not being reimbursed for expenses related to event attendance, and other HR actions.

### 1.5.5 Attendance at Local Non-Government-Sponsored Meetings

The Department prescribes the procedures for authorizing attendance at local non-governmental meetings sponsored by domestic non-governmental organizations and held in the United States or in areas under U.S. jurisdiction, not involving TDY travel. This section applies to all civilian employees and individuals representing the Department.

#### 1.5.5.1 General Requirements

Form HHS-99, “Authorization to Attend Non-Government Sponsored Meeting,” may be used to record authorizations to attend domestic meetings held by non-governmental organizations. Use of Form HHS-99 is based upon OpDiv/StaffDiv Policy. Form HHS-99 may be used for:

1. Individual meetings when the attendance at one or more meetings is to be involved; and
2. When several different meetings are to be attended during a given period by the same individual or group of individuals, if attendees will not be in temporary duty travel status.

Authorization to attend a meeting should be requested on Form HHS-99 at least 15 days prior to the meeting.

The attendee should retain the approved HHS-99 as proof that they has been authorized to be absent from his/her regular post of duty for attending a meeting.

The HHS-99 should be used to support any claim for reimbursement.

The form should contain an estimate of all expenses, including registration or similar fees, to be paid by HHS in connection with such attendance. Care should be taken by the person preparing the form to ensure that it contains sufficient information to permit the AO to make an appropriate determination of compliance with the requirements of Section 1.5.3. The HHS-99 should be prepared and processed in accordance with the OpDiv/StaffDiv’s administrative procedures.

### **1.5.5.2 U.S.-Based International Organization Local Area Meeting**

Any attendance at a meeting held at the headquarters of, or sponsored by, a U.S.- based international organization, (e.g., Pan American Health Organization, World Bank, etc.) taking place in the defined local transportation (formerly local travel) area must be processed via the HHS Notification of Foreign Travel (NFT) on-line system (See Section 6.3).

### **1.5.5.3 U.S.-Based Organizations Hosting a Conference at an International Site**

When a U.S.-based organization that typically hosts its conferences at a domestic site decides to host a conference at an international site, all policies, and procedures as outlined in Chapter 6, International Travel, of this manual shall be followed. In this scenario, an object class code reflective of travel to an international site is to be used.

## **1.6 Pre-Employment Interview Travel**

The purpose of this section is to define the Department’s policy regarding the reimbursement of travel expenses for pre-employment interviews. Generally, such payments are limited to applicants, high-level or unique positions, when the interview is necessary to determine the applicant’s qualifications for the position based on the designation of the position as hard-to-fill and mission critical. For additional information on eligibility and Office of Human Resources (OHR) guidelines, see HHS Instruction 572-1, Payment of Travel and/or Transportation Relocation Expenses.

### **1.6.1 General Information**

Travel expenses for pre-employment interviews, Competitive Service and Excepted Service (Non-competitive), may be reimbursed when the OpDiv/StaffDiv determines that a position is of such a high level or is so unique that interviews are necessary to enable the hiring agency to determine the applicant’s qualifications based on the designation of the position as hard-to-fill and mission critical. However, payments of travel expenses will be limited to applicants for unique or high level positions that are defined as technical, professional, or administrative. These positions are defined as those with unusual combinations of duties, responsibilities, and qualifications. AOs should take into consideration the costs associated with travel of top-ranked applicants. The authority to reimburse travel expenses for a pre-employment interview is not be used for entry-level positions, except in rare and unique cases (e.g., research scientists with doctorate degrees).

### **1.6.2 Travel Reimbursement**

Reimbursement of travel expenses for pre-employment interviews must be approved in advance by the appropriate AO. Post approval of pre-employment travel expenses is prohibited.

The OpDiv/StaffDiv AO must consider all travel expenses to be incurred and the time constraints when authorizing reimbursement for a pre-employment interview. Travel expenses authorized for pre-employment interviews are the same as those authorized for regular travel on official business. An Actual Expense Allowance cannot be authorized for per diem expenses. An advance of funds may never be authorized for pre-employment interviews.

Interviewees are to be reimbursed only for travel and related expenses associated with the time spent interviewing or involved in discussions with OpDiv/StaffDiv officials, as those activities pertain to the advertised position. Such expenses incurred due to unrelated matters are not to be reimbursed. For example, if the interviewee incurred an extra night's lodging cost due to their giving a speech the next day following completion of the interview process, they should not be reimbursed for that extra night of lodging or any applicable M&IE costs on that day.

Claims for reimbursement of pre-employment travel expenses are processed in the same manner as other claims for reimbursement for travel expenses and allowances. Reimbursement of travel expenses is limited to the interviewee only.

## **1.7 Travel To/From HHS OpDiv Hospitals and Medical Facilities**

The purpose of this section is to provide information and instructions concerning the travel of HHS patients, research subjects, and when required, escorts and/or attendants for them. This section applies when such an individual is being admitted to, discharged from, or transferred to, from, or between HHS OpDiv hospital(s) or medical facility(ies). As used in this section, "HHS OpDiv hospitals and medical facilities" include Indian Health Service (IHS) facilities operated by Indian Tribes or Tribal Organizations under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. An employee, who becomes incapacitated by illness or injury while in TDY travel status, should refer to Section 5.4.4, Emergency Travel while on TDY.

### **1.7.1 Definitions**

See Section 14., Glossary

### **1.7.2 Patient and Research Subject Travel**

#### **1.7.2.1 Travel Reimbursement under the Public Health Service Act**

The Public Health Service Act, as amended (e.g., at 42 U.S.C. 248 for IHS and 42 U.S.C. 282 for NIH), provides authority separate from the FTR for patients' and research subjects' travel at government expense. Under these provisions, appropriated funds may be authorized to reimburse all or some of the expenses of patient and research subject travel, at the discretion of the AO. Instructions concerning the travel of patients, research subjects, escort, and/or attendants who are eligible to travel under the Public Health Service Act will be issued as supplements to this manual by the OpDiv/StaffDiv concerned.

A patient or research subject traveling under this authority is not deemed an employee for purposes of travel entitlements and usage of special travel rates available to government employees. However, the contracts executed by GSA for City Pair air carrier transportation provide that when the cost of the ticket is charged directly to a centrally billed account, travel performed at government expense does qualify for the City Pair contract rate. Thus, a patient or research subject whose travel is being paid for under the Public Health Service Act may use the City Pair fare if the Government has charged the airline ticket to its centrally billed account and is paying for the ticket.

Importantly, the U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement managed by the DTMO may be used only by government employees to rent cars at government official business rates with accompanying special terms and conditions. The cars may not be used by patients or research subjects whose travel is reimbursed under the Public Health Service Act, unless that individual has been authorized to travel as an invitational traveler (see Section 1.7.2.2 below).

***Policy Example:*** *A patient who lives in Flagstaff, Arizona, and needs to rent a car to drive to the IHS facility in Gallup, New Mexico, for specialized treatment, must rent the vehicle in her private capacity. At the discretion of IHS, she may be reimbursed any authorized private rental costs*

*under the authority of the Public Health Service Act. The fact that she may also be an employee of IHS is immaterial if she is traveling as a patient rather than for official duty purposes.*

### **1.7.2.2 Travel Reimbursement as an Invitational Traveler**

Individuals serving without compensation or at \$1 a year when they are acting in a capacity that is directly related to, or in connection with, official activities of the Government may be authorized to travel at government expense if they are issued invitational travel orders, in accordance with the FTR. However, in line with 5 U.S.C. 5703, such invitational travel must provide a direct benefit to the Government in order for the traveler to be on an HHS travel order. In the situation of a patient, as opposed to a research subject, this requirement usually would not be met.

AOs must very carefully examine the facts surrounding patient travel before authorizing invitational travel orders for patients. An invitational traveler is entitled to full travel reimbursement under the FTR and this manual, as if they were an employee. Thus, when authorizing official travel for a research subject or possibly a patient in this capacity, consideration must be given to the direct benefit to the Government as well as the costs of the travel.

### **1.7.2.3 Documentation**

Patients and research subjects traveling at government expense under the authority of the Public Health Service Act, but not in a capacity as “employees” on official duty or as invitational travelers should not be issued HHS travel orders. OpDivs that authorize travel under the Public Health Service Act must issue supplemental instructions as to how to document authorization of such travel. At a minimum, this documentation should be readily distinguishable from the HHS travel order form for employees (including invitational travelers). The documentation should clearly state the authority for the travel being authorized.

## **1.7.3 Authorization of Escort/Attendant Travel**

### **1.7.3.1 Travel Reimbursement under the Public Health Service Act**

For patients and research subjects traveling under the authority of, and whose travel expenses are being paid under, the Public Health Service Act, an attendant may be approved when necessary to protect the health and safety of the patient/research subject and other persons likely to be exposed to them. See 42 CFR 35.22.

### **1.7.3.2 Attendants for Employees with Special Needs**

Under FTR 301-13 and this Travel Manual, the payment of travel expenses of an escort/attendant to accompany an “employee with special needs” (which includes invitational travelers) that are clearly visible and discernible or substantiated in writing by a competent medical authority, may be authorized when the approving official has determined that:

1. The employee needs to perform official travel or be admitted or transferred to an OpDiv hospital or facility, as described in Section 1.6; and
2. They are incapable of traveling unaccompanied.

The documentation authorizing escort/attendant travel must be maintained in the OpDiv’s official travel files.

## **1.7.4 Allowances and Benefits**

IHS and NIH are authorized under the Public Health Service Act to pay necessary expenses for a research subject or a patient and authorized escorts/attendants, if applicable.

Instructions concerning these additional travel expenses will be issued as supplements to this manual by each OpDiv concerned.

A patient may qualify for such reimbursement if and only if a statute provides that the patient is considered to be an “employee” (i.e., in a capacity as an invitational traveler) while performing such travel. Any such request must be supported by proper written justification from an appropriate medical official. If a research subject or a patient is traveling under invitational travel orders, all requirements of the FTR must be met prior to authorizing reimbursement for such expenses.

### Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

FTR Part 301-13, Travel of an Employee with Special Needs

## 1.8 Travel of Consultants, Experts, and Invitational Travelers

This section provides instructions and information concerning the travel of consultants and others serving the Department in an advisory capacity under the authority of law and the provisions of HHS Personnel Instructions and Directives. It applies to consultants serving either in individual capacities or as members of advisory groups, unless the members are legislatively authorized to receive reimbursement of actual travel expenses.

### 1.8.1 Definitions

HHS Personnel Instructions, Directives, and certain statutes are the authoritative source for the definition of various types of “consultants.” For the purposes of this manual, the categories of consultants are defined in Chapter 14, Glossary, and include:

1. Consultant;
2. Intermittent consultant;
3. Temporary consultant;
4. Federal Advisory Committee (Act) consultant;
5. Contractor; and
6. Invitational traveler (5.U.S.C. 5703).

The “service year” mentioned in these definitions begins with the date of appointment.

### 1.8.2 General Information

Travel allowances are essentially the same for consultants/experts and invitational travelers as for civilian employees of the Department and are paid in accordance with the FTR and the provisions of this manual.

1. **Intermittent consultants** and **invitational travelers** may be allowed travel expenses, including a per diem allowance, while serving the OpDiv/StaffDiv away from their homes or places of regular non-government employment. When a consultant is required to provide services for a period of more than 30 days, the delegated travel official shall determine whether it is advantageous to the Government to continue authorizing payment of these expenses.
2. **Temporary consultants** and **Federal Advisory Committee consultants** may be allowed travel and per diem expenses only while traveling on official business away from their designated posts of duty.
3. **Contractors** must bear all expenses, as provided by the terms of their contracts. Reimbursement of travel expenses is not allowed unless specifically authorized in the contract, in which case it must be billed against the contract. (Note: This type of consultant may not be issued travel orders and is not eligible for GSA’s contract City Pair fares for common carrier transportation. The only exception for the use of the City Pair program may be if the individual is performing duties that are not related to their contract; such as if, a person is asked to come speak about a topic that is not related to their current contract as an Invitational Traveler.)

### 1.8.3 Travel Documentation

Individuals covered by this section may be authorized to travel at the Department's expense through the issuance of travel orders. The following guidelines apply:

1. The travel order shall describe the purpose, itinerary, and authorized travel allowances.
2. OpDiv/StaffDivs will assist the traveler in making the necessary travel arrangements through the TMC.
3. Travelers are responsible for submitting their travel claims within five (5) working days from the completion of the travel in accordance with the FTR. OpDiv/StaffDivs will assist the traveler in preparing travel vouchers for reimbursement claims.
4. Travelers will be reimbursed in accordance with the FTR and the policies and procedures contained in this manual and within OpDiv/StaffDiv specific policies.
5. The documents required for authorizing and/or approving travel of consultants, experts, and invitational travelers are the same as those required for civilian employees in accordance with the FTR and this Travel Manual.

### 1.8.4 Travel Advances

A travel advance may be authorized in accordance with the policies and procedures contained in Section 3.4. OpDiv/StaffDivs have the discretion to issue travel advances to the individuals covered by this section.

### 1.8.5 Per Diem Allowances

The following guidelines apply to per diem allowances:

1. Travelers on official business will be authorized and reimbursed per diem allowances in accordance with the FTR on a lodgings-plus rate per FTR 301-11, unless higher rates are provided by Congress in specific appropriations or other Acts.
2. Travelers may be reimbursed for actual and necessary subsistence expenses for specific trip assignments, subject to the FTR and established HHS policies and procedures.
3. Travelers may be authorized a reduced per diem allowance when the OpDiv/StaffDiv can determine in advance that a lower rate can be justified.

## 1.9 Travel Expenses for Members of National Advisory Councils and Advisory Committees

This section provides policy and procedures for the payment of travel and subsistence expenses on an actual expense basis for members of national advisory councils and advisory committees. It applies only to the members of those councils and committees having legislative authority for payment of actual and necessary travel and subsistence expenses.

### 1.9.1 Allowances

Members of certain national advisory councils and advisory committees are entitled by law to actual and necessary travel and subsistence expenses while attending conferences or meetings of their respective councils/committees or while otherwise rendering services away from their homes or regular places of business.

For these individuals, reimbursement is made only for actual and necessary expenses incurred without regard to whether the traveler's subsistence expenses are more or less than the maximum per diem allowance.

As defined in the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), (k) Travel expenses: Advisory committee members and staff, while engaged in the performance of their duties away from their homes or regular places of business, may be allowed reimbursement for travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by 5 U.S.C. 5703, for persons employed intermittently in the Government service.

Travel under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) is the same as invitational travelers who are appointed as experts to the Government (Special Government Employees-(SGEs)). Per OGC, the FTR applies for SGEs (41 CFR 301-2.1).

## **1.9.2 Authorization**

A travel authorization must be submitted in advance of travel to the appropriate delegated approving official for members of advisory councils or advisory committees.

## **1.9.3 Claims for Reimbursement**

Members of national advisory councils and advisory committees will submit reimbursement claims through the ETS. The SF 1012 Travel Voucher should only be used if the ETS is not available. Receipts will be required in accordance with FTR 301-52.4 and HHS policy established in this manual. Original receipts must be kept by the traveler for two (2) years.

# **2. Travel Reports to Oversight Agencies**

This section provides supplemental guidance on the key travel reports that must be submitted by HHS and OpDiv/StaffDivs on a regularly scheduled basis. Heads of OpDiv/StaffDivs or their designees must ensure that there are automated and/or manual systems in place to collect and report required information accurately on a timely basis.

## **2.1 GSA Survey on Agency Payments for Employee Travel and Relocation**

Each OpDiv/StaffDiv that incurs more than \$5 million for travel and relocation during the fiscal year must submit a separate report to GSA. A consolidated report for all other OpDiv/StaffDivs not reaching the \$5 million level (referred to as “HHS-Other”) will also be submitted. OpDiv/StaffDivs in the HHS-Other group must provide PSC with any information it requests to complete the HHS-Other report. PSC will serve as the liaison with GSA and provide information regarding due date, requests for extensions, etc.

All participating OpDiv/StaffDivs are expected to provide required information accurately and on time. Reports will be reviewed by a senior financial manager and submitted directly to GSA, preferably in electronic format. A hard copy will also be provided to the ASA for informational purposes. This report is due at the end of every Fiscal Year per FTR amendment 2011-01, 76 FR 18335, Apr. 1, 2011.

### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

Part 300-70, Subpart A Requirement to Report Agency Payments for Employee Travel and Relocation

## **2.2 Report on the Use of Other than Coach Class Transportation Accommodations**

GSA requires agencies to submit an annual “Report on the Use of First Class Transportation Accommodations” on a fiscal-year basis. Separate OpDiv/StaffDiv reports must be submitted to PSC Transportation Services, in accordance with established deadlines. Reports should be submitted electronically in the spreadsheet format issued by GSA or through the GSA reporting tool. No changes should be made to the format, which is prescribed by GSA. Negative reports are also required, if no Other than Coach Class transportation expenses were incurred.

Fiscal Year 2011 marked a change in agency reporting requirements for employees' premium travel accommodations. Agencies are now required to track and report to GSA all instances where their transportation accommodations are anything Other than Coach Class. As described in Chapter 13, Glossary, "Other than Coach Class" (or "Premium-Class") is defined as "any class of accommodations above coach-class, e.g., first-class or business-class." Business-class and first-class accommodations must be separated out when reporting to GSA. Agencies having no Other than Coach Class travel to report must file a negative report.

Required data elements for the report must include:

1. Mode of travel (air, ship, train);
2. Name of traveler;
3. Origin city and state;
4. Destination city, state, or foreign country;
5. Beginning date of travel;
6. Travel Purpose Codes [Employee Emergency, Mission (Operational), Special Agency Mission, Conference – Other than Training, Training, Relocation];
7. Exception Codes (Circumstances justifying use of Other than Coach Class accommodations);
8. Actual First Class accommodation fare;
9. Business Class fare; and
10. Coach Class accommodation fare for actual route used.

### **2.2.1 Other than Coach Class Accommodations That Must Be Reported**

Agencies must report all instances of Other than Coach Class (First Class, Business Class) accommodations paid for by the Government. This includes reporting Other than Coach Class accommodations as part of a multi-leg or multi-segmented trip that was paid for by the Government. For multi-leg or multi-segmented trips, GSA requires agencies to separate and report on each individual leg or segment that was Other than Coach Class. Legs or segments that are not Other than Coach Class accommodations should not be reported.

### **2.2.2 Other than Coach Class Accommodations That Do Not Need To Be Reported**

Premium-Class accommodations that do not need to be reported include:

1. Other than Coach Class accommodations paid by the traveler;
2. Other than Coach Class acquired by the traveler through frequent flier points or benefits;
3. Other than Coach Class considered a free upgrade; or
4. The Federal Government paid coach-class fare for Other than Coach Class accommodations (e.g., Y-Up Fares).

### **2.2.3 Submitting Negative Reports**

Agencies must submit either data or a negative report to GSA annually. Negative reports can be submitted under two circumstances:

1. If an agency has reported first-class travel accommodations previously, but does not have any current Other than Coach Class accommodations to report; or
2. If an agency never authorizes Other than Coach Class accommodations as a matter of agency policy.

## 2.2.4 Exceptions to Reporting Other than Coach Class Travel

Agencies are not required to report data that is protected from public disclosure, by statute, or Executive Order. However, agencies not reporting data are required to submit a cover letter to GSA with the following aggregate information, as per FTR 300-70.103:

1. Aggregate number of authorized Other than Coach Class trips that are protected from disclosure;
2. Total cost of actual Other than Coach Class fares paid that exceeded the coach-class fare; and
3. Total cost of coach-class fares that would have been paid for the same travel.

Note: If the aggregate information is also protected from public disclosure then a negative report must be submitted to GSA.

### Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

Part 300-70, Subpart B—Requirement to Report Use of Other than Coach Class Transportation Accommodations

## 2.3 Semi-Annual Report of Payments Accepted from a Non-Federal Source

31 U.S.C.1353 authorizes the acceptance by Executive Branch agencies of payments for travel, subsistence, and related expenses from non-Federal sources in connection with the attendance of employees at certain meetings or similar functions. The statute provides that the head of each agency shall submit to the Director of the Office of Government Ethics (OGE) semi-annual reports of payments of more than \$250 per event accepted under this authority. Reports are due from HHS to OGE on May 31 and November 30 of each year. Only travel payments accepted under the authority of 31 U.S.C. 1353 must be reported to OGE.

Beginning with reporting period ending March 31, 2011, and for any reporting period thereafter, OGE will accept Section 1353 travel reports only through the electronic, Section 508-compliant SF-326 (in PDF format) or the new, OGE-approved alternative to the SF-326, the OGE Form-1353 (in Excel format). Both forms are available on the OGE website in the Forms Library. OGE posts these completed reporting forms on the OGE website in a searchable database for public inspection.

Negative responses are also required, if no payments of more than \$250 per event were accepted under this authority. Individual OpDiv/StaffDiv reports or a negative response must be submitted to PSC in accordance with established deadlines.

See FTR 304-3.17, Reports, for detailed reporting requirements.

### Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

Part 304 Subchapter A, Employee's Acceptance of Payment from a Non-Federal Source for Travel Expenses

## 2.4 Semi-Annual Senior Federal Travel Report (SFTR)

GSA requires all agencies to submit on a semi-annual basis information on: (a) non-mission travel on government aircraft by Senior Federal officials, dependents, and non-Federal travelers; and (b) mission and non-mission travel on government aircraft by Senior Executive Branch officials. Each agency is responsible for reporting travel by personnel transported on aircraft scheduled by their own agency. Government aircraft includes fixed and rotary wing aircraft that the agency owns, leases, contracts for, charters, or rents. Travel in aircraft used by or in support of the President/Vice President, and by officials from the Legislative and Judicial Branches and persons accompanying them, are excluded from the reporting requirement.

## **HHS Travel Policy Manual Fiscal Year 2018 – Quarter 4**

The reporting periods are October 1 through March 31 and April 1 through September 30 of each fiscal year. A consolidated departmental report is due to GSA no later than 30 days after the close of each reporting period and must contain the following information:

1. The person's name, indicating if they are either a Senior Federal official or non-Federal traveler, whichever is appropriate;
2. The traveler's organization and title or other appropriate descriptive information (e.g., dependent, press, etc.);
3. Name of authorizing Agency;
4. The official purpose of the trip;
5. The destination(s);
6. For personal or political travel, the amount the traveler must reimburse the Government (i.e., the full coach fare or appropriate share of that fare);
7. For official travel, the comparable City Pair fare (if available to the traveler) or the full coach fare if the City Pair fare is not available; and
8. The cost to the Government to carry this person (i.e., the appropriate allocated share of the Federal or Commercial Aviation Services (CAS) aircraft trip costs).

Note: Trips that are designated as classified are not required to be included in this report. However, documentation for such travel must be maintained for two years and made available if requested by GSA.

If there is no reportable Senior Federal travel, the agency is required to submit a Negative Report to PSC. GSA has implemented a web-based tool to assist in this data collection effort. Users may access the SFTR reporting tool on GSA's website.

### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-70, Subpart J, Policies and Procedures for Agencies that Own or Hire Government Aircraft for Travel

## **2.5 OMB Reports on the Travel Charge Card**

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requires agencies listed in the original Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 to submit reports on specific information identified in OMB Circular No. A-123, Appendix B, Section 5.3, which includes an annual narrative report.

Separate OpDiv/StaffDiv reports must be submitted to PSC in accordance with the established deadlines for each report.

### **2.5.1 Quarterly Reports**

Quarterly Reports should be submitted electronically in the spreadsheet format issued by OMB for reporting purposes. No changes should be made to the format. The required data elements include:

1. Number of travel charge cards;
2. Number of active accounts;
3. Percentage of employees that are cardholders;
4. Net number of new accounts (new less cancelled);
5. Charge card dollars spent, total refunds earned, and percentage of potential refunds earned;

6. Number of cases reported by the agency Office of the Inspector General (OIG);
7. Number of administrative and/ disciplinary actions taken for care misuse (including delinquency);
8. Number and percentage of travel charge cards with monthly and/or transaction limits (\$0 - \$2,500; \$2,500 - \$5,000; \$5,000 - \$7,500; \$7,500 – above);
9. Number and percentage of travel charge cards with Automated Teller Machine (ATM) withdrawal limits (\$0 - \$2,500; \$2,500 - \$5,000; \$5,000 - \$7,500; \$7,500 – above); and
10. Percentage of travel charge cardholders that travel less than five times annually.

## **2.5.2 Annual Narratives**

Annual Narrative Reports should be submitted to PSC with the required information. Annual Narrative Reports required data elements include but are not limited to the following:

1. The date(s) of the most recent and the next scheduled independent review (e.g., OIG) for all agencies charge card programs;
2. A description of the current process for monitoring delinquency, including what reports the agency reviews and what actions are taken when a problem is discovered;
3. A description of the steps the agency takes to address protracted turnaround time (> than 15 working days) following voucher submission for travel voucher reimbursement, if applicable;
4. A description of the method the agency utilizes to identify and detect possible card misuse, including the use of any specialized information technology solutions as well as any requests to charge card vendors for data reports;
5. Agency future plans (within the next 12 months) to enhance charge card systems by automating review to detect instances of abuse, misuse, and fraud;
6. A description of any best practices the agency employs in charge card management; and
7. Any additional useful information regarding charge card programs.

## **2.6 Executive Order 13514 Sustainability and Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Report**

Section removed. Executive Order 13514 was revoked by Executive Order 13693.

## **3. Travel Authorizations, Voucher Claims, and Advances**

This chapter provides supplemental guidance on the issuance and use of travel authorizations, including requests, preparation, amendments, and cancellations. It also sets forth general requirements for preparation and approval of vouchers for reimbursement of expenses incurred when traveling on official business. In addition, it also provides guidance on Travel Reservations, Frequent Traveler Programs, and OpDiv/StaffDiv Travel Programs.

### **3.1 Initiation of Travel Authorizations**

#### **3.1.1 Travel Authorizations - General**

A travel authorization is the official authorization to perform TDY duty travel and, if applicable, to incur change of station expenses. It should specify, to the greatest extent possible, the travel to be performed and the expenses to be incurred. Travel Authorizations should only be for dates and locations of official duty. Travel must be most advantageous to the Government, when cost and other factors are considered; travel must be by the most expeditious means of transportation practicable and commensurate with the nature and purpose of the duties involved. Travel should be from the Official Station to the TDY location or from one TDY location to another. Travel expenses may not be incurred until the AO has approved the travel authorization. To protect the rights of the traveler, travel and transportation should be authorized in advance through the ETS or, in rare circumstances, a hard copy Form HHS-1<sup>iv</sup> Travel Order. All authorizations must have a signature (electronic or written) by an official delegated to authorize travel.

In emergencies, when prior authorization cannot be obtained, a travel authorization may be issued after travel has begun in accordance with the OpDiv/StaffDiv's established procedures for this exception. Lack of advance written authorization for travel will not void the traveler's rights under the Federal Employee's Compensation Act in the event of accident or injury. A subsequently approved travel authorization or a written statement from the supervisor that the traveler was performing official duties when the accident occurred will be adequate evidence to afford coverage. The traveler, however, should exercise careful judgment in the performance of travel without an authorized travel order, at a minimum by obtaining verbal or informal written authorization (i.e., email) from an appropriate delegated AO before departing on the trip.

### **3.1.1.1 Payment for Official Travel Expenses**

When preparing a Travel Authorization, the AO must ensure that all official travel expenses are being paid for through use of the Government contractor bank-issued travel charge card. This is to include either use of a Centrally Billed Account (CBA) or if applicable, an Individual Billed Account (IBA).

The use of a contract vehicle to pay for travel expenses represents non-compliance with FTR 301-51.1. In addition, doing so could result in an accounting misclassification of travel expenses, in the event of a Congressional or Department imposed travel ceiling.

Exemptions to the use of the Government contractor-issued travel charge card, both Government-wide and HHS-wide, can be referenced in Chapter 10 of this manual.

Note: An employee who performs TDY travel or departs earlier than necessary to carry out the purpose of travel, without proper authorization, does so at the risk of not being reimbursed for expenses that are incurred.

Every effort should be made to obtain authorization in advance of travel for these allowances in Section 3.1.1.3. When prior authorization is not possible or practical, post-trip approval may be issued through an amended travel order, in accordance with the pertinent OpDiv/StaffDiv's policy and procedures. However, without proper authorization travelers risk not being reimbursed for expenses that are incurred.

### **3.1.1.2 Advance Authorizations of Allowances – FTR Requirements**

Section eliminated: FTR Redundant

### **3.1.1.3 Advance Authorization of Allowances – FTR Requirements**

Section eliminated: FTR Redundant

### **3.1.1.4 Advance Authorization of Allowances – Departmental Policy**

Departmental policy requires specific electronic or written authorization in advance of the following allowances:

- Excess baggage or weight;
- Checked baggage fees; and

- Use of internet services when required for official duties.

Every effort should be made to obtain authorization in advance of travel for these allowances in Section 3.1.1.4. When prior authorization is not possible or practical, post-trip approval may be issued through an amended travel order, in accordance with the pertinent OpDiv/StaffDiv's policy and procedures. However, without proper authorization travelers risk not being reimbursed for expenses that are incurred.

### **3.1.1.5 Travel Authorization Timeframe**

It is HHS policy that travel orders will be initiated by the traveler or the travel preparer within the following periods, unless an unusual or emergency situation requires a shorter authorization period:

#### **Domestic/Non-Foreign Travel**

Forms initiated for domestic/non-foreign travel should reach the AO at least five working days before the scheduled date of departure.

#### **Foreign Travel**

Forms initiated for foreign travel should reach the AO at least 30 days prior to the scheduled date of departure. Before initiating travel orders involving foreign travel, see Chapter 6, International Travel, of this manual.

#### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-71, Subpart B, Travel Authorization

### **3.1.2 HHS-1 - Travel Order Form**

The Form HHS-1, Travel Order, must only be used when the ETS cannot be used to generate an electronic travel order. The form must not be used to bypass the ETS and should only be used when absolutely necessary.

### **3.1.3 Additional Documentation Requirements**

Frequently, travel orders require additional supporting documentation. For specific requirements, refer to the appropriate HHS Travel Policy Manual Chapter covering special travel topics (e.g., International Travel – Chapter 6, and Sponsored Travel – Chapter 7).

### **3.1.4 Travel Authorizations**

The FTR permits three basic types of travel authorizations: Trip-by-trip, Limited Open, and Unlimited Open.

These travel orders must include:

1. The name of the traveler(s);
2. Proper authorization from the delegated AO;
3. Purpose of travel;
4. Any conditions or limitations on the authorization;
5. An estimate of the travel costs (for open authorizations, it should include an estimate of the travel costs over the period covered);
6. A statement that the traveler is authorized to travel; and

7. An indication as to why the travel is important and in the best interest of the Department.

The Travel Authorization needs to include enough information so that the AO can make a determination that the travel is:

1. In the best interest of the Department;
2. Is being carried out by the most expeditious and/or cost effective means of transportation practicable; and
3. Is commensurate with the nature and purpose of the duties of the employee requiring such travel.

### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR 301-71.103

#### **3.1.4.1 Trip-by-Trip Authorization**

A trip-by-trip authorization is the preferred and usual means for authorizing travel related to TDY or a permanent or temporary change of station. The ETS is set up to require the issuance of a trip-by-trip order before a TDY travel voucher can be submitted and travel expenses can be approved for payment.

#### **3.1.4.2 Limited Open and Unlimited Open Authorizations**

If an OpDiv/StaffDiv's management determines that these types of authorizations are appropriate and necessary due to unusual or exceptional circumstances, the following Departmental guidelines should be followed:

##### **Limited Open Authorization**

A limited open authorization permits an individual to travel without further authorization under certain specified conditions. Its use is expressly discouraged and should be restricted to only travelers who are expected, as part of their work assignment, to conduct frequent, specific, and repetitive travel within a designated area, and must frequently embark on trips without enough advance notice to obtain orders more specific as to the travel to be performed and its expected duration.

The travel order must state realistic limitations covering the specific purpose of such travel (use of general terms such as "to conduct official business" are not acceptable), geographic area, travel duration, and cost.

A limited open travel order is valid only for trips taken within the authorized specific geographical area for the stated purpose. Employees who hold this type order must be issued trip-by-trip orders for any assignments not covered by the limited open authorization.

Under no circumstances may a limited open authorization be issued to cover a wide geographic area, such as the east coast, thereby permitting the employee to travel at will and without reasonable opportunities for supervision of the travel. Limited open authorizations may not be issued to cover more than one fiscal year and must be re-validated each quarter by the delegated AO. If travel is no longer required for an employee, the order will be terminated.

##### **Unlimited Open Authorizations**

An unlimited open authorization permits an individual to travel for any purpose without further authorization. Unlimited open authorizations for travel are reserved for use only by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Chief of Staff, the Heads of OpDiv/StaffDivs, and Regional Directors. This type of authorization should only be used on an exception basis, and then only when essential. Should there be a need for this type of authorization, each trip must be justified separately, and documentation must be maintained on file as to the purpose of the individual trips taken must be maintained on file as to the purpose of the individual trips taken.

Note: Open authorizations (limited or unlimited) may not be issued for travel OCONUS, conference attendance, training, entitlement (such as overseas tour renewal), and relocation travel. They may not be issued to individuals who are not employees of the OpDiv or StaffDiv. A trip-by-trip authorization must be issued under these circumstances.

### 3.1.4.3 Amended Orders

An amended order may be issued when a change is made to a previously approved travel document (Authorization or Voucher). It should be requested and issued when authority contained in the original order is insufficient for performance of official business. An amended document should also be issued to permit the traveler to incur, and be reimbursed for, additional allowable expenses. Travel orders should be amended when:

1. The actual day of departure or return exceeds the date of departure or return on the original authorized travel order by more than five (5) days;
2. The total actual expenses for the trip exceed the approved amount on the original travel order by the maximum threshold established by the pertinent OpDiv/StaffDiv;
3. The itinerary needs to be changed to add an alternate TDY site; or
4. An item requiring special authorization was erroneously omitted.

### 3.1.5 Travel of an HHS Employee for another Federal Agency

Travel by an HHS employee for another federal agency is to be performed in accordance with a written agreement between the HHS OpDiv/StaffDiv and the other Federal agency. This agreement will specify the reimbursement terms of travel, per diem, and other expenses.

Two basic situations can occur when travel is performed for another Federal agency:

1. The other Federal agency will agree to reimburse the HHS OpDiv/StaffDiv for the employee's travel costs. Under this arrangement, the HHS OpDiv/StaffDiv will pay for the travel from its appropriated funds and subsequently obtain reimbursement from the other Federal agency. The other Federal agency shall provide all the appropriate accounting information and their Agency Location Code (ALC) in order to expedite the interagency billing at the conclusion of the travel. Travel expenses that are paid with HHS appropriated funds are subject to all Federal and Departmental policies. Or,
2. The other Federal agency will provide all travel expense reimbursement directly to the employee, including transportation tickets, per diem, etc. The other agency is responsible for issuing the "travel order," making all travel arrangements, and processing the travel voucher. In this case, the traveler should follow the rules and regulations of the sponsoring Federal agency.

Note: All travel orders for reimbursable travel will be supported by a copy of the agreement between the HHS OpDiv/StaffDiv and the other Federal agency.

### 3.1.6 Travel for a Non-Federal Organization

See Chapter 7, Acceptance of Payment of Travel Expenses from a Non-Federal Source, for additional information regarding reimbursable travel from non-Federal sources.

### 3.1.7 Orders for No-Expense-to-the-Government (NETG) Travel

Official TDY travel, which is performed at no expense to the Government, should be covered by a travel authorization that shows that the traveler is on official business while absent from his/her official duty station.

For attendance at a conference, meeting, symposium, or similar event, where the employee's time and participation are warranted, appropriated funds must be used to pay for transportation and per diem expenses. If, however, the travel is in conjunction with a bona fide training activity that falls under the guidelines of the GETA, the OpDiv/StaffDiv has the discretion to pay for all, a portion, or none of the transportation and per diem expenses. (See 5 U.S.C. 4109.)

In the event that none of the expenses are being paid, a NETG Travel Authorization should be prepared. Under such circumstances, the employee is conducting official business away from their official duty station and the travel authorization will provide the usual government coverage and protections (e.g., in case of an accident). In this scenario, there is no requirement for the employee to be placed on annual leave. “No-cost” or NETG travel authorizations should be the rare exception. Once a no-expense travel order is approved, it cannot be amended to authorize appropriated funds. (See Comptroller General decision B-192636, December 15, 1978.)

GSA contract City Pair fares can only be used for official travel when appropriated funds are used to purchase the tickets. Therefore, travelers cannot use the City Pair fares for travel conducted on a no-expense travel order.

### **3.1.8 Capping of Per Diem and Transportation Expenses**

An employee who is authorized to conduct official business travel for the OpDiv/StaffDiv cannot be requested to pay out-of-pocket for any common carrier (i.e., airline) transportation or per diem expenses due to budget restrictions or for any other reason. Common carrier transportation and per diem reimbursements are considered entitlements, and to request an employee to pay out-of-pocket for these services could be construed as an augmentation to the appropriation. This includes a scenario, for example, where an employee or an invitational traveler says that they will waive reimbursement for meals in order to reduce the cost of trip, in an attempt to get the trip approved.

Note: An exception to this capping policy may occur when the travel is being conducted in conjunction with training activities under the GETA. In this case, an OpDiv/StaffDiv has the discretion to pay for all, a portion, or none of the transportation and per diem expenses, and may authorize payment only for those expenses it deems necessary to achieve the objectives of the training program.

### **3.1.9 Prompt Cancellation of Travel Orders**

Travel orders will be canceled as soon as it is determined that the employee will not travel or incur expenses under the authority of the order. This is particularly important near the end of a fiscal year when unnecessarily encumbered funds may preclude the performance of other necessary travel.

#### **3.1.9.1 No Show Fees**

Under the FTR 48 Hour Rule #4, if the airline cancels your flight because of the 48-hour auto cancellation rule (trip not approved), the car and hotel reservations will not be automatically cancelled by the airline (since these are not their reservations). If you are no longer traveling, you will need to cancel the hotel and car separately to avoid “no show” fees.

A one-time exception for reimbursement of these fees may be approved, after the fact, at the discretion of the AO, with proper justification; justification must include the reason as to why the Travel Authorization was not cancelled in time to avoid the no show/cancellation fee from the hotel or car rental agency.

### **3.1.10 Travel Orders Covering Two Fiscal Years**

Travel and transportation expenses of TDY travel spanning more than one fiscal year should be charged against the appropriations for the fiscal year in which the expenses are incurred, rather than solely in the fiscal year in which the travel is ordered (see Comptroller General Decision Letter B-238110, May 7, 1991).

When travel is to be taken beyond the end of the fiscal year, cost estimates for TDY travel will be provided separately for the two fiscal years involved, as follows:

1. Tickets for round trip transportation will be charged against the appropriation current at the time the employee embarks on TDY travel, regardless of return date.
2. Per diem and miscellaneous travel costs, including Rental Cars and mileage reimbursement for Privately Owned Vehicles (POVs), will be assigned to the applicable fiscal year appropriation in which they are incurred:

- a. Costs incurred from the date travel is to begin, through the end of the fiscal year; and
- b. Costs incurred from the beginning of the next fiscal year through the date travel is to end.

## 3.2 Travel Vouchers

### 3.2.1 General

Employees traveling on official business are expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that they would exercise if traveling on personal business; in other words, follow the “prudent person” rule.

Employees are responsible for performing travel in accordance with the provisions of the FTR, the HHS Travel Policy Manual, and supplemental policy/procedural guidance issued by their OpDiv/StaffDiv. Travelers are also responsible for keeping adequate records of their expenditures, and providing the necessary facts, details, and supporting evidence for the proper preparation of their vouchers.

In addition, in accordance with the Debt Collection Act of 1996, employees are required to receive their reimbursements for travel vouchers via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), unless the traveler can demonstrate that a hardship would occur if the employee does not have an account with a financial institution or an authorized payment agent.

### 3.2.2 Vouchers Submitted in a Timely Manner

In accordance with FTR 301-52.7, an employee must file their voucher claim within five (5) working days following completion of the official business trip. (Note: If on long-term TDY travel greater than 30 nights or more, a voucher must be filed at a minimum of every 30 days, or in accordance with the appropriate OpDiv/StaffDiv policy.)

To meet the above requirement, a traveler must have:

1. Prepared their own voucher claim inclusive of an electronic certification or hard copy signature, or;
2. Submitted their receipts to a designated Travel (Voucher) Preparer and certified or signed the voucher claim.

### 3.2.3 Time Frame for Submitting Vouchers

In accordance with the FTR, travel vouchers should be submitted within five (5) working day period [seven (7) calendar days] or every 30 days if on long term TDY. However, travel claims may be submitted up to six (6) years after travel is completed in accordance with 31 USC 3702 (b) (1).

#### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-52, Claiming Reimbursement

FTR Part 301-71, Subpart C, Travel - Claims for Reimbursement

### 3.2.4 SF-1012 - Travel Voucher

Standard Form 1012, Travel Voucher, is the standard hard copy travel voucher used within the Government. The SF 1012 must only be used when the ETS cannot be used to generate an electronic voucher.

## 3.3 Travel Advances

This section provides supplemental guidance for the authorization, issuance, and liquidation of travel advances. The provisions of this section apply to both domestic and foreign travel of individuals whose travel expenses are paid for by an HHS OpDiv/

StaffDiv. Advance of funds for change of official station are covered in the FTR Chapter 302 and are limited to the specific relocation situation for which an employee may receive an advance of funds. (See Chapter 12, Relocation Allowances.)

### **3.3.1 Employees Eligible for Advance of Funds**

In general, employees, intermittent experts or consultants, and invitational travelers, who are authorized to travel on official business, may be eligible for an advance of funds. Travel advances may not be authorized or issued to contractors. According to the FTR, the use of cash or direct deposit travel advances should be minimized.

#### **3.3.1.1 Exceptions**

It is HHS policy that:

1. An employee who refuses to apply for and/or use the travel charge card for official travel and is not covered by an exemption, will not be authorized a cash travel advance from the finance office (refer to Section 10.2.5, Refusal to Apply for and/or Use the Government Travel Charge Card); and
2. An employee whose travel charge card is cancelled due to misuse, as defined in Section 10.2, Mandatory Use of Government Contractor-Issued Travel Charge Card, is considered to have elected by his/her misconduct not to use the card as required for payment of travel expenses, which disqualifies him/her from receiving an advance (refer to FTR 301-71.300 and Section 3.3.2.1 below).

Note: Check with the appropriate OpDiv/StaffDiv finance office to verify if additional exceptions are provided.

#### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR 301-51, Subpart C, Receiving Travel Advances

FTR 301-71, Subpart D, Accounting for Travel Advances

### **3.3.2 Method of Travel Advance Payment**

Heads of OpDiv/StaffDivs or their designees will establish travel advance policies within the requirements of the FTR and this HHS Travel Policy Manual.

In accordance with FTR 301-71.303, the following data must be captured for each request for an advance:

1. The name and social security number of the employee who has an advance;
2. The amount of each advance;
3. The date of its issuance; and
4. The date of reconciliation for unused portions of all travel advances.

HHS automated systems must authorize, control, and liquidate travel advances in accordance with the requirements of the FTR and this HHS Travel Policy Manual. They should provide data for automatic aging of outstanding travel advances based on the end-of-trip date and generate follow-up notices to the traveler and administrative staff concerning delinquent advances. If a travel advance must be authorized outside of an automated system, the SF 1038, Application and Account for Advance of Funds, should be used, and the necessary management controls should be established through manual and/or electronic means.

A traveler should allow seven (7) business days prior to the travel date to ensure the advance is calculated and properly processed by the ETS and the OpDiv/StaffDiv's financial system. If this requirement is not met, the electronic transfer of funds may not be processed and deposited in time for the scheduled travel.

### 3.3.2.1 Calculating Allowable Advance

The maximum allowable travel advance shall be calculated as follows:

#### **Employees with Government-issued IBA Travel Charge Cards (ATM Advances)**

Employees who have an open IBA may be authorized a travel advance and are expected to obtain the authorized advance using an ATM. An ATM cash advance may be authorized to cover anticipated out-of-pocket incidental travel expenses, such as ground transportation or occasional meals, which generally cannot be purchased with the charge card. See Section 10.3.5.3, **Exceptions to the Use of the Travel Charge Card**, for a list of items exempt from the mandatory use of the travel charge card. Travel Advances should be withdrawn not more than two (2) business days prior to the trip.

In unusual circumstances (such as travel to remote locations), the AO may determine that an employee will not be able to use the ATM feature to cover all of his/her anticipated cash out-of-pocket travel expenses and may authorize the issuance of a non-ATM cash travel advance from the servicing finance office. Advances may be in the form of check, EFT, Declining Balance Cards, or Pre-Paid Cards. The method of payment is up to the OpDiv/StaffDiv.

Note: The employee may not be able to use the IBA at all in some remote locations (e.g., certain foreign countries). In such instances, the travel advance may include funds to cover expected travel expenses such as lodging and meals. However, in the case of travel to a remote location, the traveler must be able to explain how they will receive an advance direct deposited, via EFT, if banks and ATM machines are not available.

#### **Individuals Exempt from the Use of the Government-issued IBA Travel Charge Card (Non-ATM Advances/Cash Advances)**

Those individuals who are exempt from the mandatory use of the Government-issued travel charge card (as defined in Section 10.2), such as infrequent travelers and those who are not by policy prohibited from receiving an advance, may request a non-ATM travel advance from their servicing finance office. Advances may be in the form of check, EFT, Declining Balance Cards, or Pre-Paid Cards. The method of payment is up to the OpDiv/StaffDiv. A travel advance shall not exceed 60 percent of the total estimated M&IE, lodging, and other miscellaneous expenses authorized on the travel order. All common carrier (e.g., airfare) expenses should be obtained through the TMC and charged to a CBA; therefore, those expenses should not be included when calculating the advance.

However, that if the employee's supervisor determines that the 60 percent limitation will result in a justifiable and significant financial hardship on the employee, the supervisor with the concurrence of the AO may, in their discretion, advance up to 100 percent of the estimated reimbursable expenses for an individual trip. The justification must be documented on the travel authorization and uploaded to the ETS for audit purposes. The supervisor and AO should notify the Agency/Organization Program Coordinator (A/OPC) of the increased advance amount. Heads of OpDiv/StaffDivs, or their designees, may issue policies which are more restrictive regarding the issuance of travel advances to their employees

An exception to this is that, under extremely limited circumstances, a traveler performing TDY travel in a foreign country may be required to procure passenger transportation that cannot be purchased using a Government-issued travel charge card or through the TMC on a CBA. In such cases, where the traveler would have to pay these expenses out-of-pocket, they may be included in the calculation of the travel advance.

For all travel within the CONUS, the amount advanced must not exceed estimated expenses for a period of 45 days. For foreign travel, consideration may be given to time in travel status and time required for submission and payment of the employee's travel voucher.

#### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-51, Subpart C, Receiving Travel Advances

### 3.3.3 Liquidation of Travel Advances

The employee shall repay any portion of his/her travel advance not used for reimbursable expenses. The amount of the advance must be stated on the travel voucher in accordance with the provisions listed below. If the voucher is for an amount less than

what was advanced, the employee must pay the difference in cash, by check, or by money order made payable to HHS or the specific OpDiv/StaffDiv by name, in accordance with the OpDiv/StaffDiv's travel management procedures. Payment must be made by the employee as soon as the amount of the unused advance is established with certainty.

### **3.3.3.1 Specific Trip**

When the advance is for a specific trip, a travel voucher must be submitted within five (5) working days after completion of the trip for which the advance was issued. The voucher must reflect the amount of the advance and any amount not used during travel that the employee should repay, based upon the expenses claimed.

A notice of any payment due for unused advance funds will be sent to the employee by the finance office. The notice will include a description of how to dispute the amount due, penalties for late payment, and other applicable requirements and procedures.

Payment of the amount of the unused advance must be received from the employee within 15 days from the date of the notice or the date any timely dispute over calculation of the amount is resolved, whichever is later. If payment is not received by the due date, interest will accrue on the amount due to the Government (unliquidated amount) and the entire amount (including interest) may be recovered by offset against any monies otherwise payable to the employee.

### **3.3.3.2 Long-term Travel and Multiple Vouchers**

For extended and long-term TDY, the traveler should be informed that travel advances are issued in 45-day increments, and of the necessity to submit his/her travel vouchers through proper channels to the paying finance office at a minimum of every 30 days and immediately upon completion of the travel. The amount of any unused advance will be calculated for each voucher separately, and must be refunded as provided above.

At any time the finance office deems it necessary, an employee may be required to liquidate the outstanding balance, reduce the amount, or justify continuation of a travel advance.

### **3.3.3.3 Trip Cancellation**

In the event of cancellation or indefinite postponement of travel for which an advance has been issued, the employee shall immediately refund the full amount of the advance.

## **3.3.4 Control of Travel Advances**

Each OpDiv/StaffDiv must maintain travel advance records with appropriate safeguards and review procedures. Outstanding travel advances should be reviewed monthly. Normally, the review can be made at the same time that travel advance records are reconciled with the general ledger control account. The primary purpose of the review is to identify travel advance balances that have not been reduced during the periods specified below. Unless the finance office is already aware of, and is satisfied with, the reason why a balance has not been reduced, appropriate recovery action should be taken.

Note: Each OpDiv/StaffDiv's finance office is responsible for the control of travel advances under these policies. However, each office may establish a system of controls where the authorizing program office shares responsibility for monitoring and controlling travel advances within their offices. In this case, it is the finance office's responsibility to issue clear procedures for program offices to follow in terms of monitoring and controlling travel advances, including how to handle delinquent, outstanding balances.

Employees must liquidate advances upon separation or transfer from the Department. Each OpDiv/StaffDiv will take action to ensure that employees leaving the Department have cleared all outstanding advances prior to their departure.

## **3.4 Travel Reservations and Frequent Traveler Programs**

This section provides supplemental guidance to HHS civilian employees, invitational travelers, and OpDiv/StaffDiv management on making official travel reservations, participating in frequent traveler programs, and implementing OpDiv/StaffDiv travel programs.

### 3.4.1 Mandatory Use of Government Travel Management Services for Reservations

HHS provides travel management services using the ETS and a commercial travel agent through the contracted TMC. In accordance with FTR 301-50.3, employees must use those services to arrange for common carrier transportation, lodging, and rental car. Unless specifically authorized in the FTR, no other travel agencies may be used to purchase travel services for official Government travel. Additionally, the FTR requires that all official travel reservations be made through a contracted TMC.

If an employee uses an unauthorized travel agent, unauthorized TMC, or unauthorized travel service such as Orbitz, Travelocity, etc., the employee will be responsible for all additional costs that result from the unauthorized use including service fees, cancellation penalties, or other additional costs (e.g. higher airfares, rental car charges, or hotel rates.)

#### 3.4.1.1 Outside Booking of Travel Arrangements

A one-time exception for reimbursement of these fees may be approved, after the fact, at the discretion of the AO, with proper justification; justification must include the reason as to why the contracted ETS or TMC was not used to make the travel arrangements.

#### 3.4.1.2 TMC Exemptions

HHS policy allows five exceptions from mandatory use of a government-contracted TMC for reservations:

1. If a government agency or a non-Federal organization sponsors a conference and arranges for a block of rooms to be available for Federal attendees at a specified rate (not to exceed 25 percent over the lodging rate for the area) in one or more specific hotels, the traveler or their office may make the reservation directly with the contracted hotel for the conference or the conference organizer.
2. If there is an emergency where it is not possible to use the government-contracted travel management services for arranging for common carrier transportation, lodging, and/or car rental, the STO or Deputy STO may grant an exception for the specific travel arrangement, if appropriate justification is provided. For information related to disaster response, please see Chapter 11, Travel – Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Services including National Special Security Events (NSSE) and similar situations.
3. If travel is in a remote area, OCONUS, or where it is not possible to use the government-contracted travel management services for arranging for common carrier transportation, lodging, and/or car rental (e.g., in developing nations where the TMC cannot be used to reserve flights on certain airlines). Also, see Section 4.1.4, Procuring Common Carrier Transportation.
4. If the GSA FedRooms Program is used to secure lodging accommodations, it may not be possible to use the government-contracted travel management services for such arrangements since reservations must be made through the GSA program directly.
5. If Extended Stay and Long-Term Lodging is obtained under GSA's Transportation, Delivery, and Relocation Solutions (TDRS) Schedule 48, the Emergency Lodging Services (ELS) Blanket Purchase Agreement, or through a Lodging Negotiations and Management Services provider under the Travel Services Solutions Schedule 599.

#### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-50, Arranging for Travel Services

FTR Part 301-73, Travel Programs

## 3.4.2 Frequent Traveler Programs and Promotional Materials

### 3.4.2.1 General Policy

A traveler who receives a promotional item, such as frequent flyer miles, upgrades, or access to carrier clubs, as a result of using travel or transportation services obtained at Federal government expense, or accepted under 31 U.S.C.1353, may retain the promotional item for personal use, if such item is obtained under the same conditions as those offered to the general public and at no additional cost to the Government.

### 3.4.2.2 Redeeming Frequent Traveler Benefits and Promotional Materials

Employees may use frequent traveler benefits or promotional materials earned on official travel to obtain travel services for a subsequent official travel assignment(s) or retain such benefits for personal use, including upgrading to a higher class of service. Employees may not select or choose a travel service provider (e.g. airline, hotel, etc.) based upon whether or not it provides frequent traveler benefits nor to gain frequent traveler benefits for personal use. OpDiv/StaffDivs may not authorize purchase of a higher cost ticket from the TMC with the express purpose of enabling an employee to apply their frequent flyer miles for upgraded seating. When redeeming frequent traveler benefits or promotional materials for subsequent official travel, the employee must comply with governing Federal travel regulations, such as the mandatory use of the travel management services and contract City Pair fares.

Exceptions to these regulations may be found in FTR 301-73.102, Mandatory Use of Travel Management Service, and FTR 301-10.107 and 301-10.108, Mandatory Use of Contract City-Pair Fares. (Note that if an employee is redeeming a free round-trip frequent-flyer ticket for use on official business travel, at no cost to the Government, an exemption permits use of a non-contract City Pair carrier. See Section 4.1.5 Mandatory Use of Contract Fares and When Contract Fares May Not Be Used).

#### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-10, Subpart B - Use of Contract City-Pair Fares

FTR 301-71.300 (policy governing use of travel advances)

FTR Part 301-10.107, Use of Contract City-Pair Fares

FTR Part 301-50, Arranging for Travel Services

FTR Part 301-73, Travel Programs

## 4. Passenger Travel and Allowances

### 4.1 Transportation Expenses

This section provides supplemental guidance for HHS employees, invitational travelers, and OpDiv/StaffDivs regarding allowable transportation expenses for TDY travel.

#### 4.1.1 Transportation Expenses - General

HHS AOs, as well as HHS travelers, will follow the provisions of the FTR and these supplemental HHS policy guidelines in authorizing, incurring, and approving transportation expenses.

#### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-10, Transportation Expenses

FTR Part 301-70, Subpart B, Agency Responsibilities for Policies and Procedures Relating to Transportation

FTR Part 301-72, Agency Responsibilities Related to Common Carrier Transportation

## 4.1.2 Transportation Method and Routing

### 4.1.2.1 Transportation Method and Routing

The HHS AO is responsible for determining the method(s) of transportation most advantageous to the Government when cost, timing, and other factors are considered. If actual travel time requires only part of a day, employees are expected to work or take approved leave for their remaining duty hours in that day. (See Section 4.1.11.3, Scheduling Travel to Avoid Lost or Unproductive Duty Time, for further explanation.) If an employee travels by a non-authorized method of transportation, any additional expenses will be borne by the employee. For example, if an employee is authorized to travel via common carrier and chooses to travel via POV, the total constructive cost of the trip via the authorized method (common carrier) must be calculated (including transportation, per diem, etc.) and then compared to the total actual cost of the trip via POV. The employee's reimbursement is limited to actual expense, not to exceed the total constructive cost.

### 4.1.2.2 Travel by an Indirect Route and/or for Personal Convenience

The HHS AO must only authorize travel to and from official duty destination points, unless the traveler is authorized to use a POV from their residence directly to a common carrier terminal. In addition, travel-approving officials may require a cost comparison between different arrival and departure airports. If an employee travels by an indirect route or interrupts travel by a direct route for personal convenience, reimbursement will be limited to the cost of travel by a direct route or on an uninterrupted basis, and the employee will be responsible for any additional costs.

### 4.1.2.3 Personal Liability for Purchase of Indirect Route Transportation Tickets for Personal Convenience

Employees must travel to and from their official destination points by the usually traveled route. Employees who for personal convenience travel by an indirect route or interrupt travel by a direct route are personally liable for any additional costs. In the case of indirect or interrupted travel, reimbursement cannot exceed the constructive cost of direct routing or the actual cost of travel, whichever is less.

Refer to Section 4.1.5, Mandatory Use of Contract Fares and When Contract Fares May Not Be Used, for additional information about indirect or interrupted travel for personal convenience. For information about leave, in conjunction with TDY travel, see Section 5.4.2, Reimbursement for TDY Travel in Conjunction with Approved Leave - TDY Domestic/Non-Foreign.

#### Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

FTR Part 301-10, Subpart A, General - Transportation Expenses

## 4.1.3 Transportation Gratuities

It is HHS policy that tips to a taxi, shuttle service, or courtesy transportation driver are limited to 15 percent of the charge for service. If there is no service charge, the limit for tips is \$5. Employees are expected to make maximum use of courtesy transportation (e.g., free airport/hotel shuttle service) in lieu of incurring charges for the same transportation. Transportation Gratuities should be listed as a miscellaneous expense on the Travel Voucher in the ETS.

Note: This expense should be recorded as a transportation expense on the voucher; it is not included in the "incidentals" portion of per diem.

## 4.1.4 Procuring Common Carrier Transportation

### 4.1.4.1 Prohibition Against the Use of Personal Funds for Common Carrier Transportation

Employees are required to use a government individually billed travel charge card, CBA, or a Government Transportation Request (GTR) to pay for common carrier transportation services. If a new employee or an invitational or infrequent traveler, who is unaware of proper procedures, makes an unauthorized purchase of common carrier transportation using personal funds,

reimbursement to the employee will be limited to the constructed cost of such transportation using the City Pair Fare (if no City Pair is available, the fare provided by the TMC will be used) and authorized method of payment.

Unauthorized purchases of common carrier transportation include:

1. Use of personal credit cards;
2. Cash withdrawals from an ATM using the Government travel charge card; and
3. Checks, both personal and Travelers.

For passenger transportation services costing \$100 or less, an employee may use personal funds to pay for the services only when use of the Government individually-billed travel charge card, CBA, and GTR are not practicable.

For passenger transportation services costing more than \$100, the OpDiv/StaffDiv's AO can authorize or approve the use of a cash-equivalent purchase method to obtain a reduced fare for group, charter, or excursion arrangements, or to procure non-contract carrier transportation under emergency circumstances and/or where the use of other methods is not possible. Such as in developing nations where the TMC cannot be used to reserve flights on certain airlines. To justify the use of personal funds in excess of \$100, both the employee and the employee's AO must certify on the travel claim the necessity for such use.

### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-10, Subpart A, General

FTR Part 301-51, Subpart B, Paying for Common Carrier Transportation

#### **4.1.4.2 Government Liability for Authorizing Restricted, Non-Contract Fares for Common Carrier Transportation**

The FTR Part 301-10, Subpart B, Common Carrier Transportation, lists at 301-10.107 (Use of Contract City Pair Fares) exceptional circumstances when a contract government fare does not have to be used. One such exception is when a lower fare is available to the public, which results in a lower overall cost of the trip to the Government (FTR 301-10-107(c)). If the exception is authorized, by the appropriate delegated official, the ticket still needs to be booked through the contracted TMC.

Use of non-contract fares due to lower cost should not be authorized unless the AO and the employee has full confidence that the trip will occur on the precise schedule indicated when the non-contract fare ticket is purchased unless no charge will accrue if the ticket must be exchanged or cancelled. If a traveler prepays for common carrier transportation (air, rail, etc.) prior to the departure, the OpDiv/StaffDiv cannot reimburse travelers for the expense until after the trip has been completed.

### **Domestic/Non-Foreign/CONUS**

It is HHS policy that AOs may not approve use of a non-contract fare under this low cost exception, as per FTR 301-10-107(c), unless the cost saving on the non-contract fare ticket will be at least 40 percent of the total cost of the contract fare (i.e., the ticket price is 60 percent of the contract fare or less). If the exception is authorized by the appropriate delegated official, the ticket still needs to be booked through the contracted TMC.

### **International/OCONUS**

It is HHS policy that AOs may not approve use of a non-contract fare under this low cost exception, as per FTR 301-10-107(c), unless the cost saving on the non-contract fare ticket will be at least 15 percent of the total cost of the contract fare (i.e., the ticket price is 85 percent of the contract fare or less). If the exception is authorized by the appropriate delegated official, the ticket still needs to be booked through the contracted TMC. For additional requirements for International Travel, see Chapter 6.

If the AO authorizes the purchase of a restricted or non-refundable, less-expensive commercial fare for the official trip and the Government unilaterally undertakes an action (such as canceling the trip or changing the travel dates) for purely official business-related reasons that result in:

1. The inability of the traveler to use the restricted ticket and obtain a refund; or

2. The incurrence of a cancellation or re-issuance fee to change dates, then the Government is liable for the costs arising from its actions.

The employee must submit such an unused authorized ticket to the OpDiv/StaffDiv, according to its procedures.

However, the Government is not liable for:

1. Any cancellation or re-issuance fee if the reason for the change in ticketed flight is personal and/or initiated by employee request or choice; and/or
2. Any additional costs resulting from personal actions taken by the employee, such as exchanging an authorized restricted commercial fare for direct travel on official business for a different commercial fare in order to accommodate indirect travel for personal convenience. See Section 4.1.2.3 Personal Liability for Purchase of Indirect Route Transportation Tickets for Personal Convenience.

#### **4.1.4.3 Accountability for Tickets and Other Transportation Documents**

Employees are responsible for all transportation tickets and other transportation documents for official travel issued to them. Employees may be personally liable for any additional cost for official travel resulting from improper safeguarding of these transportation documents. For example, employees may be personally responsible for any airline fee to reissue a lost or stolen airline ticket for official travel.

Employees must submit any unused tickets, coupons, or other evidence of refund to their OpDiv/StaffDiv or contract TMC, in accordance with OpDiv/StaffDiv procedures.

#### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-51, Subpart B, Paying for Common Carrier Transportation

FTR Part 301-72, Agency Responsibilities Related to Common Carrier Transportation

### **4.1.5 Mandatory Use of Contract Fares and When Contract Fares May Not Be Used**

#### **4.1.5.1 Mandatory Use of Contract City Pair Fares**

If the GSA City Pair contract fare for passenger transportation services is available to an employee for official travel, the employee must use the contract carrier, unless one or more of the exceptions listed in FTR 301-10.107 applies. The employee is personally liable for any additional costs or penalties incurred resulting from unauthorized use of non-contract service. See section 4.1.4.2 above for additional guidance on the use of restricted, non-contract fares.

Contract airfares may be used when an employee takes annual leave at the TDY duty station before or after the official travel assignment when there is no deviation of routing from the official travel points. However, OpDiv/StaffDivs may issue policies, which are more restrictive, especially when extensive leave will be taken at the TDY station in advance of the official travel. Refer to Section 4.1.11.1, Common Carrier Transportation.

If a traveler works in a market with more than one airport, such as Washington, DC, the traveler should provide a cost comparison showing the total constructed cost travelling from each of the available airports, including round-trip airfare and ground transportation. The cost comparison should be uploaded into the ETS. The traveler should use the airport with the lowest constructed cost. In addition, the AO may do their own cost comparison for any trip and may direct the traveler to use the airport that is most advantageous to the Government.

#### **Use of Capacity Controlled Contract [-CA] Fares**

In addition to the typical contract City Pair airfare [YCA], contract carriers will sometimes offer reduced-rate capacity controlled fares, known as [-CA] fares, for certain City Pair flights. If the contract carrier offers a capacity controlled [-CA] fare, the reduced-rate fares will appear right next to the [YCA] on the GSA City-Pair website.

Capacity controlled [-CA] fares can be reserved far in advance and purchased two days in advance of travel, like the [YCA] fare. They can be exchanged and are fully refundable with no fees or penalties. However, if a traveler changes their reservation, there is no guarantee a [-CA] fare will be available as seating is based on a limited inventory. It is recommended that travelers book early when trying to procure the [-CA] fare. These fares have the same benefits as the [YCA] fares and can save the agency up to 40 percent of the [YCA] airfare costs.

### **48 Hour Cancellation Rule**

As of FY 14, City Pair Program (CPP) contract's 48-hour auto cancellation rule gives airlines the discretion to cancel all CPP reservations (YCA and \_CA) that are not ticketed 48 hours prior to departure. Note: All CPP contract fares remain fully refundable and are not subject to change fees. The rule does not affect those benefits.

#### **4.1.5.2 When Contract Fares May Not Be Used**

##### **Official Travel Being Paid Directly by Non-Federal Sources**

GSA contract airfares should only be used for official travel that is being paid by Federal funds. This includes approved non-Federal sponsored travel under FTR Part 304; Payment of Travel Expenses from a Non-Federal Source, when the agency pays for the employee's transportation and is the Non-Federal source reimburses the agency (this should only occur on an exceptional basis). Contract fares should not be used for official travel being paid directly by other funding sources (personal or non-Federal organizations). For example, contract fares should not be used for the travel of an intern whose salary and travel expenses during his/her internship with HHS are being paid directly by a State government.

##### **Personal Travel and Official Travel by an Indirect Route for Personal Convenience**

GSA contract airfares may not be authorized for personal travel by employees. Personal travel includes when an employee, for personal convenience, travels by an indirect route or interrupts travel by a direct route on an official travel assignment. Employees who choose to travel by an indirect route for personal convenience may not obtain government contract fares for the indirect route portions of their trip, which are considered personal travel. In addition, they may not use the Government travel charge card or a CBA to pay for tickets for these indirect travel points.

Usually, the employee will be issued a round-trip ticket (at the Government contract fare, if available) by the OpDiv's TMC for the direct route to and from the official duty points.

##### **Contractors (Including Cost-Reimbursable Contractors)**

Use of GSA contract carrier airline passenger fares is governed by GSA's contracts with the airlines. These contracts provide that contractors (including cost-reimbursable contractors) are not eligible to use GSA's contract city fares.

Government contract fares must not be issued to a contractor, nor should a contractor be placed on an Invitational Travel Order.

##### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-10, Subpart B (Common Carrier Transportation), 301-10.107-117

#### **4.1.6 Coach Class and Other than Coach Class Upgrades**

Employees must use coach class accommodations for travel by common carrier (air, rail, bus, etc.) unless specifically authorized/approved to use a higher class of service in accordance with the provisions of FTR 301-10, Subpart B. Travelers should pay strict attention to the FTR definitions of the different service classes because airlines frequently identify them by a

different term. For example, the FTR states that when an airline flight only has two classes of accommodations, the higher class is considered to be First Class, regardless of the term used by the airline for that class (such as Business Class). Employees must follow the FTR class of service definitions.

For Other than Coach Class upgrades due to special needs, see Section 5.4.5, Travel of an Employee with Special Needs.

For HHS travelers, the following guidance applies for all Other than Coach Class travel requests. These instructions supersede all previous directives for Other than Coach Class travel. Managers should discourage Other than Coach Class travel whenever possible.

HHS OpDiv/StaffDivs engaged in travel have the primary responsibility to ensure any Other than Coach Class travel is consistent with the Department and Government's mandate to operate efficiently and effectively.

HHS travelers must submit their requests for Other than Coach Class travel along with their requests for Travel Authorization, as appropriate, via the ETS. A justification memorandum must be attached to the travel request and must accompany the travel authorization.

The OpDiv/StaffDiv AO must review and approve, if appropriate, both the memorandum and any required cost-analysis justification, before authorizing the purchase of Other than Coach Class accommodations.

#### **4.1.6.1 ETS Recommendations**

The ETS is configured with an audit (provided in audit, routing, and expense tests) in CGE that can be used to track whether or not a traveler has booked an unauthorized class of travel with an AIR or RAIL provider, or both (COMM). This is called the Class of Service Test.

Class of Service code definitions (valid parameters) are:

- F = First
- W = Premium
- C = Business
- Y = Coach/Economy

In addition, there is also a Premium Class Audit (audit and routing test only), which checks to see if a document contains premium-class travel. This audit can be built into the status routing workflow, similar to foreign travel and non-Federal sponsored Premium Travel conditional routing uses the Premium Air Approved status stamp.

PSC also recommends using the memorandum on PSC website.

PSC recommends that OpDivs/StaffDivs also turn on the Premium Travel conditional routing, which uses the Premium Air Approved status stamp.

#### **4.1.6.2 Other than Coach Class Accommodations – First Class**

HHS employees may request Other than Coach Class (First Class) accommodations only under the following circumstances:

1. There is no space available in coach class, and the trip cannot be scheduled on other flights/carriers or routed in time to accomplish the purpose of travel, which is so urgent the travel cannot be postponed;
2. The physical condition of the traveler requires use of Other than Coach Class travel service, as documented by a letter signed by the traveler's personal physician, specialist, or other medical provider as described in Section, 5.4.5 Travel of an Employee with Special Needs;
3. Other than Coach Class accommodations are required for security purpose(s), as documented in a letter from the Chief of Security of the Department;

4. When required because of OpDiv/StaffDiv mission, consistent with the employee's OpDiv/StaffDiv's policy and procedures; or
5. Frequent-traveler benefits permit an upgrade in the class of service, either by using frequent flier miles or by virtue of the employees' advanced frequent traveler status, at no cost to the Government.

Other than Coach Class (First Class), accommodations must be approved by the STO.

#### **4.1.6.3 Other than Coach Class Accommodations – Business Class**

HHS employees may request Other than Coach Class (Business Class) accommodations only under the following circumstances:

1. The physical condition of the traveler requires use of Other than Coach Class travel service, as documented by a letter signed by the traveler's personal physician or specialist as described in Section 5.4.5, Travel of an Employee with Special Needs;
2. Other than Coach Class accommodations are required for security purpose(s), as documented in a letter from the Chief of Security of the Department;
3. Regularly scheduled flights between origin/destination points (including connecting points) provide only Other than Coach Class accommodations and the employee must certify such on his/her voucher;
4. The employee's transportation costs are paid in full through agency acceptance of in-kind services from a non-Federal source in accordance with Chapter 7, Acceptance of Payment of Travel Expenses from a Non-Federal Source;
5. The use of Other than Coach Class accommodations would result in an overall cost savings to the Government (note that a cost analysis to this effect must accompany the travel authorization, as described below);
6. There is no space is available in coach class, and the trip cannot be scheduled on other flights/carriers or routed in time to accomplish the purpose of travel, which is so urgent the travel cannot be postponed; or
7. When required because of OpDiv/StaffDiv mission, consistent with the employee's OpDiv/StaffDiv's policy and procedures.

When an HHS employee requests Other than Coach Class – Business Class travel by using the fifth criteria above (Overall Cost Savings), he/she must complete a cost-analysis justification and attach it to the travel authorization. In this analysis, the employee must compare the total costs of coach-class to Other than Coach Class, including the cost of the ticket(s), additional subsistence expenses incurred during a rest stop (if applicable), overtime (if applicable), and lost productive person time. Based on this cost analysis, Other than Coach Class is only justified when it is the lesser of the two. (See examples in Section 6.4.)

Other than Coach Class (Business), accommodations must be approved in accordance with OpDiv/StaffDiv policy, which should be at a level that will ensure adequate review of the need for these requests. This includes the Senior Travel Official (STO), a centrally appointed role, or the employee's supervisor.

#### **4.1.6.4 Train Travel**

Travelers must use Coach Class accommodations for all train travel in accordance with FTR 301-10.160.

##### **Acela**

The Acela is an extra fare train service, as defined by the FTR, and its use requires prior authorization. For travel by train, extra fare service may be authorized if the traveler's OpDiv/StaffDiv determines it is more advantageous to the Government or is required for security reasons (see FTR 301-10.163 and 301-10.164). Failure to receive prior authorization will result in not being reimbursed for the related expenses. As Business Class is the lowest available class on the Acela, approval for extra fare train service is the only approval necessary.

First Class accommodations on the Acela may only be authorized as provided in FTR 301-10.162 by the STO. It is important to note that if a traveler is requesting the use of Other than Coach Class (First Class) accommodations on Acela, this requires a separate approval, in addition to the approval required for the use of Acela as an extra fare train service, as described above.

A memo of justification for the use of First Class accommodations, on the Acela, should be submitted in accordance with OpDiv/StaffDiv policy; see Chapter 6 for the “Justifications for use of Other than Coach Class travel” memo. The signed memo should be uploaded into the ETS.

#### **4.1.6.5 Travel by Ship**

For travel by ship, employees must use the lowest class of reserved accommodations available, unless specifically authorized in advance to use a higher class of service in accordance with the provisions of FTR 301-10, Subpart B.

#### **4.1.6.6 Upgrades Through Frequent Traveler Programs**

Please refer to Section 3.4.2 for HHS policies on using frequent flyer benefits for transportation accommodation upgrades.

#### **4.1.6.7 Seating Upgrade Programs and Ancillary Fees**

Seating upgrade programs are often called “Coach Elite,” “Coach Plus,” “Preferred Coach” or some other identifier. Under these airline programs, a passenger may obtain a more desirable seat choice within the coach-class cabin for a fee.

These airline upgrade or preferred seat choices are generally available for an annual fee, at an airport kiosk or gate, or as a frequent flier benefit. These coach upgrade options are not considered a new or higher class of accommodation since the seating is still in the coach cabin.

However, the use of these upgraded/preferred coach-seating options is generally a traveler’s personal choice and therefore is at the traveler’s personal expense. HHS will not reimburse expenses related to seating upgrades in coach class for personal preference.

If travelers are flying on a City Pair Fare and the only seat(s) available requires the purchase of a seating upgrade in coach class, the expense may be reimbursed if allowed by the AO and appropriate justification is provided by the traveler. Travelers should check with the AO and their OpDiv/StaffDiv policy for additional information.

#### **Ancillary Fees**

In addition to seating upgrade programs, HHS does not reimburse for ancillary fees. Ancillary fees include but are not limited to:

1. Fee to book round trip ticket by phone;
2. Preferred Seat;
3. Priority Boarding;
4. Airport Club Lounge;
5. Headset; and
6. Pillow/Blanket

#### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-10, Subpart B, Airline (301-10.121), Train (301-10.160), and Ship (301-10.180) Accommodations  
FTR 301-10.164 (Use of Extra-Fare Train Service)

## 4.1.7 Fly America Act and U.S. Flag Ship Requirements

Under the Fly America Act (49 U.S.C. 40118), anyone whose air travel is financed by U.S. Government funds must use U.S. flag air carrier service for all air travel, unless their travel is covered under one of the few exceptions provided in the FTR. U.S. flag air carrier service includes service provided under a code share agreement with a foreign air carrier when the ticket, or documentation for an electronic ticket, identifies the U.S. flag air carrier's designator code and flight number. An employee will not be reimbursed for any transportation cost for improper use of a foreign air carrier service. In addition, all OpDiv/StaffDivs require that a completed form, "Certification of use of non-US flag air carriers" is signed by the travel AO and uploaded into the ETS.

Under 46 U.S.C. 1241, employees must travel by a U.S. flagship, when available, unless mission necessity requires use of a foreign ship.

### 4.1.7.1 Open Skies Agreements

49 U.S.C. 40118, commonly referred to as the "Fly America Act," requires federal travelers to use United States air carrier service for all air travel and cargo transportation services funded by the U.S. Government. One exception to this requirement is transportation provided under a bilateral or multilateral air transport agreement, to which the U.S. Government and the government of a foreign country are parties and which the Department of Transportation has determined meets the requirements of the Fly America Act.

The U.S. Government has entered into several air transport agreements that allow federal funded transportation services for travel and cargo movements to use foreign air carriers under certain circumstances.

There are currently three bilateral/multilateral "Open Skies Agreements" (U.S. Government Procured Transportation) in effect:

- An Open Skies air transport agreement between the U. S. Government and the European Union (EU) effective April 30, 2007 and the US-EU Amendment effective June 24, 2010;
- An Open Skies air transport agreement between the U.S. and Australia effective October 1, 2008; and
- An Open Skies air transport agreement between the U.S. and Switzerland effective October 1, 2008.

Information on the three Open Skies agreements (U.S. Government Procured Transportation) and other specific country agreements may be accessed via the Department of State's website.

The rights given to airlines concerning U.S. Government procured transportation under the Open Skies Agreement do not apply to transportation obtained or funded by the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of a military department.

### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-10, 301-10.131-143 (Airline) and 301-10.180-183 (Ship)

## 4.1.8 Compensation from Airline for Denial of Seat versus Voluntarily Vacating Seat

The FTR states that when an airline denies a Federal employee a confirmed reserved seat on a plane during official travel, any payment for reimbursement (liquidated damages) belongs to the Federal government. Such payment should be made out to the Treasurer of the United States.

In contrast, if an employee voluntarily vacates his or her seat, the employee may keep any compensation provided by the airline if the conditions specified in the FTR are met:

1. Vacating the seat will not interfere with performing official duties; and
2. Additional travel expenses, if incurred because of vacating the seat, are borne by the employee and are not reimbursed.

If volunteering to give up a seat delays the employee's travel during duty hours, the employee must request an appropriate type of leave for any part of the delay period, which is official duty time. If the employee does not submit such a request in a timely manner, management of the OpDiv must charge the employee with annual leave for the additional hours.

#### 4.1.9 Government Aircraft

Per FTR 301-10.260, an employee may use government aircraft for travel only if he/she has authorization from an executive agency under the rules specified in FTR. Because the taxpayers should pay no more than necessary for a Federal employee's transportation, generally he/she may travel on government aircraft only when a government aircraft is the most cost-effective mode of travel.

Travel on government aircraft includes aircraft that an agency owns, borrows, operates as a bailed aircraft, or hires as a CAS, to carry Federal and non-Federal travelers,

Approval to travel on government aircraft requires pre-authorization and approval by the ASA. Requests for the use of government aircrafts should be submitted as far in advance as possible to PSC for review and submission to the ASA. In addition, the use of Government aircraft has separate reporting requirements as defined in OMB Circular A-126.

##### 4.1.9.1 Required Use Travel

In accordance with FTR 301-70.803, Required Use Travel on Government (Chartered) Aircraft requires that the Department develop written standards as to when we will require travelers to use Government Aircraft.

Such designated travelers are required to use Government Aircraft due to one or more of the following:

1. Their continuous requirement for secure communications;
2. For security;
3. For responsive transportation to satisfy exceptional scheduling requirements dictated by short-notice travel, which makes commercial transportation unacceptable;
4. Certain HHS Missions which require use of Government (Charter) aircraft to fulfill the needs of the mission including but not limited to:
  - a. Division of Strategic National Stockpile is deployed in support of an event that requires a Technical Advisory Response Unit including training exercises related to the particular type of response;
  - b. Division of Emergency Operations is deployed in support of a national emergency, e.g., Hurricane Katrina-type event, pandemic flu, food-borne poison episode, an anthrax event, etc.; or
  - c. In support of the Aeromedical Biological Containment System (ABCS) – Tail # N163PA or N173PA. The ABCS is a portable, tent-like device that can be quickly installed inside a modified Gulfstream III (G-III) aircraft. It provides a rapid, readily available, aeromedical evacuation asset to perform emergency movement of infectious/contagious CDC personnel from the field or site of exposure to a facility that can provide adequate and appropriate medical care. The ABCS is authorized to be used only in one of two aircraft, which are owned by Phoenix Air Group. The tail numbers are N163PA and N173PA. Both aircraft are G-III and can be used for multiple purposes – passenger, cargo, and MEDEVAC transport (with or without the ABCS installed).
  - d. Travel in support of the Ebola virus disease (EVD) public health crisis in West Africa (and elsewhere). This required use policy applies under any of the following circumstances:
    - When, due to the EVD crisis, commercial flights to affected countries are not reasonably available to fulfill the agency's travel requirement, i.e., within a 24-hour period unless extraordinary circumstances require a shorter period;

- When symptomatic personnel in need of repatriation require the use of an Aeromedical Biological Containment System;
- When asymptomatic, at-risk personnel in need of repatriation are advised, according to CDC guidance, against traveling on commercial carriers due to the risk of disease transmission to others;
- When there is a need to transport a traveler to the United States or other country for medical treatment for illness or injury not suffered due to the fault of the traveler; or
- When otherwise determined necessary by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s Chief Operating Officer (COO) because of extraordinary circumstances.
- Any personnel determined by Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s Chief Operating Officer (COO) to meet these requirements are covered under this policy. This policy also covers any individual repatriated or medically evacuated by the Department of State, Department of Defense, or other organizations through their respective programs.

Under this EVD policy only, the CDC COO can authorize such required- use travel for each such flight; approval by the General Counsel or principal legal deputy is not required; however, notice of each use of the policy must be promptly provided to the Assistant Secretary for Administration, the General Counsel, and the Director of the Program Support Center Transportation Services. This policy does not waive or alter the procedural or approval requirements as otherwise required by law or HHS policy, e.g., the approval of the agency’s chief legal office on a trip-by-trip basis for Section 4.1.9.1 #1 through 4 (c), the issuance of travel orders, and compliance with procurement and appropriations law for the acquisition of aircraft and expenditure of funds.

### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-10, Subpart B, Common Carrier Transportation

## **4.1.10 Use of Privately Owned Vehicles (POVs), Rental Cars, and Other Special Conveyances**

Section eliminated: FTR Redundant.

### **4.1.10.1 Use of Privately Owned Vehicles (POVs)**

When an employee is authorized to use a POV for official travel, the employee may be reimbursed for the mileage to and from the official destination at the current FTR mileage cost rate, plus fees for parking, ferries, and tolls. An employee may not be reimbursed for gasoline purchases, repairs, depreciation, replacements, grease, oil, antifreeze, towage, and similar expenses. Other non-reimbursable costs include parking violations, locksmith charges, and flat tires.

Mileage is defined in the FTR as the distance “As shown in paper or electronic standard highway mileage guides, or the actual miles driven as determined from odometer readings.” Sources such as MapQuest, Google Maps, etc., would be considered as electronic standard highway mileage guides under this definition.

### **Mileage to the Airport**

The traveler may claim one total round trip to an airport, up to the constructed cost of using a special conveyance (taxi, shuttle, etc.). The FTR states that a traveler will be reimbursed for the cost from “...residence directly to a common carrier terminal (airport).”

If someone drives the traveler to the airport, instead of the traveler driving, the traveler may be reimbursed up to the constructed cost of either:

1. Using a special conveyance such as a taxi, shuttle, etc.; or
2. Driving to the airport and any necessary parking costs (e.g. if waiting is required) in the lowest costing available parking facility/lot.

The traveler should provide the constructed cost of both options to the AO so that they can determine the most advantageous method for the traveler. Mileage to the airport should be authorized in advance.

Note: Per 5 U.S.C. 5704, the FTR mileage cost rate is developed by GSA based upon a review and analysis of factors, such as depreciation of original vehicle cost, gasoline and oil (excluding taxes), maintenance, accessories, parts, and tires, insurance, and State and Federal taxes. Because these items are factored into the FTR mileage cost rate paid to the employee, there is no separate, additional reimbursement for them.

#### **4.1.10.2 Rental Vehicles**

When an employee is authorized in advance to hire a rental vehicle for official travel, the employee may use the rental vehicle for official purposes while at the TDY station, including travel to and from restaurants near the work site or hotel. Any justification for rental car usage needs to include both a logistics and cost rationale for official purposes.

Rental cars may not be added after the fact except under emergency circumstances. Every effort should be made to obtain authorization in advance of travel. When prior authorization is not possible or practical, post-trip approval may be issued through an amended travel order, in accordance with the pertinent OpDiv/StaffDiv's policy and procedures. However, without proper authorization travelers risk not being reimbursed for expenses that are incurred.

#### **Acquiring Rental Cars from DTMO**

Employees must obtain vehicles from rental agencies that have negotiated agreements with the DTMO, when they have the type of rental cars available, which meet mission requirements (e.g. large van for additional passengers or materials).

The terms and conditions of the agreements and rates apply to all Federal employees on official travel and include unlimited free mileage, plus full loss/collision damage waiver (LDW/CDW) on the rental vehicle as long as the Government Administrative Rate Supplement (GARS) fee of \$5.00 per day is charged. Travelers will not be reimbursed for the purchase of additional insurance CONUS and OCONUS – Non- Foreign. Travelers are advised to examine FTR 301-10.451 guidelines when renting a car in a foreign country.

#### **Rental Car Fuel**

Travelers are expected to fill up the gas tank prior to returning the rental car. Travelers who return the rental car with an empty tank of gas and incur an additional fuel service charge will only be reimbursed the fuel service charge, in accordance with OpDiv/StaffDiv policy, when it is advantageous to the Government. In addition, travelers are not authorized to purchase pre-paid fuel, per the car rental agreement with DTMO and HHS policy.

#### **Rental Car Usage**

Additionally, employees should be aware that the Government will deny liability for any loss or damage to a vehicle rented for official business purposes using a government travel charge card if that loss/damage arises from activities outside the scope of official business travel. Even if they will not claim travel reimbursement for any associated costs of personal use of such a vehicle, employees should check all personal automobile insurance policies or coverage carefully before considering using a vehicle rented for business purposes for personal use on non-duty time, as coverage may be unavailable under these circumstances.

A rental is only to be used for official transportation similar to a Government Owned Vehicle as covered in FTR 301-10.201. Official transportation includes:

1. Transportation between places of official business;

2. Transportation between such places and places of temporary lodging when public transportation is unavailable or its use is impractical;
3. Transportation between places of official business/temporary lodging and restaurants, drug stores, barber shops, places of worship, cleaning establishments, and similar places necessary for the sustenance, comfort or health of the employee to foster the continued efficient performance of Government business; or
4. As otherwise authorized by your OpDiv/StaffDiv under 31 U.S.C. 1344.

If an employee takes a personal trip away from the TDY point on a weekend or other non-workday, or at any other time for reasons not related to official travel, any additional expenses incurred (such as gasoline purchases that cover travel mileage for personal reasons) may not be claimed. In addition, if a traveler is staying at a TDY site after the official trip is over, on personal leave, the rental car must be returned and a car rented, if needed, at the travelers own expense.

Note: Generally, a rental car will not be authorized if the employee is staying at the hotel where the conference or official business is taking place unless there are specific reasons why the rental car is necessary.

### **Global Positioning System (GPS) for a Rental Car**

The optional GPS for a rental car requires authorization in advance. After the fact, reimbursement will not be authorized except in the event of an emergency. The STO within the traveler's OpDiv/StaffDiv must approve any after the fact exceptions.

During a Disaster Response, if the traveler requires a GPS to get to the disaster response location, the STO must authorize the expense. For additional information, see Chapter 11, Travel – Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Services including National Special Security Events (NSSE).

### **Default Rental Car Size**

Per HHS Travel Policy, the default size for a rental car is compact or economy. Any other size of rental car requires pre-authorization and the appropriate justification. Per 5 U.S.C. 5733, "travel of an employee shall be by the most expeditious means of transportation practicable and shall be commensurate with the nature and purpose of the duties of the employee requiring such travel."

In addition, employees that are traveling to the same TDY location for the same mission purpose should coordinate car rentals so that multiple employees can share a rental car, where practical. This information should be included with the justification for a larger sized vehicle so that the AO can make an informed decision regarding the rental car size and cost.

### **Responsibility for Violations (Traffic, Parking, etc.)**

In accordance with Comptroller General Decision B-107081, any violation (Traffic, Parking, etc.) committed while driving a government vehicle in the performance of official duties is a personal responsibility of the employee, and there is no authority for the payment of these violations from appropriated moneys.

### **Reimbursement of Gasoline for Travelers not on the Rental Car Agreement**

In accordance with FTR 301-10.401, travelers may be reimbursed the cost of gas when using a rental car. Normally, this is limited to the employee who is on the rental car agreement and therefore, rented the car.

However, in certain circumstances, travelers who are not on the rental car agreement may be reimbursed for gasoline, in accordance with OpDiv/StaffDiv specific policies. In order to be reimbursed, receipts are required to ensure that multiple travelers are not submitting the same expense. Please verify with your OpDiv/StaffDiv that they allow travelers who did not rent the vehicle to be reimbursed in this matter prior to incurring the expense.

Employees must use the IBA to purchase gas, as OpDiv/StaffDivs will verify the name and card number, in addition to the a) date, b) time, & c) location of the gasoline purchase, to ensure the gas purchase was incurred as part of the mission. Employees should note on the voucher that they were an authorized driver of a rental car during the mission. They must reference the name

of the employee who rented the car for which the gasoline was purchased. Failure to provide this information will prevent reimbursement of the expense.

#### **4.1.10.3 Buses**

There are no government-preferred providers for bus service. If a traveler wishes to use bus as a means of common carrier transportation, it requires pre-authorization by the AO.

If a traveler wishes to use a bus service (e.g., Greyhound, Bolt, Vamoose, etc.) the service may require the purchase of a non-refundable ticket. If the AO authorizes the use of a non-refundable bus fare, the same restrictions as in Section 4.1.4.2, Government Liability for Authorizing Restricted, Non-Contract Fares for Common Carrier Transportation, apply.

#### **4.1.10.4 Use of Other and Special Conveyances for Transportation**

Employees are expected to use prudence and good judgment when choosing the mode of transportation between sites when on TDY travel (e.g., between residence and carrier terminal, place of lodging and temporary work site, carrier terminal and place of lodging).

##### **Courtesy Shuttles**

Courtesy transportation offered by hotels and motels should be used whenever possible; a tip up to \$5 may be reimbursed when these complimentary services are used.

##### **Public Transportation**

Public transportation (e.g., local bus, train, or ferry) should be used whenever reasonable under the circumstances.

##### **Multiple Party Transportation**

Suitable government-sponsored (e.g., scheduled vans) or multiple-party transportation (e.g., airport shuttle services) should be used whenever available.

##### **Taxicabs**

Taxicabs may be used when these other modes of short-distance transportation are not reasonably available or if safety is a concern (e.g., late night return from temporary duty site to place of lodging). A cost comparison may be required to assist in determining the most advantageous mode of transportation, for example, for the cost of a taxi versus the cost of a shuttle service.

##### **More Expensive Means**

More expensive means of local transportation (e.g., limousines) may be used only when strictly necessary, and require advance approval by the AO except in an emergency for which the employee is not responsible. Only the usual fare (plus tip of up to 15 percent of that amount) for the most reasonable mode of transportation under the circumstances may be reimbursed. If an employee chooses to use an unnecessary mode of transit, they are expected to pay any additional cost associated with that choice.

#### **4.1.10.5 Authorization of and Reimbursement for the Use of Transportation Network Companies**

OpDiv internal supplemental instructions should not be overly onerous or burdensome so as to impede or unnecessarily delay the consideration of TDY authorization requests or the timely processing of proper travel vouchers.

Employees should understand that when electing to use TNC services and by accepting the terms and conditions of the service, the employee assumes liability and risk when using the services.

Employees should understand that the automobile insurance policy of the driver/vehicle might specifically prohibit the driver/owner from operating a ridesharing/TNC service, and passengers might not be covered by the policy's provision.

Employees are not required to use ridesharing services, and should not use TNC services if there are doubts concerning personal safety or doubts concerning the TNC vehicle's ability to be operated safely, its mechanical condition or its roadworthiness. Employees should consider a TNC's policies, terms and conditions, the driver, and the overall condition of the vehicle before entering a TNC vehicle.

Use of TNC services shall be in compliance with the local jurisdiction's laws, regulations and rules concerning such services that are in effect at the time of the need. It is the traveler's responsibility to comply with the local jurisdiction(s).

Civil or criminal violation financial penalties issued to travelers for using TNCs in jurisdictions where the companies are not permitted to operate, or any fine or penalty of any sort issued to a TNC driver, shall not be reimbursed.

#### **4.1.11 Internal Controls over the Authorization and Payment of Transportation Expenses**

Heads of OpDiv/StaffDivs or their designees are responsible for establishing appropriate management controls over the authorization and payment of transportation expenses to ensure compliance with the FTR, the HHS Travel Policy Manual, and their own supplemental policies and procedures.

OpDiv/StaffDiv travel and finance offices are encouraged to obtain and use the U.S. Government Passenger Transportation Handbook as a reference tool. This document provides extensive information on using and controlling government Transportation Requests, handling transportation refunds, redeeming unused tickets, and other pertinent topics. The handbook is issued by GSA's Federal Supply Service; copies can be obtained from Audit Division, Federal Supply Service (FBT), GSA, 1800 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20405.

##### **4.1.11.1 Common Carrier Transportation**

OpDiv/StaffDiv travel managers are responsible for establishing supplemental policies and procedures to control the issuance of TDY tickets through their TMCs, including when employee leave and/or indirect travel are involved. Controls are needed to ensure that tickets are issued in accordance with agency mission requirements (not to facilitate personal travel plans), in the interest of compliance with the FTR, and in keeping with sound cash management practices. In addition, AOs may require a cost comparison between different arrival and departure airports. Controls must include administrative procedures to identify and collect unused, partially used, and exchanged tickets, refund receipts, or ticket refund applications, and denied boarding compensation.

##### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR 301-70, Subpart B, Internal Policy and Procedure Requirements Relating to Transportation  
FTR 301-72 Agency Responsibilities Related to Common Carrier Transportation

##### **4.1.11.2 Rental Vehicles and Use of Privately Owned Vehicles – General Administrative Responsibilities**

OpDiv/StaffDiv travel/logistics/administrative managers are responsible for establishing appropriate supplemental policies and procedures to control the authorization and use of government, rental, and POVs for official use. For example, these managers should:

1. Provide guidance to their employees regarding the terms and limitations of government rental car agreements, including loss and damage coverage, exclusions, and billings;
2. Provide guidance on factors applicable to selection of appropriate rental vehicles in a prudent manner (for example, size, type, number of days actually needed, use of upgrades, consolidating travelers going to the same site to reduce number

of vehicles needed, etc.) and require written justification for any vehicle rented which might appear imprudent or unnecessary under the circumstances or disallow the excess cost;

3. Advise employees about special policies and procedures for operating rental and POVs in foreign countries, if applicable; and
4. Advise employees about filing personal property loss or damage claims resulting from the use of a vehicle while on official business in accordance with HHS claims policies and procedures.

#### **4.1.11.3 Scheduling Travel to Avoid Lost or Unproductive Duty Time**

All managers and AOs are responsible for ensuring that employees schedule official business travel in a manner and on a time schedule, which minimizes lost or unproductive work hours. Employees should work a complete day (the usual number of hours in their tour of duty) on travel days, or take an appropriate type of leave for the hours not worked.

#### **4.1.11.4 Management Responsibility to Ensure Compliance with FTR and HHS Travel Policy Manual When Approving Travel Vouchers**

OpDiv/StaffDiv officials who are responsible for approving travel payments must ensure compliance with the FTR guidelines, the HHS Travel Policy Manual, and OpDiv/StaffDiv policies, including proper exercise of discretion in approving the amount of reimbursement claimed by employees.

## **4.2 Authorization of a Per Diem Allowance at the Official Station or within the Local Transportation (Formerly Local Travel) Area**

This section provides supplemental guidance for HHS civilian employees, invitational travelers, and OpDiv/StaffDivs regarding the authorization of a per diem allowance in conjunction with official business that takes place at the employee's official station or within the HHS defined local transportation (formerly local travel) area. It also applies to officers of the Commissioned Corps U.S. Public Health Service. Local transportation expenses do not require a no-cost travel order.

### **4.2.1 Definition of Official Station**

Removed: FTR Redundant.

#### **4.2.1.1 Authorization of a Per Diem Allowance at the Official Station**

In accordance with the above definition of official station (i.e., the place where the employee regularly performs their duties), a per diem allowance will not be allowed. This prohibition includes reimbursement for meals and incidentals, even when the workday extends beyond 12 hours.

#### **4.2.1.2 No Per Diem Can Be Authorized at the Official Station**

Rulings by the Comptroller General (CG) and the CBCA state that there is no authority to allow per diem (Lodging, Meals, & Incidental Expenses) at the employee's official station (this includes the local transportation (formerly local travel) area as defined below in Section 4.3.2), even if authorized in advance by government officials. This applies even in situations where per diem expenses are incurred under extraordinary circumstances, such as:

1. Late conference sessions;
2. Heavy volume of work;
3. Adverse weather conditions (blizzards, ice storms, etc.);

4. Protective missions by security personnel; and
5. Inability to leave duty post.

#### **4.2.2 HHS Definition of the Local Transportation (Formerly Local Travel) Area**

The FTR does not define “local transportation area” and instead delegates that responsibility to the Federal agencies. Thus, it is from the term official station, as described in Section 4.3.1 above, that HHS has developed the following definition for the term “local transportation area” (formerly local travel area):

1. If the meeting site is 50 miles or less (using the most direct route) from the employee’s (or invitational traveler’s) primary place of work, the site is considered to be within the local transportation area; or
2. If the meeting site is 50 miles or less (using the most direct route) from the employee’s (or an invitational traveler’s) residence, the site is considered to be within the local transportation area.

##### **4.2.2.1 Authorization of a Per Diem Allowance in the Local Transportation (Formerly Local Travel) Area**

As a rule, authorization of a per diem (Lodging, Meals, & Incidental Expenses) allowance will not be allowed unless one of the exceptions discussed in the subsections below can be applied.

##### **4.2.2.2 Exceptions Authorized at the OpDiv/StaffDiv Level (80 Mile Rule)**

Per diem (Lodging, Meals, & Incidental Expenses) will not be paid in the Local Transportation (Formerly Local Travel) area as defined above unless the following narrow exception applies, in which all criteria must be met:

1. The local transportation is not being performed to attend or participate in a conference, meeting, or training for which the agency had any influence over or input into the site selection; and
2. The local transportation assignment will last at least three consecutive nights and four days, and entail at least nine and one-half consecutive hours of work per day on each of those days; and
3. It is clearly within the Government’s interest, for accomplishment of its mission, to permit a particular employee to stay overnight at the site of the local travel assignment on one or more of those night(s), not necessarily consecutive; and
4. That employee would be required to perform an extensive amount of driving (defined as at least 80 miles) each way between his/her residence and the site of the local transportation assignment, on a daily basis (in a carpool situation, each employee must live at least 80 miles from the TDY site to qualify for this exception); and
5. Significant safety issues are raised by the combination of the extended hours of work and the extensive amount of driving for the employee performing this local transportation assignment.

Note: Once all of the above criteria have been met, a travel authorization must be approved, in advance to authorize the applicable travel and per diem expenses.

##### **80-Mile Rule Example**

An employee who works in the Parklawn Building has an official station of Rockville, Maryland. If the employee attended a conference, that was held in Warrenton, Virginia (49 miles away), it would be within the Local Transportation (Formerly Local Travel) area, and so per diem (Lodging, Meals, & Incidental Expenses) would not be paid.

However, if that employee, who happens to live in Hagerstown, Maryland, is assigned to:

1. Perform a full-week inspection at a site in Warrenton, Virginia (driving 82 miles each way from his home),

2. Must spend 9 hours on-site each day doing the inspection, and
3. Must meet with his inspection team for at least an hour after each day's on-site activity.

Then, his or her AO could decide to authorize him or her to spend Wednesday and Thursday nights in Warrenton with per diem (Lodging, Meals, & Incidental Expenses) for that period.

OpDiv/StaffDiv Heads or their designees have the authority to increase the minimum distance for the local transportation area above 50 miles, if they deem it to be in the best interest of their organization. However, they may not reduce it below the HHS policy.

#### **4.2.2.3 GETA Statutory Exception**

A per diem allowance may be authorized within the above defined Local Transportation (Formerly Local Travel) area, consistent with a specific statutory exception found in the Government Employees Training Act. Refer to Section 5.1.3.7 of this manual for additional information.

#### **4.2.2.4 Exceptions Authorized at the Agency Senior Travel Official (ASTO)**

##### **ASTO**

If a meeting takes place within the defined Local Transportation (Formerly Local Travel) area but the exception in Section 4.2.2.2, or 4.2.2.3 cannot be applied, a formal request may be submitted by the OpDiv/StaffDiv STO to the ASTO. The ASTO shall review and approve all requests for per diem within the local transportation area due to Reasonable Accommodation or those that do not meet Section 4.2.2.2 Exceptions Authorized at the OpDiv/StaffDiv Level (80 Mile Rule) including Emergencies and Disaster Responses covered under the Stafford Act.

##### **ASA**

If a meeting takes place within the defined local transportation area but the exception in Section 4.2.2.2, or 4.2.2.3, or those approved by the ASTO (see above) cannot be applied, a formal request may be submitted by the OpDiv/StaffDiv STO to the ASTO for submittal to the ASA. This waiver request may be submitted only if there is a need to authorize a per diem allowance (Lodging, Meals & Incidental Expenses) due to religious observances or another exigency (e.g., statutory requirement).

##### **Exception Request**

The letter should be sent 30 days in advance of the meeting to PSC Transportation Services for review and approval by the ASTO or, if necessary, review and submittal to the ASA on behalf of the STO. The following information must be included in the request:

1. Dates of meeting;
2. Type of meeting;
3. Purpose of meeting;
4. Reason for the venue;
5. How far away the traveler lives (residence) from the meeting site;
6. How far away the traveler works (official station) from the meeting site;
7. The total costs associated including, per diem: room, room tax, M&IE, any fees;

8. Whether per diem costs as well as lodging costs are being requested;
9. Conference services costs (if applicable);
10. Total number of attendees;
11. Federal employee vs. non-Federal employee attendee distribution;
12. Number of attendees who live w/in 50 miles (residence);
13. Number of attendees who live 50 or more miles away (residence) from meeting site;
14. Distance from residence to work versus the distance from residence to the meeting location;
15. Why it is necessary to lodge overnight or to be reimbursed for a meal(s);
16. The number of attendees who are on OpDiv/StaffDiv travel orders;
17. Agenda items and times;
18. Frequency with which the meeting held;
19. Location of the meeting site;
20. Meeting organizer information and the logistics that necessitate this request;
21. Any statutory or regulatory requirement for this meeting; and
22. Any HHS or OpDiv/StaffDiv initiative linked to this meeting.

#### **4.2.2.5 Use of Government Charge Card**

If the exception in either Section 4.2.2.2, Section 4.2.2.3, or Section 4.2.2.4 applies, the employee should use his/her government travel charge card for per diem (Lodging, Meals & Incidental Expenses) expenses consistent with Section 10.2.8 of this manual.

### **4.2.3 HHS Policy Regarding the Local Transportation (Formerly Local Travel) Area**

When an employee is required to secure transportation to transact official government business in the local transportation area, they may be reimbursed for allowable travel expenditures, if approved.

#### **4.2.3.1 Use of Travel Charge Card**

It is HHS policy that the travel charge card may only be used for official travel and official travel-related expenses connected with TDY travel or relocation. The travel charge card may not be used for local transportation or travel-related expenses, except as outlined in Section 10.2.8.

#### **4.2.3.2 Reimbursement of Expenses**

Reimbursement for allowable local transportation (formerly local travel) expenditures will usually be claimed via an electronic local voucher in the ETS or hard copy version of SF 1164, Claim for Reimbursement for Expenses on Official Business, because

no travel authorization was required or issued. Claims may be filed as frequently as necessary, but preferably no more often than on a monthly basis, so that administrative processing may be kept to a minimum.

If a Travel Authorization is issued by management of an OpDiv/StaffDiv under an exception in Sections 4.2.2.2, 4.2.2.3, or 4.2.2.4, or written authorization is given for rental of a vehicle for official local transportation as per Section 4.2.5.4, this expense should be claimed using the ETS.

## **Receipts**

Receipts for local transportation expenditures are generally not required, except for any single expense costing over \$75. However, receipts are required for all lodging including hotel taxes, air, rail transportation, phone calls, internet fees, laundry, baggage fees, ATM Fees, rental vehicle, regardless of amount in accordance with Section 5.2.1 Reimbursable Miscellaneous Expenses. In addition, you may be required to provide receipts under \$75 on case-by-case basis at the request of the AO, as allowed by the FTR in section 301-52.8. Original receipts must be kept by the traveler for two (2) years.

If the employee is unable to furnish receipts where required, he or she will make a full explanation on the claim or voucher. Mere inconvenience in obtaining receipts will not be accepted as a satisfactory explanation.

## **4.2.4 Criteria for Determining Allowable Local Travel Transportation Expenses**

### **4.2.4.1 Non-Reimbursable Local Travel Transportation Expenses**

Employees are expected to bear the cost of transportation between their homes and places of duty (commuting costs), and the cost of transportation between places where meals are taken and places of duty. Payment shall not be allowed for transportation expenses on non-regular weekdays and weekends, between an employee's home and official duty station for the purposes of commuting to and from work, or the performance of overtime or emergency duty. However, payment for mileage, parking, tolls, etc., may be allowed for a meeting/conference/training that takes place away from the employee's official duty station on a non-workday or on a weekend.

Exception: If an employee is officially ordered unexpectedly to work at his or her designated post of duty beyond official working hours, he or she may be allowed reimbursement of the usual taxicab fare for travel between office and home provided that: (1) he or she is dependent on public transportation for such transportation, and (2) transportation is during hours of darkness or infrequently-scheduled public transportation.

### **4.2.4.2 Reimbursable Local Travel Transportation Expenses**

Employees may be reimbursed transportation expenses incurred in the local transportation (formerly local travel) area to perform official business, except for commuting costs. Generally, reimbursement may be allowed from whatever point the employee begins the journey to perform official business. However, when the journey begins and/or ends at the employee's home, the AO must ensure that appropriate reduction is made for normal commuting expenses in accordance with Section 4.2.4.1 above.

A traveler will not be reimbursed if the transportation expenses do not exceed the normal commuting costs. However, AO can take into consideration unusual circumstances and not require a reduction of normal commuting costs when the employee has no normal commuting costs, or where the employee has prepaid normal commuting costs and loses their benefit because of local transportation requirements (see below for further explanation).

## **Unusual Circumstances Where Reduction of Normal Commuting Cost is Not Required**

Some examples of unusual circumstances where reduction of normal commuting costs is not required include:

1. Employees working from home on a scheduled day under an approved flexi-place agreement, who need to travel locally on official business, have a zero normal commuting distance. Therefore, no reimbursement reduction is required.

2. This exception does not apply on a scheduled work-at-home day, if the employer cancels the scheduled work-at-home day and requires the employee to work at the normal duty office or at an alternate TDY location in the local transportation area for most or all of the day.
3. Employees who prepay normal commuting expenses on a weekly, monthly, or other basis to a common carrier, vanpool, parking lot, etc. may incur the cost and receive no (or reduced) service/benefit because of the requirement for local transportation. These “sunk” commuting costs should not be included in any reduction (although if an employee uses the pre-paid expense to cover part of the local travel cost, no reimbursement is due for that cost).

### **Calculating Allowable Reimbursement**

Allowable reimbursement is calculated as the difference between the total expenses incurred and the employee’s normal commuting expense, for instance:

1. If an employee normally commutes from home to an official duty station office via a POV and on a particular day must travel to a temporary work site via POV, the normal commuting distance between the employee’s home and official duty station office should be deducted from the total mileage claimed.

**Example:** An employee normally drives 20 miles each way between home and office. Today, the employee must drive from home to a TDY location for a morning meeting and then drive to his/her regular office for the rest of the day. The trip from home to the meeting and then to the regular office totals 30 miles. The employee may be reimbursed for 10 miles.

2. If an employee is a member of a car pool and shares the driving with the members of the car pool, the Comptroller General has ruled that the appropriate reduction for commuting expense is the total mileage the employee is expected to drive in a week divided by five, and the resulting figure is the daily reduction.

**Example:** An employee drives 100 miles round trip one day per week as a member of a carpool. The reduction for each day the employee travels to a temporary work location would be 20 miles per day ( $100/5 = 20$ ).

3. If an employee normally uses public transportation, the amount expended for public transportation and any parking fees incurred in the course of the employee’s normal commute would be included in any reduction unless the parking fees are paid monthly and considered a “sunk” cost.

### **When Employee Receives Transit Subsidy**

If the employee receives a transit subsidy, which encourages employees to use public transportation when commuting to and from work as a benefit, the rules stated above still apply.

**Example:** If the transit subsidy is used to secure a fare card or bus tokens with no time limitation on use, and the employee’s normal, one-way commuting cost on the subway or bus is \$2.05, then when the employee must drive a POV to a temporary work site for the day and mileage reimbursement is calculated as \$2.50, the employee may be reimbursed only the extra commuting cost: \$.45 each way (or \$.90 for round-trip) if he/she retains the transit subsidy money for that day.

The employee could also reduce her/his next transit subsidy amount, to reflect the day the subway/bus was not used. If that is done, the full amount of the mileage for the temporary duty day could be reimbursed.

**Example:** If the transit subsidy is used to pay for a fixed amount monthly bus/train pass or car pool ridership with time limitations on use, there should be no reduction for this “sunk” commuting cost. The employee may be reimbursed the full commuting cost for the POV vehicle: \$2.50 each way (or \$5.00 for round-trip).

## **4.2.5 Modes of Travel**

### **4.2.5.1 Public Transportation**

Public transportation, such as buses, subways, etc., should be used when practical between points where official business is being conducted, except:

1. Employees should use government shuttle service when available rather than subways, streetcars, buses, and other public means of transportation.
2. Taxicabs or a POV may be authorized when public transportation or shuttle service is not available, is impractical to use, or would result in undue loss of government time.
3. A rental car may be authorized when it is the mode of transportation most advantageous to the Government for a local assignment. In determining cost advantage, consideration should be given to incidental costs associated with rental car use in lieu of public transit or shuttles/taxicabs, etc., such as gasoline, parking fees (at duty points and lodging facilities), tolls, accessibility, etc.

#### **4.2.5.2 Privately-Owned Vehicles**

When necessary and determined by the approving official to be advantageous to the Government, the use of a POV will be allowed on a mileage basis, not to exceed the applicable rates specified in the FTR. Such allowance shall be based on either tables of official distance or odometer readings taken at the beginning and end of the trip. In addition to mileage, the cost of parking fees, ferry fares, bridge, road, and tunnel tolls will be allowed.

Mileage is payable to only one employee when two or more employees travel in the same vehicle on the same trip. The employee claiming reimbursement will list on the voucher the names of other passengers accompanying him or her.

#### **4.2.5.3 Government Vehicle**

A government vehicle may be used when authorized, and reimbursement of the cost of parking fees, ferry fares, bridge, road, and tunnel tolls will be allowed. Per FTR 301-10.310, if an employee is authorized to use a government vehicle and use a POV instead, he/she will be reimbursed based on a constructive mileage rate limited to the cost that would be incurred for a Government automobile. For the current rate, see [www.gsa.gov/mileage](http://www.gsa.gov/mileage).

Note: For additional policy guidance on the authorization of government vehicles, refer to the HHS Logistics Management Manual, Chapter 103-38: "Motor Vehicle Management."

#### **4.2.5.4 Rental Vehicles**

If a rental vehicle is determined to be the most advantageous mode for local transportation (formerly local travel), there must be specific written authorization or prior approval to obtain this service. Appropriate arrangements should be made in advance with the rental agency. There may be instances when an OpDiv/StaffDiv is required to furnish the rental agency acceptable written authorization (e.g., letter on official agency letterhead signed by AO).

In the rare emergency situation where the usual advance written authorization cannot be made, rental of a vehicle may be approved less formally, but some type of written authorization must be prepared to document the action and provided to the employee (e.g., by fax). The informal authorization should be explained on the reimbursement paperwork (SF-1164 or SF-1012) after travel is completed, and a copy of the informal approval documentation attached when the claim/voucher is submitted.

It is preferable for a travel order to be issued when a rental vehicle is authorized for local transportation. A travel order will provide the necessary written authorization and obligate funding for this purpose. Therefore, employees should follow their OpDiv's authorization and vouchering procedures for rental of cars in the local transportation area.

## **5. Per Diem and Subsistence Allowances**

### **5.1 Per Diem Rates, Actual Expense Reimbursement, and Lodging**

## Requirements

This chapter provides supplemental guidance for HHS civilian employees, invitational travelers, and OpDiv/StaffDivs regarding allowable per diem and subsistence expenses for TDY travel.

As covered in Section 1.2.2, travel policies and per diem rates for Commissioned Corps officers of the USPHS are governed by the JTR.

### 5.1.1 General

HHS AOs, as well as HHS travelers, must follow the provisions of the FTR and these supplemental HHS policy guidelines in authorizing, incurring, and approving per diem and subsistence expenses.

#### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-11, Per Diem Expenses

FTR Part 301-70, Subpart C, Policies and Procedures Relating to Per Diem Expenses

### 5.1.2 Eligibility for Per Diem or Actual Expense Allowance

An HHS employee is entitled to per diem or actual expense allowance as follows:

1. If the employee performs official travel outside the official station as defined by the FTR; or
2. If the employee is in travel status for more than 12 hours.

HHS officials who authorize travel that meets the above conditions must pay a per diem or subsistence allowance to the employee, unless:

1. The employee performs travel to a training event under the GETA (5 U.S.C. 4101-4118), and the OpDiv/StaffDiv does not authorize reimbursement for per diem or subsistence expense; or
2. The individual performs pre-employment interview travel, and the hiring HHS component does not authorize payment of per diem expenses; or
3. The employee is authorized annual leave in conjunction with the TDY travel (see Section 5.4.1 and Section 6.5).

### 5.1.3 Per Diem and Actual Expense Allowances

#### 5.1.3.1 Lodging-Plus Per Diem

HHS employees are expected to travel on a lodgings-plus per diem basis, except in limited, unusual situations, when reduced per diem or actual expense reimbursement is specifically authorized or approved for the particular trip. Under the lodgings-plus per diem method, a maximum per diem rate is established for lodging, plus M&IE, at a specific location. The following government organizations establish per diem rates:

1. General Services Administration: CONUS areas;
2. Department of State: Foreign areas;
3. Department of Defense: Non-foreign areas OCONUS

In most circumstances, employees may choose lodging facilities (up to the maximum lodging rate for the TDY location) at their discretion, but every HHS traveler must keep in mind the mandate to be prudent when incurring charges for official travel.

Reserving hotel lodging that requires an advance deposit on the travel charge card may be authorized when there is no FedRooms or Government rate available in accordance with OpDiv/StaffDiv policy. If a traveler prepays lodging prior to the departure, the OpDiv/StaffDiv may or may not reimburse travelers for the expense until after the trip has been completed in accordance with FTR 301-11.16, 301-11.32 and OpDiv/StaffDiv policy.

Employees are expected to stay in the location of the TDY assignment if appropriate lodging is available there. For example, employees should not choose a lodging facility a significant distance away from the temporary duty site and at greater expense to the Government if local lodging is available, reasonable, and safe (e.g., staying 20 miles away from the duty site, at a resort, would not be prudent; the employee will bear any extra cost for the distant facility). The high charge for parking at downtown hotels should be considered when choosing a lodging facility in major cities, if that charge could be avoided by driving a few extra miles without substantial inconvenience.

### **5.1.3.2 Lodging**

Travelers or designated personnel must make lodging reservations using the ETS and/or contracted TMC unless they meet one of the exceptions in 3.4.1.2 TMC Exemptions.

First consideration must be given to establishments that are contracted by GSA under the FedRooms program to ensure that travelers stay in fire-safe accommodations at a rate that is at or below per diem. In addition, a majority of FedRooms property provide additional benefits such as free internet access. The TMC partnered with HHS will also assist travelers to identify the commercial lodging facilities in the FedRooms program.

### **Compliance with the E-Gov Travel System Procedures**

Lodging facilities participating in the FedRooms program offers hotel rates at or below government per diem, are USFA-certified, offer a cancellation deadline of 4:00 p.m. or later on the day of arrival, and have a 2-star or higher rating. If there are no FedRooms properties at the TDY location, employees may select a non-FedRooms hotel, which are also listed during the hotel reservation process in the ETS.

The FTR does require travelers to book all reservations through the ETS or their contracted TMC. However, there are extenuating circumstances for which it may not be possible or practical to use the ETS online booking tool to book lodging; however, employees are still required to use their IBA when making reservations.

Examples include (See Section 3.4.1.2 for additional information):

1. When attending a conference where the conference sponsor has negotiated with one or more lodging facilities to set aside a specific number of rooms for conference attendees and to ensure that a set aside room is available, it is necessary to book lodging directly with the lodging facility.
2. When travel is to a remote location and it is not possible to book lodging accommodations through the ETS online booking tool. In this instance, travelers should work with the TMC to determine lodging availability. Travelers should contact their OpDiv/StaffDiv for additional assistance.
3. When such travel arrangements are so complex and circumstances will not allow for booking travel through the online self-service booking tool in the ETS. Travelers should contact the TMC for assistance.

Personal convenience is not an exception to the FTR. If an employee uses an unauthorized travel agent, or unauthorized TMC, or unauthorized travel service such as Orbitz, Travelocity, etc., the employee will be responsible for all additional costs that result from the unauthorized use.

Some lodging facilities charge taxes from which government travelers may be exempt. See Section 5.1.5.

Note: When selecting lodging facilities, first consideration must be given to lodging facilities contracted by GSA under the FedRooms Program. (See FTR 301-11.11.)

### 5.1.3.3 Reduced Per Diem

Per diems are an entitlement for employees conducting business for the Government. In determining whether a per diem amount will be reduced, the following guidance is provided. Four obligations must be met before reducing per diem:

1. The employee must be notified on their travel authorization that their per diem will be reduced. This is accomplished within the ETS using a system notice that displays.
2. The amount of the reduction must be calculated through the entire TDY period. This is accomplished either automatically by the ETS, or by manual calculation and manual entry into the ETS.
3. All actions (notification and reduction calculations) must be completed at the time of approval of the travel authorization and before the travel occurs.
4. Decisions to reduce per diem must be made prudently and never for the sole purpose of saving the Agency money. The Authorizing/Approving Official shall not substitute their general understanding for the research put in to create a per diem level.

### 5.1.3.4 HHS Maximum Subsistence Rate Guidelines for Extended/Long-term TDY Assignments

#### General HHS Policy

An “extended” travel assignment is one where the employee stays for official duty purposes in the same TDY station for at least 14 lodging nights, although the procedures discussed in this section are considered appropriate to apply for any assignment in a single TDY duty station that lasts longer than one week.

For extended and long-term TDY (LTTDY) assignments, in line with FTR Part 301-11.200, per diem rates must be reduced in accordance with the HHS Maximum Subsistence Rate Guidelines for Extended/Long-term TDY Assignments listed in Table 6 below to establish an appropriate per diem rate for a particular extended assignment. AOs are expected to ensure that a realistic reduced per diem rate is authorized for employees who are on extended travel for TDY assignments. The rate should provide the employee with adequate reimbursement to cover necessary living expenses. Employees on an extended long-term assignment should be able to maintain a reasonable standard of living, without reaping any significant financial gains, suffering any significant losses, or living in an unsafe location.

#### Tax Implications of Long-term TDY Greater than a Year

In accordance with the FTR and HHS policy in Section 10.5, LTTDY travel has significant tax implications for the employee as the per diem that is received is considered as income and is therefore taxable. Please consult with your OpDiv/StaffDiv or PSC when a LTTDY assignment has the potential for being greater than a year so that a cost evaluation can be completed.

#### Long-term TDY Greater than Six (6) Months

For LTTDY greater than six months, OpDiv/StaffDivs should perform an analysis as to the most advantageous method for completing the travel to include:

- Reduced Per Diem
- Temporary Relocation
- Relocation

For information on performing this analysis, see Section 9.5 Travel and Transportation Cost Comparison: Reduced Per Diem Allowance/ Limited Relocation Allowances versus Repeated TDY Trips to the HHS Work Site and Section 12.6 Relocation Allowance by Specific Type.

**Specific HHS Maximum Per Diem Rate Reduction Guidelines**

***Assignments within CONUS and Non- Foreign Travel Areas:***

For Assignments Less than 30 Lodging Nights

The maximum daily amount in the FTR for the traveler’s locality may be used when reasonable for the expected duration of the assignment.

Assignments of 30 Lodging Nights or Greater

For longer-term assignments, the allowable per diem should be reduced, as employees are expected to secure Extended Stay or Long-term Lodging Facilities at substantially lower rates. Such lodging will normally include cooking facilities, so the M&IE rate shall be reduced at the same rate as lodging. Close attention must be given to setting a daily lodging rate appropriate for the timing of the assignment and the particular location involved. The goal is to reduce the cost to the Government as much as possible for the entire period of travel/occupancy, while providing safe and adequate lodging to the employee, with reasonable transportation option(s) to the TDY site at a cost not exceeding the lodging savings. Travelers will always receive 75 percent of per diem on travel days.

The following guidelines in the Table below are provided for setting per diem rates for assignments of 30 lodging nights or more. The guidelines are based upon the length of the entire TDY assignment, and do not represent a sliding scale during the length of the TDY assignment. The reduction begins on day one, unless the traveler’s OpDiv/StaffDiv policy allows for a different rate for the first 29 lodging nights, in which case the reduction begins in accordance with OpDiv/StaffDiv policy.

**Table 2 (Formerly Table 6) - Reduced Per Diem Allowances**

<b>Assignment Period</b>	<b>Percent Reduction</b>
30 to 180 Lodging Nights	65% of per diem rate for location
Over 180 Lodging Nights	50% of per diem rate for location

Employees may elect to secure lodging that is more expensive, for personal convenience, but they must pay the excess cost over the authorized rate.

***Assignments outside the Continental United States (OCONUS)***

Assignments of Less than 30 Lodging Nights

The maximum daily amount in the FTR for the traveler’s locality may be used when reasonable for the length of the assignment; however, a lower amount may be more appropriate. The rate should be realistic and fair for the location involved, given the timing of the travel.

Assignments of 30 Lodging Nights or Greater

For long-term assignments OCONUS, the allowable per diem should be reduced if, it is reasonable to expect employees to be able to secure Long-term Lodging Facilities at substantially lower rates within the location. Due to varying considerations of availability, cost, safety, and features of lodging options in foreign areas, no guideline amounts for setting reduced rates for lodging in foreign countries will be provided in this section. However, the guidelines above should be the starting point for determining the reduction amount.

Supervisors or AOs should gather sufficient reliable information about the location of the assignment to enable them to assess what is a reasonable and fair lodging rate, given the circumstances of the travel and length of assignment. The rate must be specified on the travel order and discussed with the employee.

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If lodging options that include meals or meal preparation facilities are reasonably available, the M&IE rate must be reduced to the same percentage as the lodging or, if all meals are provided with the lodging, only the incidental expenses portion of the locality's M&IE rate should be authorized.

An employee's personal preference (e.g., staying in superior accommodations) may not be considered a necessary living expense. Employees are responsible for incurring only those expenses that a prudent person would incur while traveling on personal business, and claiming reimbursement accordingly.

Occasionally, circumstances unique to a particular travel assignment may lead the AO to the conclusion that a rate higher than the guideline maximum is in the public interest and critical to the agency's mission. Under such unusual conditions, the AO may increase the guideline reduced maximum rate to a prudent rate consistent with the conditions and necessary costs that must be incurred by the employee.

Note: In all discussions of reducing rates for extended/long-term travel, the term "night" refers to a lodging night, and all such nights are to be counted sequentially. If an employee is absent from the TDY station for a short period (e.g., for personal or official business travel elsewhere), the number of "nights" is not reduced to account for that break in presence at the TDY location.

**Example:** An individual on a 90-night assignment to Rockville, MD is scheduled to work at the TDY station 4 days per week requiring four lodging nights; however, since the length of the assignment is for 90 lodging nights, the lodging and M&IE should be reduced according to the guidelines in Table 2 (formerly Table 6).

Assuming 65% of lodging at \$211/day = \$137.15 and 65% M&IE at \$71/day = \$46.15, for a total of \$183.30 per day. Calculation of the maximum authorized per diem allowance for the three month assignment would be 48 (number of actual days worked) x \$183.20 = \$8,798.40.

### **Recommended Lodging Facilities**

When selecting lodging facilities, employees should follow the guidelines and give first consideration to the type of lodging facilities in Table 3 (Formerly Table 7) - TDY Length and Lodging Selection below.

**Table 3 (Formerly Table 7) - TDY Length and Lodging Selection**

Term	From	To	Lodging
TDY	1	13 Nights	FedRooms/Extended Stay
Extended TDY	14 Nights	29 Nights	Extended Stay
Long-term TDY	30 Nights	90 Nights	Extended Stay/Long-term Lodging Facilities (Apartments)
Long-term TDY	91 Nights	End of Assignment	Long-term Lodging Facilities (Apartments)

### **TDY Lodging Facilities**

For TDY travel, first consideration must be given to FedRooms properties in accordance with FTR 301-11.11. In addition, employees can look at extended stay lodging facilities. Extended stay hotels are a type of lodging with features unavailable at standard hotels. These features are intended to provide more home-like amenities such as laundry and kitchen facilities. Extended Stay Facilities may offer discounts for extended stays, beginning at five nights.

### **Extended TDY Lodging Facilities**

For extended TDY stays of 14 lodging nights to 29 lodging nights, first consideration must be given to Extended Stay Facilities. Extended Stay Facilities may or may not be a participant in the FedRooms program. They often include the term “Suite” in the name.

### **Long-term TDY Facilities – 30 – 90 Lodging Nights**

For Long-term TDY of 30 lodging nights to 90 lodging nights, first consideration must be given to Extended Stay Facilities. In addition, travelers should check Long-term Lodging Facilities to determine if they are a more cost-effective option. Long-term Lodging Facilities include apartment or condominium-type properties that may be furnished with all the amenities of a regular home. Returning home on the weekends, because it is more cost effective, does not preclude the use of either Extended Stay or Long-term Lodging Facilities. A cost comparison should be completed to determine what is most advantageous to the Government. If an Extended Stay or Long-term Lodging Facility is not selected, proper justification must be provided.

### **Long-term TDY Facilities – 91 Lodging Nights to end of Assignment**

For Long-term TDY greater than 91 Lodging nights, first consideration must be given to Long-term Lodging Facilities. Long-term Lodging Facilities are available on the GSA schedule. In addition, check the PSC website for specific Long-term Lodging Facilities available to HHS employees. Returning home on the weekends, because it is more cost effective, does not preclude the use of either Extended Stay or Long-term Lodging Facilities. A cost comparison should be completed to determine what is most advantageous to the Government. If a Long-term Lodging Facility is not selected, proper justification must be provided.

It is the responsibility of the HHS AO to ensure that the appropriate research takes place, by the traveler or travel preparer, and proper consideration is given to Extended Stay and Long-term Lodging Facility choices and reduced per diem allowances, before an employee is authorized and issued travel orders for an extended or long-term TDY assignment.

### **Temporary Change of Station**

For TDY duty assignments at one location that are expected to last more than six months, the use of a temporary change of station move for eligible categories of employees should be considered in lieu of per diem. For additional information on both Temporary Change of Station (TCS) and Permanent Change of Station (PCS), see Chapter 12, Relocation Allowances.

### **Long-term Lodging**

Travelers should work with the TMC or their OpDiv/StaffDiv Travel Office to determine lodging availability. Long-term Lodging Facilities are available on the GSA schedule available. In addition, check the PSC website for specific Long-term Lodging facilities available to HHS employees. Returning home on the weekends, because it is more cost effective, does not preclude the use of either Extended Stay or Long-term Lodging facilities. A cost comparison should be completed to determine what is most advantageous to the Government. If a Long-term Lodging Facility is not selected, proper justification must be provided.

In addition to reducing the lodging expenses, careful consideration should be given to reducing the allowance for meals and incidentals. Long-term lodging accommodations that include facilities for preparing/eating meals and/or storing food should be used, when available and economical to the Government. When an employee on long-term assignment rents accommodations with cooking facilities, the M&IE portion of their per diem rate must also be reduced, generally by at least one-half of the locality’s M&IE rate.

### ***Authorized Temporary Duty Travel away from the Extended or Long-term TDY Location***

An employee who is authorized to perform TDY travel away from the Extended/Long-term TDY location will receive transportation and per diem allowances in the same manner, and at the same rates, as if they were performing typical TDY travel. An employee engaged on such an assignment will be authorized transportation or mileage to return home in accordance with Section 5.4.3.3, Periodic Returns to Official Duty Station for Non-Official Reasons.

Per Diem

An employee, who is receiving per diem at the Extended/Long-term TDY location, as prescribed in this section, will be entitled to the entire M&IE for the day of departure from the place of Long-term TDY at the rate authorized for the official duty. On the day of return to the Long-term TDY location, the M&IE rate will be paid through midnight of that day. Because there are two per diem rates, care must be exercised to ensure duplicative expenses for per diem are not authorized. On the first and last day of travel, the employee will receive the following entitlements:

1. 25 percent of the authorized Extended/Long-term TDY M&IE rate; and
2. 75 percent of the TDY M&IE rate.

Dual Lodging

An employee who is receiving per diem at the Extended/Long-term TDY location, and who is required to perform official TDY travel either back to the permanent official station or to another TDY location, is not normally entitled to per diem as a travel expense at the Extended/Long-term TDY Location. This would be considered Dual Lodging because the employee would be receiving reimbursement for lodging in both locations. However, if the employee obtained a reduced long-term lodging rate, such as an apartment that is paid on a monthly basis, in accordance with the HHS Maximum Subsistence Rate Guidelines for Extended/Long-term TDY Assignments, the traveler may be reimbursed the payment of the lodging cost for the days not spent at the Long-term TDY location.

The payment is based upon the daily lodging rate. To calculate the daily lodging rate, the number of days of actual occupancy during the billing period, excluding days of travel, should be divided into the monthly (periodic) rate billed for the lodging. See the examples provided below in Tables 4 and 5.

**Table 4 (Formerly Table 8) - Daily Lodging Rate Example 1 – Reimbursed Full Amount**

Daily Lodging Per Diem Rate for Washington, DC	Monthly Billing Rate for the Long-Term Lodging Facility	Monthly Daily Lodging Rate
\$211	\$2,500	$\$2,500 / 30 = \$84$

**Table 5 (Formerly Table 9) - Daily Lodging Rate Example 2 – Traveler Pays the Difference**

Daily Lodging Per Diem Rate for Washington, DC (over 180 Nights)	Monthly Billing Rate for the Long-Term Lodging Facility	Monthly Daily Lodging Rate
$\$211 \times 50\% = \$105$	\$3,400	$\$3,400 / 30 = \$113$

Note that if that daily rate is within the approved lodging rate set on the employee’s travel order, as in Table 4, reimbursement in full is appropriate. However, if the re-computed daily rate exceeds the daily lodging rate approved on the travel order, as in Table 5, the employee must pay the difference unless the AO approves a one-time exception to the authorized daily rate.

**Reduced Per Diem for Commissioned Corps Members**

AOs should send questions related to zero or reduced per diem rates to:

U.S. Public Health Service, Director, Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness, (Attn: PDTATAC MAP Member), 1101 Wootton Parkway, Plaza Level, Suite 100, Rockville, MD 20852-1061.

### 5.1.3.5 Actual Expense Allowance

Federal Travel Regulation Part 301-11, Subpart D, Actual Expense, states that actual expense reimbursement may be warranted when:

1. Lodging and/or meals are procured at a prearranged place such as a hotel where a meeting, conference, or training session is held, and no feasible less expensive alternative exists;
2. Costs have escalated because of special events (e.g. sporting events, conventions, natural disasters, etc.), lodging and meal expenses within prescribed allowances cannot be obtained nearby, and costs to commute to/from the nearby location consume most or all of the savings achieved from occupying less expensive lodging;
3. Because of mission requirements; or
4. Any other reason acceptable and approved by the agency.

In accordance with FTR 301-11.302, requests for reimbursement of actual expenses must be made in advance of travel.

In these unusual circumstances, delegated officials may authorize a daily actual expense reimbursement rate up to 300 percent of the applicable maximum per diem rate, but the reimbursement rate should not be set higher than necessary under the circumstances for each day of travel. There is no regulatory authority to exceed the 300 percent ceiling. A per diem rate at or near the ceiling level should be exceedingly rare and must be thoroughly justified on the travel documentation.

Actual expense reimbursement may be authorized for the same types of expenses covered by per diem rates: lodging, meals, and incidental expenses. Only those expenses that actually will exceed the maximum per diem rate due to the unusual circumstances in the locality will be increased.

### 5.1.3.6 Authorization of Actual Expense Allowance(s)

Generally, consideration for actual expense allowance (AEA) is permitted only when there is no hotel(s) in the area that is within the maximum per diem. As such, if there is a hotel available to the traveler whose lodging costs are within the per diem allowance AEA is not to be authorized unless:

1. There is concern for personal safety;
2. It can be demonstrated that the hotel within the per diem rate is not the lowest cost option when the cost of ground transportation to and from the work/meeting location is considered; or
3. It can be demonstrated that travel time between the hotel and the work/meeting site is excessive.

When authorizing an AEA, the AO should consider the following when evaluating the reasons listed above in Section 5.1.3.5, items 1-4:

#### Actual Expense

For Items 2 – 4, in Section 5.1.3.5 above, travelers must submit documentation justifying the increase in expenses, which includes hotel cost comparisons from at least three (3) hotels within the TDY location (see Section 5.1.7, Request for Actual Expense Allowance (AEA) Memorandum Sample). The documentation must be attached to the Travel Authorization in the ETS. In addition, the justifications in the ETS (Pre-Audits) should contain detailed information, which allows the AO to substantiate the request.

One of the hotels for the comparison must be at the maximum lodging rate set by GSA. If there is no hotel available at the maximum per diem rate, as provided by the TMC, the traveler must provide this information as part of the justification. The cost comparisons also should include the cost of ground transportation (e.g., taxi/shuttle) from the hotels to the site, and the location and distance in miles from the meeting site. Based upon the cost information provided by the Traveler or Travel Preparer, the

AO should only authorize the actual amount necessary for the specific expenses that are impacted by the circumstances and, therefore, that are above the per diem rate set by GSA.

The use of the full 300 percent should be limited, and the AO should only raise the expense category by the amount (percent) necessary to cover the expenses for the TDY location. The AO should note the actual expense amount (percent) increase authorized, and for which expense categories, either on the authorization or in a document that is then attached to the Travel Authorization. The AO should authorize one of the following:

- Up to 300% of Lodging Only
- Up to 300% of M&IE Only
- Up to 300% of both Lodging and M&IE

For example, the AO may authorize a higher lodging component under actual expense, but limit meals and incidentals to the locality's M&IE rate.

A request for authorization for actual expense reimbursement must be made in advance of travel, and authorization should be documented on the travel order in accordance with the OpDiv/StaffDiv's delegation of authority and ETS procedures. Actual expense reimbursement may also be approved after travel is completed ("post-approval") when properly justified, under the following conditions:

1. Emergency situations in which requests for prior travel authorization were not possible;
2. Unanticipated and exceptional circumstances which, during the course of the specific travel assignment, resulted in the incurrence of actual and necessary subsistence expenses that were much greater than the authorized per diem allowance; or
3. Other circumstances that would necessitate approval by the appropriate delegated official.

Authorization for actual expense allowances after the fact may require approval by the STO depending on the individual OpDiv/StaffDiv's policy.

Note: Each OpDiv/StaffDiv is responsible for establishing procedures for authorizing actual expense and ensuring that justifications for its use are appropriately documented.

#### **5.1.3.7 Statutory Exception**

The Government Employees Training Act (see 5 U.S.C. 4109 and 5 CFR 410.304) states that agencies "may pay, or reimburse the employee for, all or a part of the necessary expenses of the training."

When the OpDiv/StaffDiv requires all participants in a training course to stay in a local hotel in order to participate in daytime and evening training activities, a per diem allowance at the training location within the HHS defined local transportation (formerly local travel) area may be authorized as a necessary expense of training. Training that takes place within the local transportation area and any corresponding expenses paid, including special authorization of per diem, must be authorized, approved, and paid in accordance with the OpDiv/StaffDiv's policies.

This authority does not come from the FTR. For policy guidance on TDY travel expenses for training under the GETA, please refer to Section 5.2.

#### **5.1.4 Hotel/Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990**

Title 5 of the U.S.C. Section 5707a(a), requires agencies to ensure that not less than 90 percent of the commercial lodging room nights within CONUS and non-foreign OCONUS locations for a fiscal year are booked in approved places of public accommodation that meet fire safety guidelines. Whenever available, employees are strongly encouraged to stay in public accommodations that are on the FEMA List of Hotels and Motels that meet the requirements of the Hotel/Motel Fire Safety

Act. The travel management services provided by the HHS OpDiv will assist employees in reserving lodging in an approved, fire-safe accommodation.

### 5.1.5 Exemption from State or Local Tax on Hotel/Lodging Accommodations

The FTR requires employees on official travel to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent (financially responsible) person would exercise if traveling on personal business. This includes claiming a Federal exemption from payment of state and/or local taxes on lodging wherever this option is available to employees on official travel. Not all states and localities offer tax exemption, and some locations do not specify a particular form on which to claim it.

HHS travelers are expected to inform themselves about the tax exemption status of each location prior to departing on official travel, and they should make every effort to obtain and use any locally approved lodging facility tax exemption form. If official travel takes place in a location where the lodging property is listed at either GSA's Website or the SmartPay website, and the traveler's voucher claim includes domestic lodging tax reimbursement, the traveler must have made every effort to obtain the lodging tax exemption and failing that, include proper justification in the "Comments" block of the voucher.

Failure to obtain the tax exemption or not having proper justification in the "Comments" block may be a basis for denial by the AO of the reimbursement for the lodging tax.

Employees should inquire at the lodging check-in desk about availability of state and/or local tax exemption for Federal official duty travel. In the event there is no locally approved or lodging facility-provided form, the traveler should present a copy of his/her official Travel Authorization with their Government ID card and Government Travel Charge card, if applicable, to the lodging facility in order to find out whether the facility might be willing to offer lodging tax exemption.

Valid reasons a traveler may be required to pay hotel taxes may include:

1. State does not offer tax exemption to Federal travelers; or
2. State offers tax exemption, but lodging establishment refused to acknowledge.

It is extremely important for a traveler to carry his/her Government-issued travel charge card, Government ID card, and a copy of his/her approved Travel Authorization to demonstrate his/her eligibility for these exemptions or discounts.

Failure to make that inquiry, resulting in payment of state and/or local tax in an exempt area, may result in denial of reimbursement for the lodging tax.

### 5.1.6 Internal Controls on Authorization and Payment of Per Diem Rates and Actual Expenses

Heads of OpDiv/StaffDivs or their designees are responsible for establishing appropriate management controls over the authorization and payment of per diem rates and actual expense reimbursements to ensure compliance with the FTR, the HHS Travel Policy Manual, and their own supplemental policy and procedure requirements.

FTR Part 301-70, Subpart C, Policies and Procedures Relating to Per Diem Expenses, identifies additional policies and procedures that OpDiv/StaffDiv management should establish for authorization and payment of per diem expenses. Most of these policies pertain to internal delegations of authority.

### 5.1.7 Request for Actual Expense Allowance (AEA) Memorandum Sample

The following sample memorandum should be used for documentation as described in Section 5.1.3.6, Authorization of Actual Expense Allowance(s).

## Memorandum

**Date:** [Click here to enter a date](#)

**To:** [Click here to enter text](#)

**Through:** [Click here to enter text](#)

**From:** [Click here to enter text](#)

**Subject:** Request for Approval of Actual Expense Allowance

The current Government per diem rate for this geographic location is [Click here to enter text](#) for lodging and [Click here to enter text](#) for Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE). I am requesting authorization of AEA expenses for lodging for the following event:

Event	Information
Name of Meeting:	<a href="#">Click here to enter text</a>
Dates of Meeting:	<a href="#">Click here to enter text</a>
Geographic Location:	<a href="#">Click here to enter text</a>
Date(s) for which AEA is being requested:	<a href="#">Click here to enter text</a>

**Justification for requesting Actual Expense Allowance:** Check the one box below that best describes why a request for AEA is warranted, in accordance with FTR 301-11.300, and complete the Hotel Cost Comparison Data and Information for all four (4) Hotels as provided below:

1. Hosting organization has a prearranged meeting site (i.e., rooms are booked with the hotel well in advance of the meeting dates). Note: Checking this box is not an automatic justification for authorization of an AEA hotel rate. The Hotel Cost Comparison Data and Information section below must be completed.
2. Hotel accommodations at the maximum (i.e., Government) lodging rate cannot be obtained within a five-mile radius of the TDY Location/meeting site in a major city. Local ground transportation (e.g., taxi) costs to commute to and from the hotel at the Government lodging rate to the meeting site would negate any savings achieved by staying at the hotel with the Government lodging rate. The Hotel Cost Comparison Data and Information section below must be completed.
3. Hotel accommodations at the maximum (i.e., Government) lodging rate cannot be obtained because travel is to a geographic location where the costs have escalated temporarily due to a special event (e.g., sporting festival, major conference, etc.) and nearby cities/towns have escalated their hotel rates. Note: Checking this box is not an automatic justification for authorization of an AEA hotel rate. The Hotel Cost Comparison Data and Information section below must be completed.
4. Safety and security concerns (e.g., heightened terrorist alerts, disease outbreak, etc.). The Hotel Cost Comparison Data and Information section below must be completed. Please provide additional information/justification for the AEA request below.
5. Other. The Hotel Cost Comparison Data and Information section below must be completed. Please provide additional information/justification for the AEA request below. Note: This can include a scenario where there is no special event taking place (see box 3 above), yet a hotel at the maximum (i.e. Government) lodging rate cannot be procured in the geographic location.

Proposed AEA Hotel

Proposed Hotel	Information
Name of Hotel:	Click here to enter text
Address of Hotel:	Click here to enter text
Phone Number of Hotel:	Click here to enter text
Distance from meeting site:	Click here to enter text
Daily ground transportation costs if applicable:	\$ Click here to enter text
Other daily costs, if applicable:	\$ Click here to enter text
Proposed Percent Per Diem Increase:	Click here to enter text

Hotel Cost Comparison and Information:

Hotel Comparison #1	Information
Name of Hotel:	Click here to enter text
Address of Hotel:	Click here to enter text
Phone Number of Hotel:	Click here to enter text
Lodging Rate:	\$ Click here to enter text
Distance from meeting site <sup>ii</sup> :	Click here to enter text
Daily ground transportation costs if applicable:	\$ Click here to enter text
Other daily costs, if applicable:	\$ Click here to enter text

Hotel Comparison #2	Information
Name of Hotel:	Click here to enter text
Address of Hotel:	Click here to enter text
Phone Number of Hotel:	Click here to enter text
Lodging Rate:	\$ Click here to enter text
Distance from meeting site:	Click here to enter text
Daily ground transportation costs if applicable:	\$ Click here to enter text
Other daily costs, if applicable:	\$ Click here to enter text

Hotel Comparison #3	Information
Name of Hotel:	Click here to enter text
Address of Hotel:	Click here to enter text
Phone Number of Hotel:	Click here to enter text
Lodging Rate:	\$ Click here to enter text
Distance from meeting site:	Click here to enter text
Daily ground transportation costs if applicable:	\$ Click here to enter text
Other daily costs, if applicable:	\$ Click here to enter text

Note: Lodging Tax is not to be included in a requested AEA lodging rate in a domestic or non-foreign location; lodging tax is to be included in the requested AEA lodging rate in an international geographic location.

Additional Justification (if applicable):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Authorization of AEA not to exceed \$ [Click here to enter text](#) which is [Click here to enter text](#)% above the government lodging rate and \$ [Click here to enter text](#) which is [Click here to enter text](#)% above the M&IE rate for a maximum of \$ [Click here to enter text](#) per day is requested for the dates above.

---

Traveler Signature

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Disapproved: \_\_\_\_\_

---

<sup>i</sup> One of the hotels for the comparison must be at the maximum lodging rate set by GSA. If there is no hotel available at the maximum per diem rate, as provided by the TMC, the traveler must provide this information as part of the justification.

<sup>ii</sup> If the hotel is the meeting site, indicate zero (0) miles.

## 5.2 Miscellaneous Expenses

This section provides supplemental guidance for HHS employees and invitational travelers on reimbursable miscellaneous expenses incurred during official travel.

## 5.2.1 Reimbursable Miscellaneous Expenses

HHS authorizing and approving officials may authorize or approve reimbursement of miscellaneous expenses, as listed in the FTR Part 301-12 and these supplemental HHS policy guidelines. Each type of miscellaneous expense will be reported as a separate line item on the travel voucher, indicating the amount and dates when incurred. Unless otherwise specified, receipts are required only when the individual expense is greater than \$75. The purpose of the receipt is to justify the amount to be reimbursed; therefore, the receipt details are required to ensure that no prohibited items are being claimed. Original receipts must be kept by the traveler for two (2) years.

Per HHS Policy, the following miscellaneous expenses require receipts even if the value is below the \$75 dollar threshold. In addition, they have additional requirements for authorization. However, you may be required to provide receipts under \$75 on case-by-case basis at the request of the AO, as allowed by the FTR in section 301-52.8.

### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-12 Miscellaneous Expenses

#### 5.2.1.1 Hotel Taxes

##### **Continental U.S. (CONUS)**

GSA does not include hotel taxes in the lodging rates that are issued as part of the per diem rates for the continental U.S. Hotel taxes are a miscellaneous expense item. (See FTR 301-11.27.) Travelers are required to request exemption from state and local taxes where applicable; see Section 5.1.5, Exemption from State or Local Tax on Hotel/Lodging Accommodations.

##### **Non-foreign Duty Areas (OCONUS)**

The Department of Defense does not include hotel taxes in the lodging rates for non-foreign duty areas outside of the continental U.S. Non-foreign areas include: Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and territories and possessions of the U.S. Hotel taxes are a miscellaneous expense item. Travelers are required to request exemption from state and local taxes where applicable; see Section 5.1.5, Exemption from State or Local Tax on Hotel/Lodging Accommodations.

##### **Foreign Duty Areas (OCONUS)**

The Department of State includes hotel taxes in its per diem lodging rates for foreign duty areas. Hotel taxes in foreign areas may not be authorized or claimed as a miscellaneous expense item unless and until a change in policy is published by the State Department and becomes effective for travel by employees of this Department.

#### 5.2.1.2 Personal Telephone Calls

It is HHS policy that commercial charges for brief telephone calls placed for personal reasons while in travel status are reimbursable as a miscellaneous travel expense to civilian employees, subject to the following restrictions:

1. Employees are expected to incur telephone call expenses in the same manner as a prudent person would. An average of one call per day is authorized for domestic travel. In accordance with the General Services Board of Contract Appeals rulings, a traveler may be reimbursed for the cost of telephone calls made while on TDY if the AO determines that the calls were in the Government's interest and then only to the extent the cost falls under the \$5 ceiling explained below.

2. The employee must incur a minimum of one night's lodging on official travel, domestic, non-foreign, or foreign.
3. Government-provided long distance telephone systems and services (including government-issued calling cards and government cell phones) are not available, so that a commercial toll service must be used. If they do not have government-issued calling cards or cell phones, employees should make their allowable personal call(s) from the TDY station before departing for the day to avoid incurring expensive commercial telephone charges.

### **Travel within CONUS**

The Department's policy for travel within the CONUS is that reimbursement for personal telephone calls should be limited to actual expenses not to exceed an amount equal to \$5 times the number of consecutive nights on official business. OpDivs may set policy limits for their employees, which are more restrictive than the Department's.

Guidelines regarding personal telephone calls made while traveling OCONUS to Alaska, Hawaii, and U.S. territories and possessions follow the CONUS policy as calling conditions and rates are expected to be similar to these areas.

### **Travel OCONUS**

The Department's basic requirements for personal telephone call reimbursement for periods of travel OCONUS to foreign areas are as follows:

1. Authorization shall be made prior to the beginning of travel and shall be included on the travel order.
2. Due to major costs differences in foreign phone rates, the AO must also authorize the frequency and estimated cost of telephone calls on the travel order. Major deviations beyond what is authorized on the travel order must be accompanied by a written justification describing the circumstances for the deviation. The AO is responsible for reviewing such claims and making the final determination on whether the amounts claimed are reasonable or are the personal responsibility of the traveler.

Note: If an employee incurs costs for personal telephone calls under this policy (i.e., does not use government-provided long-distance telephone systems and services for the call(s) he/she makes on travel), the employee must provide a receipt for those costs claimed on his/her travel voucher. Acceptable receipts include hotel bills with long distance telephone calls and numbers marked.

Employees must sign a certification to accompany the receipt(s), stating that the entire claimed expense was in fact incurred for telephone calls permissible under the rules of this section.

### **Pre-paid Phone Cards**

If an employee purchases a Pre-Paid phone card, he/she must provide a store receipt listing the purchase of pre-paid phone cards or turning in the phone card whose cost/value is annotated on the card. Any remaining value of the Pre-Paid Phone Card becomes the property of the OpDiv/StaffDiv.

### **Employee-Owned Personal Communication Devices**

No reimbursement is permitted for the use of employee owned personal communication devices such as cell phones, blackberries, PDAs, smartphones, etc., for domestic or non-foreign travel.

However, for foreign travel to remote areas where long distance telephone systems are inaccessible, the use of an employee-owned cell phone may be authorized once it is determined necessary and authorized on the travel order prior to departure on travel. An itemized receipt indicating specific costs for each call is required for reimbursement.

Note: Whenever possible, calls should be made from the TDY location, on the employee's government-issued mobile device (cell phone, blackberry, smartphone, etc.), or from the employee's hotel room. If a call on an employee-owned personal communication device, e.g. cell phone, must be made, it will only be reimbursed if:

1. The call was made outside of the employee's regular plan minutes (including text and data); and
2. The bill must show the date, time, telephone number, and cost per minute of the personal call. (However, if the call is within the employee's plan minutes and shows as a cost of \$0.00, the employee will not be reimbursed for the cost of the call.)

### **5.2.1.3 Business Calls**

It is HHS policy that all necessary and reasonable charges for official business calls incurred while on official TDY travel must be reimbursed as a miscellaneous travel expense. Generally, there are no dollar caps placed on official business calls.

However, it is the travel approving official's responsibility to ensure that all charges are necessary and reasonable. Such costs should be fully justified on the travel voucher.

Whenever possible, business calls should be made from the TDY location, on the employee's government-issued mobile device (cell phone, blackberry, smartphone, etc.), or from his/her hotel room. If a call on an employee owned personal communication device e.g. cell phone must be made, it will only be reimbursed if:

1. The call was made outside of the employee's regular plan minutes (including text and data); and
2. The bill must show the date, time, telephone number, and cost per minute of the business call. (Note that if the call is within the employee's plan minutes and shows as a cost of \$0.00, the employee will not be reimbursed for the cost of the call.)

### **5.2.1.4 Internet Fees**

Expenses for Internet Fees must be pre-approved on the Travel Authorization (see Section 3.1.1.4). In addition, they require justification as to why the Internet Fee is not included in the cost of the hotel room as the majority of FedRooms properties provide free internet access. This same requirement for approval applies to:

1. Wireless access (internet fees) during a conference;
2. While at the airport waiting for a flight (whether origination or connection); or
3. Airplane internet fees.

These fees may be approved, after the fact, at the discretion of the AO, with proper justification; justification must include the need for the internet service including why it was not requested in advance on the Travel Authorization.

In addition, some OpDiv/StaffDivs have wireless access (air cards) available for use. Check with the appropriate OpDiv/StaffDiv Travel Office and IT department to determine if one is available for use.

Note: If an employee incurs costs for internet fees under this policy (i.e., the hotel does not provide free internet access), the employee must provide a receipt for those costs claimed on their travel voucher. Acceptable receipts include hotel bills with internet fees clearly marked.

### **5.2.1.5 Laundry, Dry Cleaning, and Pressing of Clothing**

#### **CONUS Travel**

In the continental U.S., laundry, cleaning and pressing of clothing services at a temporary duty location are reimbursable as a miscellaneous expense item to civilian<sup>v</sup> employees, subject to the following restrictions:

1. The employee must incur a minimum of four consecutive nights lodging on official travel.
2. The Department's guideline states that reimbursement should be limited to actual expenses not to exceed an amount equal to \$5 times the number of consecutive nights on the trip for the first 30 nights at a TDY location.

3. Receipts are required for all laundry/dry cleaning purchases claimed for reimbursement (except coin-operated machine usage where receipts are not available).

### **Extended or Long-term Temporary Duty Assignments**

Each OpDiv is responsible for setting a policy on limitations to reimbursement. The Department's guideline is that for extended or long-term TDY travel, at the same location, reimbursement should be limited to actual expenses not to exceed an amount equal to:

1. \$5 times the number of consecutive nights on the trip for the first 30 nights;
2. \$3 times the number of consecutive nights on the trip for nights 31 through 90; and
3. \$2 times the number of consecutive nights on the trip for nights 91 and beyond.

### **OCONUS Travel**

In non-foreign OCONUS and foreign areas, laundry, dry cleaning, and pressing of clothing expenses are covered under the incidental expenses component of per diem allowances issued by the Department of Defense and Department of State, respectively. They may not be authorized or approved as a separate miscellaneous expense item. Non-foreign areas include Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and territories and possessions of the U.S.

### **Emergencies**

For guidance regarding reimbursement during a Disaster Relief or Emergency Response Services, see Section 11.3.4.

#### **5.2.1.6 Baggage Fees**

Per FTR 301-12.2, an employee may be reimbursed for the following baggage fees:

1. Transportation charges for authorized excess.
2. Necessary charges for transferring baggage.
3. Necessary charges for storage of baggage when such charges are the result of official business.
4. All fees pertaining to the first checked bag. In addition, charges relating to the second and subsequent bags may be reimbursed when the agency determines those expenses necessary and in the interest of the Government (see FTR 301-70.300, 301-70.301).
5. Charges or tips at transportation terminals for handling Government property carried by the traveler.

Items 1, 2, 3, and 4 require pre-approval on the authorization. Failure to receive prior approval may result in an employee not being reimbursed for the expense. However, the FTR does not allow for reimbursement of clothing purchased to replace items lost during travel, due to lost or delayed baggage, in accordance with CBCA 15030-TRAV.

#### **5.2.1.7 ATM Fees**

Certain fees associated with ATM withdrawals may be reimbursed by an employee's OpDiv/StaffDiv according to their policy. These fees include but are not limited to:

1. ATM Fees for Full-Time Employees (FTE) who do not have an IBA per the HHS Travel Charge Card policy (see Section 10.2, Mandatory Use of Government Contractor-Issued Travel Charge Card);

2. ATM Fees for individuals who are authorized to travel on behalf of the Department (i.e., Invitational Travelers who, for example, do not have an IBA and are not eligible for a travel advance); or
3. When a travel charge card cannot be used at a foreign hotel due to the merchant code not being allowed.

NOTE: ATM Fees that are incurred to withdraw an advance that was direct deposited via an EFT are not reimbursable as this is considered a personal expense. See Section 3.3, Travel Advances, for additional information.

### **5.2.1.8 Trusted Traveler Programs and PreCheck (Pre✓™)**

Custom's and Border Protection's (CBP) Trusted Traveler Programs provide expedited travel for pre-approved, low risk travelers through dedicated lanes and kiosks. See CBP's website for additional information. These include:

- Global Entry for international travel and processing through customs;
- Nexus for travel between the U.S. and Canada; and
- SENTRI travel between U.S. and Mexico via land.

The Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) TSA Pre✓™ allows low-risk travelers to experience expedited, more efficient security screening at participating U.S. airport checkpoints. See TSA's website for additional information.

Reimbursement for the PreCheck and Global Entry program must be limited to those employees who travel internationally, OCONUS, five (5) or more times per year. Reimbursement for Nexus and SENTRI programs must be limited to those that travel five (5) or more times to either Canada or Mexico (via land). Reimbursement for these programs must be authorized by the STO.

Fees for Trusted Traveler and the PreCheck programs may not be charged to the Travel Charge Card. Please contact the appropriate acquisition personnel to arrange for payment of these programs via the purchase card or other mechanism.

GSA Bulletin FTR 18-04 rescinded the previous prohibition of reimbursing fees associated with airport security fast pass memberships. GSA determined it was a fiscal matter decision and each agency may set its own policy. However, individual employee memberships in private trusted traveler programs remain prohibited in accordance with 5 U.S.C. §5946.

The distinguishing difference between a "Federally sponsored trusted traveler program" and "private...program" requires illustration:

- The Department of Homeland Security's "TSA Pre-check" program is a Federally sponsored program, and is reimbursable.
- On the other hand, commercial programs like "CLEAR" and others are private programs and membership in them is not reimbursable.

### **5.2.1.9 Emergency and Other Authorized Miscellaneous Expenses**

HHS AOs may authorize or approve reimbursement of miscellaneous expenses beyond the examples listed in the FTR 301-12, Miscellaneous Expenses, when they determine these expenses to be directly related to the employee's official business travel and adequate justification is provided for the necessity of the purchase.

Note: If a traveler is at a TDY site where a particular facility (hotel, restaurant, etc.) refuses to accept the travel charge card for payment of the bill, and the employee uses a personal credit card rather than paying with cash, no interest accrued on the personal credit card for that payment may be reimbursed under any circumstances.

Heads of OpDiv/StaffDivs or their designees are responsible for establishing appropriate management controls over the authorization and approval of miscellaneous expenses to ensure compliance with the FTR and these supplemental guidelines.

Additionally, they are responsible for ensuring that purchases of goods and services that should be ordered and authorized through purchase card procurement processes are not approved for payment on travel claims, including TDY, relocation, and local transportation (formerly local travel) vouchers.

### **5.3 Reimbursement for Travel and Related Expenses Incidental to Training under the Government Employees Training Act (GETA)**

This section provides instructions and information concerning transportation and other expenses incidental to training, as authorized under GETA.

GETA stipulates that managers may only permit employees to attend continuing-education seminars and other training opportunities (such as technology-training courses) held outside the United States after determining that the same or substantially similar courses or sessions are unavailable within the United States.

#### **5.3.1 Authority**

GETA, 5 U.S.C. 4101-4118, provides that an employee undergoing training away from their permanent official station may be authorized payment of all or part of the necessary expenses of training, which includes either:

1. Transportation and per diem to and from the place of training, and per diem during training, for the employee only; or
2. Limited relocation allowances. However, the latter should only be authorized to include:
  - a. Transportation to and from the place of training for the employee and immediate family;
  - b. Per diem en route for the employee; and,
  - c. Round-trip shipment and storage of the employee's household goods and personal effects.

Relocation allowances should only be authorized when such cost is less than the estimated aggregate per diem payments during the period of the training assignment.

#### **5.3.2 No Expense to the Government Travel**

If the travel is in conjunction with a bona fide training activity that falls under the guidelines of the GETA, the OpDiv/StaffDiv has the discretion to pay for all, a portion, or none of the transportation and per diem expenses. (See 5 U.S.C. 4109.)

In the event that none of the expenses is being paid, a NETG Travel Authorization should be prepared. See Section 3.1.7 Orders for No-Expense-to-the-Government (NETG) Travel for additional information.

#### **5.3.3 Conferences**

If the bona fide training activity is being held at an event that is considered a conference under the official Definition of Conference, please see Section 1.5 Attendance at Conferences for additional information on policies related to conference and the approval process based upon the cost of attendance related to conferences and the approval process based upon the cost of attendance.

#### **5.3.4 Allowances for Training**

The rates prescribed below represent the maximum allowances, which may be authorized for training assignments, except in extenuating circumstances. Any amount approved in excess of these maximums must be properly justified, showing the circumstances that led the official to conclude that the higher payment would be in the public interest.

Reimbursement rates below the maximum must be established whenever possible for specific travel provided the AO ensures that the rate set is:

1. Realistic for the geographic area during the time period at issue; and
2. Fair to both the Government and the employee in that it establishes a rate commensurate with the daily costs for lodging, food, and incidental expenses that the traveler would reasonably incur at the place of training.

Whenever training at one location involves employees from more than one agency, the organization sponsoring the training may recommend to participating agencies a uniform rate of per diem that would be reasonable in view of the circumstances. The OpDiv/StaffDiv must assess use of the recommended per diem rate under the standards set forth in this section.

### **5.3.4.1 Transportation and Per Diem Rate**

#### **En Route**

An employee, whose training has been authorized, may be paid or reimbursed the necessary costs for transportation and per diem to and from the place of training.

#### **At Training Site**

While at the place of training, an employee may be authorized per diem not to exceed the authorized maximum rate guidelines below, or be authorized limited relocation allowances in accordance with Chapter 302 of the FTR, but not both.

#### **Criteria for Establishment of Per Diem at the Place of Training**

The following criteria will be considered in establishing the authorized per diem rate at the place of training.

1. When the AO approves per diem for the period of training, every effort must be made to establish a rate commensurate with the daily costs for lodging, food, and incidental expenses that the traveler would reasonably incur at the place of training, given the circumstances of the assignment. The AO should consider the availability of college or dormitory facilities, or similar housing assistance, which refers assignees to private quarters at a modest expense, or other types of long-term housing appropriate to the location and duration of the training. The cost of local transportation between the lodging site and the training site should also be considered. (For example, factor in the cost of a rental car or taxi fare, if public transportation is unavailable between the lodging site and the training site; use lodging at the training site if available.) Costs in excess of such a fair assessment of lodging expenses must be at the trainee's expense.
2. Expenses, which might be incurred by an employee's family either at the place of training or at the employee's permanent duty station, are not to be considered in setting the rate of per diem. Neither will the AO consider the cost of maintaining a family abode at the place of training or elsewhere.
3. In most circumstances, employees authorized to attend training should not leave the training location to conduct official business travel for other purposes. In the unusual situation where such travel is anticipated, consideration should be given to the number of days that the employee is expected to be away from the place of training for conducting official travel when setting the traveler's per diem rate for the training location.
4. The cost of transportation and per diem for the period of training is a factor in determining if training should be authorized.

#### **Long-term TDY Greater Than Six (6) Months**

For LTTDY greater than six months, OpDiv/StaffDivs should perform an analysis as to the most advantageous method for completing the travel to include:

- Reduced Per Diem

- Temporary Relocation
- Relocation

For information on performing this analysis, see Section 9.5 Travel and Transportation Cost Comparison: Reduced Per Diem Allowance/ Limited Relocation Allowances versus Repeated TDY Trips to the HHS Work Site as well as Section 12.6 Relocation Allowance by Specific Type.

**Within the Continental United States (CONUS) and Non-Foreign (OCONUS)**

*Assignments of Less than 30 Lodging Nights*

The maximum per diem amount for the locality concerned may be used when reasonable for the length of the training, but a lower amount may be more appropriate, particularly if the training will last more than a week (creating extended lodging rate alternatives).

*Assignments of 30 Lodging Nights or Greater*

For extended training assignments, unless otherwise justified, the allowable per diem must be reduced and established in advance on the Travel Authorization, as employees are expected to secure long-term lodging at substantially lower rates. Such lodging will normally include cooking facilities, so the M&IE rate shall be reduced at the same rate as lodging.

Close attention must be given to setting a daily lodging rate appropriate for the duration of the training and the particular location involved. The goal is to reduce the cost to the Government as much as possible for the entire period of training, while providing safe and adequate lodging for the employee, which includes reasonable transportation option(s) to the training site at a cost not exceeding the lodging savings.

**Tax Implications of Long-term TDY Greater than a Year**

In accordance with the FTR and HHS policy, LTTDY travel has major tax implications for the employee as the per diem that is received is considered as income and is therefore taxable. Please consult with your OpDiv/StaffDiv or PSC when a LTTDY assignment has the potential for being greater than a year so that a cost evaluation can be completed.

See Section 5.1.3.3, Reduced Per Diem, for additional information on the types of lodging facilities to be used for extended and long-term TDY.

The following guidelines in Table 6 (formerly Table 10) and below are provided for setting per diem rates for assignments of 30 lodging nights or more. The guidelines are based upon the length of the entire TDY assignment and do not represent a sliding scale during the length of the TDY assignment. The reduction begins on day one, unless the traveler’s OpDiv/StaffDiv policy allows for a different rate for the first 29 lodging nights, in which case the reduction begins in accordance with OpDiv/StaffDiv policy.

**Table 6 - Reduced Per Diem Allowances**

<b>Assignment Period</b>	<b>Percent Reduction</b>
30 to 180 Lodging Nights	65% of per diem rate for location
Over 180 Lodging Nights	50% of per diem rate for location

For personal convenience, employees may elect to secure lodging that is more expensive but they must pay the excess cost over the authorized rate.

**Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS)**

Extra care should be taken when assessing whether to authorize training outside CONUS and, if approved, setting the maximum per diem rate for the period of training. Training at foreign locations, in particular, presents additional and often complex considerations in terms of lodging availability, cost, etc. The authorized rate must be specified on the employee's travel order.

*Assignments of Less than 30 Lodging Nights*

The maximum daily amount for the locality concerned may be used when reasonable for the length of the training, but a lower amount may be more appropriate. The rate should be realistic and fair for the location involved, given the timing of the training.

*Assignments of 30 Lodging Nights or Greater*

For long-term training assignments outside CONUS (which should be rare), the allowable per diem MUST be reduced if it is reasonable to expect employees to be able to secure long-term lodging at substantially lower rates in the training location. Depending on the timing and length of training, it may be more prudent to adjust the rate during the training, to adjust to local conditions. The goal is always to reduce the cost to the Government as much as possible for the entire period of training, while providing safe and adequate lodging to the employee, which includes reasonable transportation option(s) to the training site at a cost not exceeding the lodging savings.

Because of widely varying considerations as to availability, cost, safety, and features of lodging options OCONUS, no guideline amounts for setting reduced rates for lodging are provided in this section. However, the guidelines above should be the starting point for determining the reduction amount.

Supervisors or AOs should gather sufficient reliable information about the training location to enable them to assess what is a reasonable and fair lodging rate under the circumstances, if training OCONUS is approved. The rate must be specified on the travel order and discussed with the employee.

If lodging options that include meals or meal preparation facilities are reasonably available, the M&IE rate must be reduced to the same percentage as the lodging or, if all meals are provided with the lodging, only the incidental expenses portion of the locality's M&IE rate should be authorized.

#### **5.3.4.2 Limited Relocation Expenses including Transportation of Immediate Family and Household Goods**

Transportation of the immediate family, household goods, and personal effects as well as temporary storage, may be allowed to the extent that the estimated costs of such transportation and related services would be less than the estimated aggregate per diem payments for the period of training determined independently of the family move. Reimbursement of such expenses may be allowed in accordance with Part 302 of the FTR. For additional information, see Chapter 12, Relocation Allowances.

Note: Reimbursement shall not be allowed for house hunting trips, miscellaneous expense allowance, temporary quarters, residence transactions, or per diem for the immediate family.

#### **5.3.4.3 Authorized Temporary Duty Travel Away from the Place of Training**

An employee who is authorized to perform TDY travel away from the place of training will receive transportation and per diem allowances in the same manner, and at the same rates, as if they were performing typical TDY travel. An employee engaged in a full-time course of instruction will not be authorized transportation or mileage to return home on weekends or off-duty hours unless it is determined that official duty is, in fact, to be performed.

An employee who is receiving per diem at the place of training as described in this section will be entitled to the entire M&IE for the day of departure from the place of training at the rate authorized for the official duty. On the day of return to the place of training, the M&IE rate will be paid through midnight that day. Because there are two per diem rates, care must be exercised to ensure that duplicative expenses for per diem are not authorized. On the first and last day of travel, the employee will receive the following entitlements: 25 percent of the authorized GETA M&IE rate, and 75 percent of the TDY M&IE rate.

An employee who is receiving per diem at the place of training, and who is required to perform official TDY travel back to the permanent official station, is not entitled to per diem as a travel expense either at the permanent official station or the place of

training. If the employee obtained a substantially reduced long-term lodging rate based on an extended stay at the training location and then must return to the official station for work-related reasons during the training period, payment of the portion of the lodging cost for the days not spent at the training site due to the short work-related return to the official duty station may be reimbursed as follows:

The number of days of actual occupancy during the billing period (i.e., excluding days of travel to the permanent duty station) should be divided into the periodic rate billed for the lodging to ascertain the daily rate for lodging during that period. If that daily rate is within the approved lodging rate set on the employee's travel order, reimbursement in full is appropriate. If the re-computed daily rate (excluding days at the permanent official station) exceeds the daily lodging rate approved on the travel order, the employee must pay the difference unless the AO approves a one-time exception to the authorized daily rate.

**Policy Example:** *An employee on TDY for a three-month training program in Chicago goes on a two-day trip home. The employee is staying in an extended-stay apartment in Chicago at a rate of \$2,750 per month; his lodging allowance for the training was set at \$3,100 per month. (Assume the maximum daily lodging rate is \$149 for Chicago; his rate for an average month is approximately 70 percent of that.)*

*His 28 days of occupancy in that 30-day month means he is paying \$98.21 per day, still within his maximum lodging allowance (\$103.33 per day for a 30-day month) for the training period, so he will be reimbursed in full for the monthly rent on the apartment despite his short trip home.*

*However, if in the next month he makes an eight-day trip home, his daily rate on the apartment for that 31-day month would be \$125 per day, over the maximum monthly lodging rate (\$100/day for a 31-day month) set in his travel authorization. He would only be reimbursed \$2,200 towards his rent for that month; the remainder would have to be paid out of his personal funds.*

An employee who is authorized limited relocation allowances and subsequently is required to perform official TDY travel to the former permanent official station may be paid per diem while at the former permanent official station. This assumes the Notification of Personnel Action, SF-50, has been changed to reflect the relocation.

#### **5.3.4.4 Leave of Absence While in Training**

##### **Annual Leave**

For any period that an employee undergoing training is charged annual leave, the provisions of this manual apply. (See Sections 5.4.1 and 6.5 for annual leave policies.)

##### **Sick Leave**

The provisions of this manual in Section 5.4.4, Emergency Travel while on TDY, will apply when an employee in training away from the permanent official station is incapacitated because of illness or injury while:

1. At the place of training, if the employee is otherwise entitled to per diem at the place of training on a temporary basis; or
2. Performing official travel away from the place of training. The latter provision applies whether or not the employee is entitled to per diem at the place of training.

#### **5.3.4.5 Other Allowable Expenses: Non - Travel**

Examples of other allowable expenses that may be reimbursed through the Authorization, Agreement, and Certification of Training form, SF 182, are:

1. Tuition, registration, and matriculation fees;
2. Library and laboratory services-related fees;
3. Costs for purchase or rental of books, materials, and essential supplies; and
4. Costs of other services and facilities directly related to the training, except membership fees unless they are a necessary cost directly related to the training itself or payment of the fee is a condition precedent to undergoing such training.

Note: The above expenses are not travel-related and are not to be reimbursed as such.

### **5.3.5 Advance of Funds**

An employee may be authorized an advance of funds by the appropriate AO to cover the necessary expenses associated with either TDY travel or limited relocation allowances, in accordance with the authorized entitlement selected. (See Section 3.3 for information regarding approval, calculation, and liquidation of the travel advance.)

### **5.3.6 Travel Documentation**

The documentation required for transportation and travel incident to training is essentially the same as that required for normal TDY travel or an authorized change of official station. In addition, a copy of the applicable training nomination form shall be retained with the travel order in the OpDiv/StaffDiv's official travel files.

### **5.3.7 Claims for Reimbursement**

Employees will be reimbursed in the same manner as if they were performing normal TDY travel under FTR Chapter 301 or relocation under FTR Chapter 302. All required receipts must support reimbursement claims for allowable transportation and travel expenses.

Original receipts must be kept by the traveler for two (2) years. See Section 5.3.4.2 for information on limited relocation allowances and Chapter 12, Relocation Allowances.

### **5.3.8 Recovery of Training Expenses from Employees**

Upon written determination by the AO, an employee may be required to repay the expenses incurred in connection with training if the employee fails to:

1. Complete the training; or
2. Remain in Federal service for the agreed period of time.

The OpDiv/StaffDiv's Finance Office shall recover such amount from the employee either through the appropriate debt collection mechanisms or by other methods provided by law for recovery of amounts owed to the Government.

## **5.4 Special Travel Situations including Leave while on TDY Travel Domestic/Non-Foreign and Reasonable Accommodations**

This section provides supplemental guidance for HHS civilian employees, invitational travelers, and OpDiv/StaffDivs regarding special travel situations including the use of annual and compensatory leave.

### **5.4.1 HHS Leave Policy while on TDY Travel Domestic/Non-Foreign**

The leave policy for employees on domestic/non-foreign TDY is as follows:

1. An employee who spends a three or more lodging nights on TDY may be authorized, not to exceed, three (3) days of annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with domestic/non-foreign trips.
2. An employee who spends two (2) lodging nights on TDY may be authorized, not to exceed, two (2) days of annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with domestic/non-foreign trips.

3. An employee who spends only one (1) lodging night on TDY may be authorized, not to exceed, one (1) day of annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with domestic/non-foreign trips.
4. An employee whose TDY trip includes no overnight stay will not be authorized annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with a domestic/non-foreign trip.

Employees on TDY must adjust their schedule to conform to the hours of the TDY assignment and revert to a standard tour of duty for the pay period(s) during which the TDY occurs.

The leave needs to be planned in accordance with Section 4.1.3.2, Personal Liability for Purchase of Indirect Route Transportation Tickets for Personal Convenience.

In cases of long term TDY travel (in excess of 30 days), the OpDiv/StaffDiv STO may consider other approved annual or compensatory leave requirements. In addition, the OpDiv/StaffDiv STO may consider other approved annual or compensatory leave requirements due to personal/immediate family related emergencies, health related issues, and in instances of imminent dangerous circumstances.

It is HHS policy that employees will not be authorized annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with any trips that are sponsored, in whole or in part, by non-Federal sources, whether for-profit or non-profit. This includes domestic, non-foreign, and/or foreign travel.

## **5.4.2 Reimbursement for TDY Travel in Conjunction with Approved Leave - TDY Domestic/Non-Foreign**

### **5.4.2.1 Return from Approved Leave - General Rule**

When an employee is away from their official station on leave of absence, they assume the obligation of returning to the official duty station at their own expense. Reference Comptroller General Decision B11 Comp. Gen. 336 (1932).

### **5.4.2.2 Orders for TDY Travel Issued Before Departure on Approved Leave Where Indirect Travel is Involved**

An employee who is on authorized annual leave but is required to travel to a TDY station and back to the permanent duty station, may be reimbursed for the cost of his/her actual TDY travel expenses. However, this reimbursed cost is not to exceed the cost to the Government of uninterrupted travel by a direct route between the permanent duty station and the temporary duty station.

(Reference Comptroller General Decision B 58 Comp. Gen. 797 (1979). In this decision, airfare reimbursement was the sole claim at issue. The employee had scheduled annual leave for vacation in Toronto, Canada, and had made necessary travel plans. Before departure from his headquarters/official duty station (Boulder, CO), he was directed to perform TDY in Norfolk, VA before returning to his headquarters. His actual trip involved an indirect route (Denver to Toronto to Norfolk to Denver) and cost \$387. He was entitled to reimbursement for the cost of his actual expenses not to exceed the cost of a direct round-trip between headquarters (Boulder/Denver) and the official temporary duty point (Norfolk). The direct trip cost would have been \$312, so this was the amount that could be reimbursed.)

The same rule related to indirect travel applies in the rare case when an agency requests an employee, before they depart on annual leave, to perform TDY travel at or near a planned vacation site. Even if the agency request is based solely on the fact that the employee will be taking leave at or near the TDY site (otherwise the request would not have been made), the agency should reimburse the employee only those costs attributable to performing the temporary duty in excess of those the employee would have incurred for personal reasons.

### **5.4.2.3 Orders for Official Duty While in Leave Status Away from Official Station**

#### **Employee Chooses or Is Directed to Return to Official Station**

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When an employee proceeds to a point away from their official station on annual leave and during such leave, they are required to perform TDY and are required or choose to return to their official station after completion of the TDY, the employee may be reimbursed only for the difference between:

1. What it cost them to return to their official station via the TDY location; and
2. What it would have cost them to return to their official station directly from the place where they were on leave.

In other words, the Government is responsible only for the difference between the cost attributable to the TDY and what it would have cost the employee to return to their official station from the place where they were on leave.

(Reference Comptroller General Decisions B 11 Comp. Gen. 336 (1932), 56 Comp. Gen. 96 (1976), and 64 Comp. Gen. 28 (1984). In 56 Comp. Gen. 96, an employee traveled from his permanent duty station, Lincoln, NE, to Waterbury, CT, while on annual leave. Shortly before his personal stay was scheduled to end, he was issued travel orders to go to Billings, MO, to testify before a court. His reimbursement was limited to the difference between the costs he actually incurred in traveling from Waterbury to Billings to Lincoln and the costs he would have incurred if he had returned from Waterbury to Lincoln, as originally planned.)

### **Employee Chooses to Resume Leave Status**

Travel expenses not to exceed the cost of travel to and from the place where the leave was interrupted to the place where the duty was performed may be authorized, if the following conditions apply:

1. The employee is on authorized leave of absence away from their official station; and
2. The authorized leave of absence is temporarily interrupted because they are recalled to duty at their official station; or
3. The authorized absence is interrupted because they are ordered to perform TDY at another place; and
4. The employee wishes to resume leave status immediately after the completion of official duty; and
5. A statement is included in the travel order that an administrative determination was made that it would be unreasonable to require the employee to assume the additional travel expense in compliance with the TDY. (Reference: Comptroller General Decision B 39 Comp. Gen. 611 [1960].)

***Example:** An employee travels from his official station, Los Angeles, CA, to Seattle, WA, while on annual leave. While in Seattle, the employee is issued a travel order to go to New Orleans, LA immediately for a three-day operational review.*

*Upon completion of the TDY assignment in New Orleans, the employee returns to Seattle to continue their annual leave. Subsequently, the employee travels back home to Los Angeles. The employee may be reimbursed for his actual travel expenses to go from Seattle, where he was on leave, to New Orleans, his TDY point, and to return to Seattle, where he resumed leave.*

### **5.4.2.4 Per Diem/Actual Expense Reimbursement when Annual or Compensatory Leave is Taken While on Official Travel**

If an employee takes annual or compensatory leave at the TDY location during the official travel period, it is HHS policy that appropriate adjustments must be made to reimbursement for the period of leave.

#### Approved Annual or Compensatory Leave in Conjunction with TDY Trips to Domestic & Non-Foreign Locations

It is HHS policy that:

1. No allowance for M&IE may be paid for days of annual leave or equivalent time off (e.g., compensatory time, credit hours).

2. No per diem or actual expenses for lodging may be authorized or paid for days when annual leave or equivalent time off is taken if the employee is paying a daily lodging rate, because they could check out during the period of leave.
3. However, when an employee performing an extended/long-term travel assignment in one location secures a reduced lodging rate based on long-term occupancy, the lodging rate is set and billed by extended periods (e.g., monthly) the employee must pay for the entire period of occupancy irrespective of leave taken. In this circumstance, isolated days or hours of annual leave or equivalent time off will generally not affect their right to reimbursement, as the daily rate will be calculated as covered in Section 5.1.3.4, HHS Maximum Subsistence Rate Guidelines for Extended/Long-term TDY Assignments.
4. In some circumstances, however, the approved daily lodging rate may be exceeded using HHS Maximum Subsistence Rate Guidelines for Extended/Long-term TDY Assignments when accounting for annual/equivalent leave days. If that occurs, any days in which annual/equivalent leave was taken for one-half of the scheduled work day or less (e.g., if the employee is scheduled to work 8 hours and takes 4 hours of such leave on that day), should not be counted as a day with leave for purposes of calculating the daily lodging rate. If the daily lodging rate using this method exceeds the daily lodging rate approved on the travel order, the employee must pay the difference for that billing period.

#### **5.4.2.5 Per Diem Reimbursement for Indirect/Interrupted Official TDY Travel Involving Annual or Compensatory Leave**

When employees travel by indirect routes, or interrupt official travel for personal convenience and/or to take leave, they are entitled to per diem and travel expenses not to exceed those that would have been incurred on uninterrupted travel by a usually traveled route for official business. (Reference Comptroller General Decision Letter, B-248868, dated September 2, 1992.)

***Example:** An employee is authorized to travel on a Monday afternoon for TDY duty in Denver on Tuesday and chooses to depart on Sunday for personal reasons. The employee is approved to take annual leave on Monday morning and is required to report for duty on Tuesday. The employee incurs a lodging cost on Monday night, within the locality's per diem rate.*

*Since the employee was authorized to travel officially on Monday, the employee may be reimbursed the per diem expense on Monday, not to exceed the constructive cost of what the employee was authorized to incur for per diem on that day.*

*Similarly, if a traveler elects to travel on Sunday rather than Monday, for official duties which begin on Tuesday morning, the 75 percent ME&IE payable for the first day of travel may be paid for Monday, the designated official duty travel day, or for Sunday, the actual travel day, but not both.*

Refer to Section 4.1.2, Transportation Method and Routing, and Section 4.1.5.2, When Contract Fares May Not Be Used, for additional guidance on procuring transportation when travel is indirect or interrupted for personal convenience or leave.

#### **5.4.2.6 Recording Leave on Travel Voucher**

When leave is taken prior to or upon completion of an official travel assignment, leave should not be recorded in the official dates of travel, but must be annotated on the travel order and voucher. When leave is taken during an official travel assignment, the number of hours of leave for each day must be reported on the employee's travel voucher. Employees should check with their OpDiv/StaffDiv to find out if planned leave should also be shown on the travel authorization (this policy is discretionary and varies within HHS).

#### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-10, Subpart A, General

#### **5.4.3 Per Diem/Actual Expense Reimbursement for Non-Workdays while on Official Travel**

Non-workdays are defined as weekends, legal Federal holidays, or other scheduled days when work does not occur.

In general, an employee will be reimbursed for per diem or actual expenses, as authorized, as long as the employee's travel status requires their stay to include a non-workday. HHS AOs should determine and authorize the most cost-effective situation between the following:

1. Having the employee stay at the TDY location in travel status during the non-workdays and pay per diem or actual expenses; or
2. Returning the employee back to his/her duty station during the non-workdays.

It is the responsibility of the designated HHS AO to determine whether an employee will be reimbursed for non-workdays when they take leave immediately before or after the non-workday (e.g., Friday or Monday).

### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-11, Subpart A, General

#### **5.4.3.1 Required Return to Official Station**

If an employee is required to return to his/her official station on a non-workday by the agency, the employee will be reimbursed the per diem or actual expense amount allowable for return travel.

#### **5.4.3.2 Periodic Returns to Official Station for Business Reasons**

An Agency may authorize per diem or actual expense and round-trip transportation expenses for periodic return travel on non-workdays to the employee's home or official duty station under the following circumstances:

1. The agency requires the employee to return to his/her official station to perform official business; or
2. The agency will realize substantial cost savings by returning the employee home.

#### **5.4.3.3 Periodic Returns to Official Duty Station for Non-Official Reasons**

Periodic return travel home may be justified incident to an extended/long-term TDY travel assignment. The number and frequency of such trips home, which are authorized by the approving official, must be stated on the employee's travel order.

The only expenses which may be reimbursed by the Government for such authorized return travel home are the cost of round-trip transportation between the TDY station and home/official duty station (plus associated local transportation to and from the point of departure from the TDY site and the employee's home). These reimbursement guidelines should be annotated on the travel order.

### **Return Trips Home**

If an employee is on a long-term assignment, the OpDiv/StaffDiv may authorize a return trip home in keeping with the guidelines below.

For assignments that are less than 30 lodging nights:

1. Employees will not be authorized a return trip home at Government Expense.
2. Should the employee decide to return home any other time, see Section 5.4.3.4, Voluntary Return to Home or Official Station without Travel Order, for applicable policy guidelines.

For assignments that are greater than 30 lodging nights:

1. An employee may return home no more than two (2) times per month at the Government's expense in consultation with and approval by the AO.

2. Should the employee decide to return home any other time, see Section 5.4.3.4, Voluntary Return to Home or Official Station without Travel Order, for applicable policy guidelines.

An OpDiv/StaffDiv may choose to implement this policy in a more restrictive manner within its own OpDiv/StaffDiv.

#### 5.4.3.4 Voluntary Return to Home or Official Station without Travel Order

If an employee, by personal choice and without a travel order, returns home or to his/her official station on non-workdays during a TDY travel assignment, the maximum reimbursement for all expenses (including round trip transportation and per diem or actual expense) is limited to what would have been allowed for per diem/actual expense under his/her travel order had the employee remained at the TDY travel location.

#### 5.4.3.5 Voluntary Travel Away from TDY Station (Excluding Return to Home or Official Station) on Non-Workdays

If an employee voluntarily travels away from the TDY station on non-workdays and incurs lodging, meals, and incidental costs at a different location (other than their home or official station as discussed above), per diem or actual expense is limited to what would have been allowed had the employee remained at the TDY travel location. In addition, the employee may not claim any transportation costs for this personal travel, even though there were no per diem costs incurred.

*Example: If an employee takes a train to another location to stay with relatives over a weekend, the employee may not be reimbursed for the cost of the train trip to offset the fact that they incurred no lodging costs by staying with relatives.*

### 5.4.4 Emergency Travel while on TDY

Emergency travel may result from:

1. An employee becoming incapacitated by illness or injury not due to his/her own misconduct;
2. The death or serious illness of a member of the employee's immediate family (as defined in FTR 300-3.1 and 301-30.2);  
or
3. A catastrophic occurrence or impending disaster, such as fire, flood, or act of God that directly affects the employee's home.

If an employee has to interrupt or discontinue TDY travel due to one of the emergencies listed above, the employee should contact the delegated travel official for instructions as soon as possible.

If emergency travel is approved for the employee, the OpDiv/StaffDiv may reimburse the following expenses:

1. Per diem at the location where the employee incurred or was treated for an incapacitating illness or injury for reasonable period (generally up to 14 calendar days), or where the family member is ill (the OpDiv/StaffDiv at its discretion may pay for a longer period);
2. Transportation and per diem expense for travel to an alternate location to receive medical treatment, or to be with immediate family due to serious illness or death;
3. Transportation and per diem expense to return to the traveler's official station; and
4. Transportation costs of a medically necessary attendant.

When an employee in TDY travel status experiences the death or serious illness of a member of his/her immediate family, the OpDiv/StaffDiv may, at its discretion, reimburse the cost of transportation from the TDY site to the alternate site (location of the family member) and return to the TDY site. The reimbursed cost, however, must not exceed what it would have cost for the

employee to have traveled in the most economical means possible, using the City Pair fare, from the employee's official station to the alternate site and back to the official station.

Note: In order to be eligible for any reimbursement, the employee must travel from the alternate site back to the TDY site. If they travel from the alternate site to any other location (e.g., back to the official station), no reimbursement may be authorized (see FTR 301-70.505, 301-70.507, and 301-70.508).

**Travel Example:** An employee travels from her official duty station in Atlanta, GA, to Washington, DC on an official business trip. While on TDY travel in Washington, a member of her immediate family dies in NY. She purchases, out-of-pocket, a round-trip ticket between Washington and NY, the cost of which is \$400. The constructive cost of a contract-carrier coach class round-trip ticket from Atlanta to NY is \$800. The employee would not be entitled to any reimbursement, as no excess cost is involved; the cost of the Atlanta-NY ticket is higher than the ticket she purchased from Washington to NY.

#### **5.4.4.1 Telephone Calls**

An employee may be reimbursed (via post-trip approval) for a personal call during emergencies. When personal emergencies occur, the approving official may approve a higher amount than the OpDiv's standard reimbursement policy limitation when the following requirements are met:

1. Government-provided long distance telephone systems and services are not available, so that a commercial toll service must be used;
2. A justification for the higher personal telephone expense allowance must be documented on the approved travel voucher; and
3. Receipts are required for all charges, to the extent that the calls were placed through a method that provides a receipt.

Employees calling to an area stricken by a disaster should be mindful that emergency services workers need extensive communications capacity and, therefore, restrict calls into that area to the minimum necessary.

In all cases, employees should make personal calls during lunch, break, or other off-duty periods, if possible. To the maximum extent practicable, employees should place calls on government-provided long distance telephone systems and services instead of using commercial toll services, in accordance with their OpDivs/StaffDivs' policies.

Approving officials must be sensitive to the employee's needs yet, at the same time, protect the Government's interest by assuring that any reimbursement of or towards the expense of such calls is prudent. Numerous conditions can affect the cost of a telephone call, such as hotel surcharges and high rates for calls placed from individual rooms. Additional cost factors arise in foreign countries, including the country's telephone carrier system and additional tariffs. If telephone calls for personal reasons during travel cannot be made on a government telecommunications system, reasonable restrictions and guidelines should be issued to ensure that costs are minimized.

#### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-30  
FTR Part, 301-70, Subpart F

#### **5.4.5 Travel of an Employee with Special Needs**

An agency may pay for additional travel expenses necessary to accommodate a special physical need, which is either:

1. Clearly visible and discernible; or
2. Substantiated in writing by the traveler's personal physician, specialist, or other medical provider.

All travelers, including invitational travelers, who request accommodations for special needs (medical reasons), must follow the HHS Reasonable Accommodation process as outlined in Chapter 4, “Reasonable Accommodation,” of the HHS Equal Employment Office (EEO) and Diversity Management Policy and Procedures Manual (EEO Manual), and as implemented by the traveler’s OpDiv/StaffDiv. The period for processing requests should be taken into consideration when planning travel. Response time varies but is a minimum of 10 business days, in accordance with the Reasonable Accommodation guidelines found in the EEO Manual. For travelers that already have a medical waiver currently in place, they will be required to follow their OpDiv/StaffDiv Reasonable Accommodation process when the existing medical waiver expires and needs to be recertified.

#### **5.4.5.1 Reasonable Accommodation Certification Time Frames**

The following guidelines apply to the length of the reasonable accommodation request, based upon the determination made by the office responsible for the OpDiv/StaffDiv’s reasonable accommodation process:

1. Employees with permanent disabilities, as assessed by the office responsible for the OpDiv/StaffDiv’s reasonable accommodation process, may be authorized use of Other than Coach Class accommodations or reimbursement for additional expense(s) not to exceed a three-year period.
2. Employees with disabilities that are assessed, by the office responsible for the OpDiv/StaffDiv’s reasonable accommodation process, as serious but where the medical records do not substantiate a permanent condition, may be authorized use of Other than Coach Class accommodations or reimbursement for additional expense(s) not to exceed a one-year period.
3. Employees with a temporary disability, as assessed by the office responsible for the OpDiv/StaffDiv’s reasonable accommodation process, may be authorized use of Other than Coach Class accommodations or reimbursement for additional expense(s) not to exceed a six-month period.

After these respective periods have lapsed, a request must be re-submitted for approval. This re-submission is necessary to ensure that there continues to be a need for the approval and to keep authorization records current. Authorizations that have exceeded the expiration date should not be considered valid and must be reissued.

#### **5.4.5.2 Reasonable Accommodation Requests**

The following guidelines apply to the information that must be contained in the reasonable accommodation request:

1. A written request from the traveler must justify and clearly define the need for the expense and include any possible cost basis for Other than Coach Class accommodations (e.g., employee with a special need for wider seat capacity due to his/her size may be required by an airline to purchase two coach seat tickets, but could purchase only one business class ticket). A cost comparison between the two total fares involved would determine whether Other than Coach Class should be authorized in this instance. Cost comparisons should only be undertaken after it has been established that multiple options<sup>vi</sup> would provide the needed accommodation(s).
2. Letters from the physician or specialist must detail in which particular situations special accommodations are needed (e.g., on flights that exceed more than five (5) hours) and which level of accommodation is required (e.g., legroom beyond what Coach Class provides on the aircraft involved). The physician attesting to the medical condition must be the traveler’s personal physician, specialist, or other medical provider, and not within the traveler’s chain of command (either up or down).

#### **5.4.5.3 Requests for Other than Coach Class Accommodations**

Authorization for the use of Other than Coach Class accommodations, including First and Business Class, due to medical reasons must be made a minimum of 10 business days in advance of the actual travel unless extenuating circumstances or emergencies make advance authorization impossible. If advance authorization cannot be obtained, the employee must obtain approval in accordance with the reasonable accommodation temporary authorization process of their OpDiv/StaffDiv. Without specific approval, travelers may be held responsible for all additional costs resulting from the use of Other than Coach Class accommodations minus the difference of the constructed cost of Coach Class (City Pair) accommodations.

When requesting approval to use Other than Coach Class accommodations solely because of a medical reason, the form “Justification for Use of Other than Coach Class Travel” must be properly completed for all such requests. A copy of the form can be found on the PSC website.

#### **5.4.5.4 Request for Additional Expenses**

Request for authorization for additional expenses as an accommodation due to medical reasons shall be made a minimum of 10 business days in advance of the actual travel, unless extenuating circumstances or emergencies make advance request for authorization impossible.

If advance authorization cannot be obtained, the employee must obtain approval in accordance with the reasonable accommodation temporary authorization process. Without specific approval, travelers may be held responsible for all additional costs.

The reimbursable expenses include the following:

1. Transportation and per diem expenses of one escort/attendant, to accommodate the special need, if necessary;
2. Specialized transportation to the hospital/facility;
3. Specialized services provided by a common carrier;
4. Costs for handling the employee’s baggage that are a direct result of the special need;
5. Renting and/or transporting a wheelchair; and
6. Other than Coach Class accommodations necessary to accommodate the special need, if properly justified. (See Chapter 6 for information on use of premium class accommodations for international travel.)

Other expenses may be reimbursable if medically required. All requests for authorization of additional expenses to accommodate for special needs (medical reasons) are subject to independent review, assessment, examination, and/or verification.

Note: If the employee is a patient (whether or not they require an escort/attendant), please refer to Section 1.7 for guidelines for additional expenses.

#### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-13, Travel of an Employee with Special Needs

#### **5.4.6 HHS Travel Orders for Congressional Members or Staff**

When it is determined that agency appropriations may be used to fund the travel of Congressional members or staff, an HHS travel order should be issued to the Congressional member or staffer to travel as an HHS “invitational traveler.” The HHS travel order will authorize the Congressional member or staffer to travel under the policies and procedures of the executive branch (i.e., the Federal Travel Regulation, the HHS Travel Policy Manual, and the funding OpDiv/StaffDiv), instead of the legislative branch. Travel reservations should be made through the OpDiv/StaffDiv’s TMC.

Each Congressional committee has its own rules and procedures for allowing members or staff of the Committee to travel, when the travel costs will be paid from an executive branch appropriation. HHS offices that are asked to pay for such travel should check with their Committee contact, usually within the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Regional Representatives, as to the appropriate travel reimbursement requirements.

## 5.4.7 TDY Travel in Conjunction with Special Arrangements Due to Religious Observances

When an employee requires special travel arrangements (e.g., lodging, common carrier transportation, etc.) due to their religious beliefs, the OpDiv/StaffDiv AO must follow the reasonable accommodation process in accordance with their OHR and EEO to ensure that the proper analysis is completed. Proper analysis includes a determination that all accommodation options are considered and that the accommodation option that is selected does not pose a hardship on the agency. Additional expenses should reflect the most cost effective modes of transportation and travel related services.

### 5.4.7.1 Additional Travel Expenses

Request for authorization for additional expenses as an accommodation due to religious beliefs shall be made a minimum of 10 business days in advance of the actual travel unless extenuating circumstances or emergencies make advance authorization impossible.

If advance authorization cannot be obtained, the employee shall obtain approval in accordance with the reasonable accommodation temporary authorization process. Without specific approval, travelers may be held responsible for all additional costs.

Note that the following guidelines apply:

1. For Other than Coach Class accommodations, all existing FTR provisions in Section 301-10 and corresponding HHS policy guidelines in Section 4.1.6 and Section 6.4 of this manual should be followed.
2. For per diem, all existing FTR provisions in Section 301-11 and corresponding HHS policy in Chapter 5, Per Diem and Subsistence Allowances, of this manual should be followed.
3. For annual leave in conjunction with international travel, all existing HHS policies in Section 6.5 of this manual should be followed. This includes, if applicable, the waiver process outlined in Section 6.7.
4. For annual leave in conjunction with Domestic/Non-Foreign travel all existing HHS policies in Section 5.4.2, Reimbursement for TDY Travel in Conjunction with Approved Leave - TDY Domestic/Non-Foreign, of this manual should be followed.

## 6. International Travel

This chapter provides information on purposes, policies, and procedures relating to all types of official international travel (excluding change of duty station) and defines, and outlines categories of international travel. This chapter applies to civilian employees, officers of the Commissioned Corps, U.S. Public Health Service, and invitational travelers.

In addition to the FTR, the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) is applicable to international travel. Employees who are posted overseas for employment should also consult with OHR and HHS Instruction 301-1 Overseas Employment.

### 6.1 General Policy

#### 6.1.1 HHS International Travel Goals

International travel is important to achieving Departmental goals. However, such travel is typically very expensive and entails security concerns and other sensitivities. Therefore, managers must carefully monitor the frequency of the overseas travel performed by their employees and others authorized to travel for HHS. OpDiv/StaffDiv Heads must maintain proper delegations of authority to ensure they approve proposed official international travel only when it effectively and safely serves the goals of the Department.

International travel can and should serve the following goals:

1. To fulfill regulatory or inspection obligations, such as the inspection of foreign manufacturers of foods, drugs, medical devices, and biologicals;
2. To respond to epidemics in other countries that could have an impact on the health of U.S. citizens;
3. To contribute, with the guidance of the U.S. Department of State, to U.S. foreign-policy objectives;
4. To fulfill U.S. responsibilities as a Member Government of multilateral organizations, including the United Nations (UN), World Health Organization (WHO), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Codex Alimentarius Commission, UN agencies such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and others;
5. To participate in research and science-related activities deemed of high importance to HHS; and
6. To provide technical assistance.

## **6.1.2 Oversight**

International travel is often of high priority and must be subject to stringent procedures for justification, approval, and monitoring beyond those applied to travel within the U.S. HHS employees who travel abroad represent the United States and the American people to other nations. International travel is especially visible, and subject to Congressional and public scrutiny.

### **6.1.2.1 State Department - Chief of Mission**

Travelers abroad fall under the scope of responsibility of the Chief of Mission (COM) authority at the U.S. Embassy or Mission and are required to adhere to COM mandates— including security directives, except in emergency evacuations (refer to the Department of State's Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 7 FAM 1800 Consular Crisis Management). The Chief of Mission's authority extends to the activities of all U.S. Department of Health and Human Services employees and contractors within the borders of the host country upon arrival and up to the point of departure. With respect to travel, certain provisions do not pertain only to U.S. State Department employees, including Rest and Recuperation (R&R) Travel, Visitation Travel, Emergency Visitation Travel (EVT), Travel of Children of Separated Families, Travel Messages, and Travel to Posts or Ordered Departure and To Unaccompanied/Partially Unaccompanied Posts." All other provisions of the Foreign Affairs Manual applies.

### **6.1.2.2 Additional Oversight Responsibilities**

The ASA retains the authority to review all international travel and must approve certain types of foreign trips, as referenced in Section 6.3.1. The ASA has delegated the authority to the STO to approve expenditures up to \$25,000 per trip. However, the ASA retains the authority to disapprove any international travel in consultation with the STO and the OpDiv/StaffDiv Heads. The authority designated above can only be re-delegated to an official who is a direct report of the STO.

OpDiv/StaffDivs and the OS, in consultation with the OGA and the Office of Security and Strategic Information (OSSSI), have a shared responsibility for the placement of controls over international travel that are both efficient and effective, including travel funded by non-Federal sources.

HHS OpDivs/StaffDivs engaged in international travel must ensure Federal funds are used appropriately. Employees authorized to travel OCONUS must avoid the perception of misusing Federal funds or taking advantage of their status as a Federal employee to receive benefits unavailable to the public. Accordingly, individuals should use prudence when traveling to resort or vacation destinations.

Travelers must be particularly sensitive to the perception generated by their travel to conferences or meetings outside the U.S. when accepting full or partial sponsorship by non-Federal sources and outside organizations, whether for-profit or non-profit. The AO should consult with the OpDiv/StaffDiv Deputy Ethics Counselor (DEC) and/or the Office of the General Counsel

(OGC), Ethics Division to ensure that there is a thorough conflict of interest analysis. For additional information, please see Section 7.5.1.4.

Managers must also be sensitive to the high cost of registration fees for conferences held OCONUS, and the perception that Federal funds are subsidizing outside organizations. Excessive registration fee costs, in most circumstances, should preclude attendance by groups of employees or individual employees. OpDiv/StaffDiv Heads and their STOs should be directly involved in developing the annual forecasts for attendance at international conferences and administrative meetings to maximize early registration discounts for attendees.

Managers may only permit U.S.-based employees to attend continuing-education seminars and other training opportunities (such as technology-training courses) held OCONUS after determining that the same or substantially similar courses or sessions are unavailable within the U.S., or that there is a clearly definable, mission-related documented rationale for the employee's attendance at such an event.

## **6.2. International Travel Requirements**

Employees who request approval for international travel must allow no less than 30<sup>vii</sup> days for authorization. Travelers must submit such requests through the NFT process in the ETS. Refer to Section 6.2.2, Notification of Foreign Travel, for further ETS system guidance.

The OpDiv/StaffDiv and/or the employee must complete the following requirements no later than seven (7) days prior to departure:

1. Review the Department of State current travel advisories and HHS travel warnings available at <http://www.globalhealth.gov> to determine if there are any restrictions on official travel to the destination country.
2. Process international travel requests for clearance through the NFT within the ETS travel system. The uses of the Travel System and NFT systems are not currently required for HHS employees employed, assigned permanently, or on long-term TDY overseas when travel services are provided by the Department of State. However, travel must be performed under HHS travel policies.
3. Ensure the employee, if eligible, obtains a valid official (maroon) or diplomatic (black) passport and visa(s), if required by the country or countries visited.
4. Ensure employee meets all medical requirements, including appropriate vaccinations and examinations.
5. Ensure the employee obtains Department of State e-Country Clearance (eCC) through the eCC system prior to travel.
6. Ensure the employee completes an in-house OpDiv/StaffDiv travel safety briefing, approved by the OSSI in consultation with the U.S. Department of State for all travel.
7. OpDiv/StaffDivs will ensure that every employee conducting international travel to non-designated countries annually receives an OSSI approved travel safety and security brief irrespective of the length of travel. OSSI may conduct travel safety and security briefings and debriefings of any HHS employee on a case-by-case basis. HHS employees and locally employed workers who are stationed outside the United States traveling from country to country should follow instructions in the country clearance message and promptly make contact with and maintain contact with the appropriate embassy representative while deployed.
8. OpDiv/StaffDivs will ensure that employees on TDY to designated countries receive safety, security, and threat briefs in consultation with OSSI. OSSI may conduct threat and/or counterintelligence briefings to employees holding Top Secret/SCI clearance levels. Debriefings may be conducted by OSSI and/or the appropriate OpDiv/StaffDiv security director on a case-by-case basis. Anyone traveling with an Assistant Secretary level person or above will be required to attend a debriefing by OSSI within ten (10) business days of return from official travel. OSSI may consult with OpDiv/StaffDiv personnel with possible recommendations for modification of travel plans.

9. When required for travel to a designated country, as defined by OSSI, ensure the employee received a travel safety and threat briefing, as needed, in consultation with OSSI. OSSI may consult with an OpDiv/StaffDiv head with possible modification of travel plans.
10. When an employee plans to be on official duty travel in one location for 30 days or longer, complete the U.S. Department of State's Foreign Service Institute (FSI) approved minimum four-day training course, "Serving Abroad for Families and Employees." HHS/CDC also offers a similar training course, "Preparing for Work Overseas," which has been certified as compliant to the Department of State. Once the traveler has completed the basic course, he or she will only be required to attend a shorter, security-refresher course every five (5) years.

A link for the U.S. Department of State Travel Warning and e-country guidance is available on the PSC website.

Note: All tickets for foreign trips must be issued with the traveler's full name, as it appears on their official (maroon) or diplomatic (black) passport.

## **6.2.1 Employees with Sensitive Compartmented Information Access (SCI)**

### **6.2.1.1 Official Travel**

Employees granted a security clearance must adhere to government wide national security policies and procedures. Persons granted accesses to SCI incur a special security obligation and are to be alerted to the risks associated with travel to countries of concern and areas subject to substantial risk of terrorism.

HHS employees and contractors who are cleared for SCI must notify either their respective OpDiv/StaffDiv Personnel Security Representative (PSR) or the HHS Special Security Officer (SSO) of their intent to travel to any foreign country at least fifteen business days prior to departure.

Departmental employees with SCI access traveling on official duty to designated countries are also required to report the proposed travel to their OpDiv/StaffDiv PSR who will coordinate with OSSI to provide required briefings and debriefings.

Departmental employees with SCI access who are assigned or directed to conduct hazardous travel will be afforded a defensive security briefing and/or risk of capture briefing by the Regional Security Officer subsequent to arriving in country. If travel will not include a stop at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate, this briefing will be facilitated by OSSI.

### **6.2.1.2 Unofficial Travel**

All persons having access to SCI who plan unofficial international travel, including leave taken in conjunction with official travel:

1. Must notify their respective OpDiv/StaffDiv PSR or the HHS SSO of their intent to travel to any foreign country at least fifteen days prior to departure;
2. May request a classified, country specific, travel brief from their OpDiv/StaffDiv PSR or from OSSI if OpDiv/StaffDiv resources are unavailable;
3. May receive a defensive security briefing from the HHS SSO for unofficial travel;
4. Must immediately contact the nearest U.S. Consul, Attaché, or Embassy Regional Security Officer or Post Duty Officer if detained or subjected to significant harassment or provocation while traveling; and;
5. Must report to the HHS SSO any unusual incidents, including incidents of potential security concern, encountered during travel.

## **6.2.2 Notification of Foreign Travel**

PSC will maintain a system of controls for international travel for the Department. This process is commonly called Notification of Foreign Travel (NFT). These controls will:

1. Ensure that the Department receives advance notice of all international travel through an automated reporting tool via the ETS;
2. Ensure the dispatch of e-country clearance requests for HHS employees;
3. Ensure appropriate travel safety briefings; and
4. Assist travelers regarding official (maroon) passports or diplomatic (black) passports, and visas.

HHS employees planning an international trip must create a Travel Authorization using the ETS and route a NFT request, via the ETS, to OpDiv/StaffDiv's designees at least 30 days prior to their proposed trip departure date. In exceptional circumstances, OpDiv/StaffDivs may accept late notification, with proper justification. All notifications must include the following detailed cost data:

1. Airfare or cost of other common carrier transportation, with indication of class of service;
2. Government-established per diem for lodging and M&IE or actual expenses where authorized;
3. Registration fees; and
4. Miscellaneous expenses.

If more than one HHS employee from an OpDiv/StaffDiv is traveling for the same purpose, that OpDiv/StaffDiv shall create a separate travel order for each employee.

HHS travelers on official international travel are required to create and route a travel voucher for trip expenses to their OpDiv/StaffDiv within five (5) working days following their return to the U.S. for all travel categorized in Section 6.3 below.

### **6.2.3 U.S. Department of State Country Clearance**

Under no circumstances will an HHS employee depart on an official business trip outside the U.S. without first receiving country clearance (i.e., permission to enter a foreign country) from the relevant U.S. Embassy or Mission overseas. Note that if a HHS employee has not obtained prior permission, the COM at a U.S. Embassy or Mission:

1. Can terminate the traveler's visit to a country;
2. May be unable to provide security escort/transportation in "sensitive" countries or to dangerous areas; and
3. May be unwilling to accommodate true HHS emergencies, if OpDiv/StaffDivs frequently ask for last-minute clearances because of their non-compliance with country-clearance guidelines.

OpDiv/StaffDivs are responsible for reviewing eCC through the U.S. Department of State.

### **6.2.4 Passports and Visas**

To enter a foreign country, HHS employees on official business and immediate family members authorized to accompany employees on permanent assignment must have the appropriate:

1. Passport(s);
2. Visa(s), if required by the country visited;
3. Country clearance(s) from the U.S. Embassy, Consulate, or Mission;
4. Health clearance and immunizations; and

5. Travel security briefings and trainings.

HHS employees should always consult with the OpDiv/StaffDivs international office or OGA to verify when a visa is required. HHS employees should refer to the OpDiv/StaffDiv's international office for specific procedures on obtaining an official (maroon) U.S. passport.

HHS employees are responsible for obtaining the necessary visa(s) required for their official international travel. Please note that many countries that do not require visas for U.S. citizens who travel on tourist (blue) passports often require visas for U.S. Government officials who travel on official (maroon) or diplomatic (black) passports. Consult with the Department of State's website for information. Costs associated with obtaining official passports, such as pictures, are considered a reimbursable miscellaneous expense.

Travelers should check the visa requirements for holders of official (maroon) or diplomatic (black) passports for anticipated/potential stopover sites where they might wish to leave the airport.

### 6.2.4.1 Passports

There are three types of passports: diplomatic, official, and personal/tourist. The colors of U.S. passports vary depending on the type:

Passport Type	Color
Official	Maroon
Diplomatic	Black
Personal/Tourist	Blue or Green

Passport applicants must be U.S. citizens.

#### **Official (Maroon) and Diplomatic (Black) Passports**

Official (maroon) passports are valid, no-fee passports issued to an employee of the U.S. Government who is traveling abroad for official business.

The categories of personnel eligible for diplomatic (black) passports that are pertinent to HHS include: U.S. Government employees accorded diplomatic titles; those assigned abroad for at least one year who are under the authority of the COM at a U.S. Embassy or Mission, and their authorized accompanying family members who are on official travel orders<sup>viii</sup>; and personnel assigned to foreign-service posts where the Department of State has determined diplomatic passports are necessary for reasons of personal security, or because of unusual local conditions that prevent the accomplishment of assigned duties without diplomatic passports.

Eligible HHS employees who are on official international travel must travel under an official (maroon) or diplomatic (black) U.S. Government passport, unless the Department of State specifically advises OGA otherwise (e.g., because of security concerns).

Please note that a HHS employee on detail to an international organization might have to travel under a United Nations Passport (Laissez Passer) while on official business.

Official and diplomatic passports are for official use only, and employees must never use them for personal travel.

HHS employees who are not U.S. citizens and who are traveling on HHS official business must travel under their own passports; they are not entitled to U.S. passports.

Bearers of official (maroon) or diplomatic (black) passports may receive certain privileges, depending on their assignments and the particular countries and Embassies involved. While many may perceive a diplomatic passport as a symbol of status and prestige, it does not automatically afford the bearer with diplomatic status or privileges and immunities. Only when granted a diplomatic title by the Department of State do HHS overseas assignees have full diplomatic status.

HHS staff may not simultaneously hold diplomatic (black) and official (maroon) passports. HHS employees may, however, hold a personal/tourist passport (blue) while also holding a diplomatic (black) or official (maroon) passport, and may carry a personal passport with them while on official duty travel, as long as they use their official (maroon) passport for all entry, exit and other formalities with the host Government(s).

HHS employees must return their diplomatic (black) or official (maroon) passports when they expire to the Department of State, through their OpDiv/StaffDiv international office. HHS employees may request the return of their canceled passports as a souvenir.

Official (maroon) and diplomatic (black) passports are U.S. Government property, and HHS employees must store them under lock and key in HHS facilities. All HHS OpDiv/StaffDiv personnel who have official (maroon) or black (diplomatic) passports must store them with OGA. Under no circumstances should HHS staff send any passports through interoffice mail. The official passports issued while at HHS must be returned to the Passport Holding Office from which it was issued within five (5) working days after the traveler has returned from their TDY.

### **Personal/Tourist (Blue or Green) Passports**

HHS employees who are on personal leave must use their personal (blue) passports. Spouses and immediate family who accompany HHS staff on their international TDY travel must use their personal passports.

#### **6.2.4.2 Visas**

Each individual Government sets the requirements for visas. The U.S. Department of State website details official visa travel requirements for each country. HHS travelers should always check with their OpDiv/StaffDivs international office, or with OGA, to verify when a visa is required.

HHS employees should apply for the required visas as early as possible, but no later than three (3) weeks before travel. If multiple visas are required, travelers must allow time for acquiring each visa.

The traveler's employing office will assist HHS employees and their family members in obtaining the visas required for official purposes. OGA can also often be of help in this regard, because of its special relationships with many foreign Embassies in Washington, DC. As noted above, in some cases visa requirements are different for holders of tourist (blue) and official (maroon) or diplomatic (black) passports. Travelers should check the visa requirements for holders of official (maroon) or diplomatic (black) passports for anticipated/potential stopover sites where they might wish to leave the airport.

### **6.2.5 Medical Requirements**

All HHS personnel, civilians, and Commissioned Corps officers who are going on long-term overseas assignment/detail, TDY of 30 or more days, or who undertake frequent overseas TDY travel (30 days or more per year – not necessarily consecutive) must have medical examinations, and usually must obtain medical clearance from the Department of State.

They must also receive immunizations appropriate for their assignment. Accompanying immediate family members/dependents must also have medical examinations, obtain medical clearance, and receive required immunizations. HHS employees are not authorized to depart for overseas assignments without medical clearance or an approved waiver.

The Department of State allows a medical clearance to be granted for some assignments and not for others, if an employee or accompanying immediate family member has a medical condition that would put that person at risk because of the poor quality of medical care in a given country. Department of State medical clearances are valid for a tour of duty (generally, two or three years). If HHS personnel extend, renew, or take new overseas assignments, they must undergo a new medical examination.

The "sending" HHS OpDiv/StaffDiv pays for all usual and reasonable medical expenses that result from a medical clearance. All medical information is confidential, and any medical information transmitted between HHS and officials of the Department of State overseas will be in "Eyes Only" cables.

### 6.2.5.1 Separation Exam

Upon completion of their overseas assignment (other than TDY duty), employees, and immediate family members must have a separation medical examination to identify medical conditions that could have developed during the overseas assignment.

### 6.2.5.2 Immunizations

All HHS overseas travelers must receive recommended immunizations, unless specifically exempted because of religious or other reasons, as allowed by regulation. Immunizations may be reimbursed as a miscellaneous expense if not available from the office of Occupational Health or an OpDiv/StaffDiv medical facility.

Dependents/ immediate family members who are accompanying the HHS staff assigned/detailed overseas must also receive recommended immunizations. Current immunization recommendations are available online.

### 6.2.5.3 Post Travel Illness Evaluations

Returning international travelers need to report any post-travel illness promptly to their primary-care physician. For those returning from a malarial fever area, the possibility of malarial infection should be considered by the traveler and monitored by a medical provider for up to a year after return.

### 6.2.5.4 Clearance of Newborns

Generally, the Department of State will not grant a medical clearance to newborns and mothers until four weeks postpartum. If HHS employees travel at an earlier time after the birth of an infant, they may forfeit their medical benefits.

## 6.2.6 Medical Evacuation (MedEvac) Coverage

Per Department of State (DOS), Office of Medical Services (MED) guidelines, effective April 1, 2013, all United States Government (USG) employees, contractors eligible for Embassy medical services, and employees on international Temporary Duty (TDY) assignments, are required to have medical evacuation coverage either through their sponsoring agency or via personally obtained medical evacuation insurance.

HHS is self-insured for medical evacuation coverage. This means that those who travel internationally, on HHS travel authorizations, do not need to purchase medical evacuation insurance; however, nothing in this policy precludes purchase of additional medical evacuation or hospital insurance by the individual employee or the OPDIV/STAFFDIV. HHS does not insure medical evacuation payment for contractors, who must seek coverage independently or through their sponsoring company.

In order to ensure a consistent approach to certifying medical evacuation coverage, OpDiv/StaffDivs must include the following information on all Travel Authorizations and electronic country clearances (ECC) as required in Section 6.2 # 5 and 6.2.3 of the HHS Travel Policy Manual for International TDY Travel:

1. This language: “HHS - OpDiv/StaffDiv is self-insured for medical evacuation coverage and certifies medical evacuation coverage for all international travelers who are traveling on HHS - OpDiv/StaffDiv travel orders.”
2. The contact information for the appropriate Authorizing Official(s), who can approve the medical evacuation.
3. A Line of Accounting (LOA) also known as a Common Accounting Number (CAN) for the Department of State to use in the event that a MedEvac is necessary.

The Department of State, Office of Medical Services, recommends that travelers carry a copy of their authorization, which includes the information above, and provide a copy to their Embassy point of contact.

Copies of travel authorizations can also be provided to the Department of State’s Medical Foreign Programs, [medforeignprograms@state.gov](mailto:medforeignprograms@state.gov), for distribution to those who handle medical evacuations within the Department of State.

## 6.2.7 Hospitalization Coverage

Similar to Medical Evacuation Coverage, the Department of State recommends that the same information provided for MedEvac insurance also be provided for hospitalization insurance or upfront hospital payments as many overseas facilities require a letter of guarantee for admission.

In the same section of the Authorization, where the language is added for Medical Evacuation Insurance, OpDiv/StaffDivs should add a line stating that the agency is self-insured and will guarantee coverage of hospitalization costs. It should be noted that HHS will act as a secondary payer and as per 16 FAM 521; employees without medical insurance will ultimately be responsible for all medical costs.

## 6.2.8 Department of State Overseas Positions and Extended TDY Requirements

All HHS personnel who are transferring to an overseas location under Department of State COM authority must complete appropriate overseas personal-security training prior to their travel. The same requirement also applies to HHS personnel who are requesting country clearance to perform long-term TDY travel, which is defined as more than thirty (30) days at a single overseas location.

The U.S. Department of State's Foreign Service Institute (FSI) conducts the approved minimum four-day training course, "Serving Abroad for Families and Employees." HHS/CDC also offers a similar training course, "Preparing for Work Overseas," which has been certified as compliant by the Department of State. Once the traveler has completed the basic course, he or she will only be required to attend a shorter, security-refresher course every five (5) years.

HHS must provide the U.S. Department of State (normally via the assignment notification or country-clearance requests) certification that each traveler will complete the required training prior to his or her departure.

## 6.2.9 Individual Reports

OpDiv/StaffDivs will require each traveler to prepare a brief, written report of the significant aspects and results of their trip, including a summary of the extent to which the purpose(s) of the trip was achieved.

PSC may request an individual trip report for any trip undertaken by an HHS official. Such reports should be faxed or scanned electronically and uploaded into the ETS.

## 6.3 International Travel that Requires HHS Notification and Approval, and Department of State Country Clearances

While under the travel-related Delegations of Authority issued by the Assistant Secretary for Administration, effective September 17, 2009 and until further notice, employees must obtain ASA approval, in consultation with OGA, for certain kinds of international travel, as described below. Travelers must also provide a report of work accomplished on international travel to the ASA.

### 6.3.1 Types of Travel Requiring ASA Approval

#### 6.3.1.1 Politically Appointed or Approved

Politically Appointed (Schedule C) and Presidential Appointee Scheduled Senate-Confirmed (PAS), employees require ASA clearance and approval for all international travel.

#### 6.3.1.2 U.S. Delegation Travel

Attendance at intergovernmental meetings held by multilateral organizations at which HHS employees will serve on official U.S. Delegations require prior approval from the ASA through OGA.

### **6.3.1.3 Travel to Sensitive Countries**

Travel to countries designated as “Sensitive” may require additional clearance and approval by the ASA, in consultation with OGA and OSSI. The State Department maintains a site with travel warnings about safety, including health, or insecurity at HHS travelers on official TDY. Travel to Taiwan must follow special procedures for obtaining permission and visas through the American Institute in Taiwan and must not travel on their official (maroon) passports.

### **6.3.1.4 Travel to Designated Countries**

OSSI will monitor the NFT. The list of designated countries includes State Sponsors of Terrorism and these can be found on the Department of State’s website. Additionally, OSSI may add countries determined to be of interest based on current intelligence. OpDiv/StaffDiv security offices will be consulted on the most expedient, sensitive and efficient method to implement changes. An OpDiv/StaffDiv may develop their own list of Designated Countries, however, at a minimum their list must include all countries selected by OSSI. OpDiv/StaffDivs will ensure that employees selected to be on a TDY to designated countries receive safety, security, and threat briefs in consultation with OSSI prior to deployment.

## **6.3.2 Approval and Authorization for Participation in Official Intergovernmental Meetings as a Member of a U.S. Delegation**

The Secretary reserves the authority to nominate Department personnel or individuals to serve on official U.S. Delegations accredited by the Department of State. All requests to nominate members of official U.S. Delegations to intergovernmental meetings, including those held in the United States, must be submitted to OGA. OGA will consult with the Secretary and appropriate Department officials with respect to making nominations, which, upon the Secretary’s approval, OGA will forward to the U.S. Department of State and the White House.

OGA is responsible for obtaining both the necessary OS approval and the certification of security clearance that the Department of State requires for nominees.

Under no circumstances may an HHS employee attend, in an official or personal capacity, an intergovernmental meeting to which the United States is sending an official Delegation without having received the proper approvals to participate as a part of that Delegation.

## **6.4 Other than Coach Class International Travel**

### **6.4.1 Other than Coach Class (Premium) Accommodations International Travel General Administration**

For general information on Other than Coach Class accommodations for Domestic TDY, see Section 4.1.6, Coach Class and Other than Coach Class Upgrades. For HHS travelers based overseas and in the United States, the following guidance applies for all international Other than Coach Class travel requests. These instructions supersede all previous directives for Other than Coach Class travel. Managers should discourage international Other than Coach Class travel whenever possible.

HHS OpDiv/StaffDivs engaged in overseas travel have the primary responsibility to ensure any international Other than Coach Class travel is consistent with the Department and Government’s mandate to operate efficiently and effectively. The ASA retains the authority to review all requests for international Other than Coach Class travel, including those trips that require only notification. The ASA also retains the authority to deny any international Other than Coach Class travel request.

### **6.4.2 Other than Coach Class (First Class) Travel Accommodations**

International First Class travel is not permitted, except for the following reasons:

1. **Physical Need:** To accommodate a medical disability or other special need, as documented by a letter from the traveler's personal physician or specialist, see Section 5.4.5, Travel of an Employee with Special Needs.
2. **Security/Mission Need:** When other exceptional travel situations exist, such as security or mission critical travel, a written request from the traveler must justify and clearly define the need for Other than Coach Class accommodations in these circumstances. Approval will be granted on a case-by-case basis, as deemed necessary.
3. **Seat Scarcity:** When Other than Coach Class (Business Class) accommodations are not reasonably available and the requirements and approval for Other than Coach Class (Business Class) travel have previously been met and approved.

All First Class travel must be fully justified, documented, and approved by the STO. When requested, the underlying documentation, which contains the justification, must be submitted to PSC.

### **6.4.3 Other than Coach Class (Business Class) Accommodations**

HHS travelers may request international Other than Coach Class (Business Class) accommodations only under the following circumstances, in addition to those described in Section 4.1.6, Coach Class and Other than Coach Class Upgrades:

1. Travel by Coach Class on a foreign carrier does not provide adequate sanitation, and the use of foreign-flag air carrier service is approved in accordance with the International Air Transportation Fair Competitive Practices Act of 1974 (P. L. 93-623), also known as the "Fly America Act" or an "Open Skies Agreement."
2. The scheduled actual flying time, not including a domestic layover or actual domestic segment(s) flying time, is in excess of 14 hours, and the traveler cannot take a rest stop because of the urgency of the mission. Travel should be urgent because of the nature of the task-- not because the employee is delayed for personal reasons.

A rest stop is:

- i. A stop-over point during travel;
- ii. Of up to 24 hours;
- iii. Midway in the journey, or as near to the destination as the schedule permits; or
- iv. At the destination. See FTR 301-11.20 or JTR U4326.

**HHS Policy:** HHS travelers should also note these additional policies below.

Per HHS Policy, Coach Class must be used for all domestic segment(s) of trips using the exception in item 2 above. Any Other than Coach Class approval must be limited to the flight segment(s) between the gateway city (i.e., a city that serves as a departure or arrival point for international flights) and the foreign destination.

In most instances, the rationale supporting the urgency of the mission criterion will only be satisfied on the outbound flight; the return flight home will not generally be subject to identifiable mission urgency. Other than Coach Class accommodations may be approved solely for the outbound flight, unless specific mission urgency demands the employee's return without a rest stop and scheduled actual flying time, not including domestic layovers or actual domestic segment(s) flying time, is in excess of 14 hours.

Travelers must submit a memo with their request justifying why they are not able to schedule a rest stop (stopover) either midway or at the destination.

HHS travelers must submit their requests for international Other than Coach Class travel along with their requests for clearance/approval or notification, as appropriate, via the ETS. A justification memorandum must be attached to the travel request (see sample at the end of this Chapter), and must accompany the travel authorization. The OpDiv/StaffDiv AO must approve both the memorandum and any required cost-analysis justification (see sample at the end of this Chapter), before submitting the international travel request to OGA.

When an HHS employee requests international Other than Coach Class travel by using the Overall Cost Savings justification, as covered in Section 4.1.6.3 of this manual, they must complete a cost-analysis justification and attach it to the travel authorization. The employee must compare the total costs of coach-class to Other than Coach Class, including the cost of the ticket(s), additional subsistence expenses incurred during a rest stop, overtime (if applicable), and lost productive person time. Based on this cost analysis, Other than Coach Class is only justified when it is the lesser of the two. (See examples at end of this Chapter.)

## **6.5 Annual Leave in Conjunction with International Travel**

The Department strongly discourages employees from using annual leave in conjunction with official international travel. Taking annual leave in conjunction with official international travel can generate the impression that Federal funds are being used to finance holidays or junkets for employees, or that travelers are taking advantage of their status as Federal employees to receive benefits that would not be accessible to members of the public. Accordingly, Department employees should especially avoid taking any annual leave in conjunction with official international travel to resort areas to which the public is attracted because of recreational facilities or sight-seeing attractions, such as Europe during the summer.

### **6.5.1 HHS Leave Policy while on International TDY**

The leave policy for employees on international TDY is as follows:

1. An employee who spends a three or more lodging nights on TDY may be authorized, not to exceed, three (3) days of annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with international trips.
2. An employee who spends two (2) lodging nights on TDY may be authorized, not to exceed, two (2) days of annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with international trips.
3. An employee who spends only one (1) lodging night on TDY may be authorized, not to exceed, one (1) day of annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with international trips.
4. An employee whose TDY trip includes no overnight stay will not be authorized annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with an international trip.

Employees on TDY must adjust their schedule to conform to the hours of the TDY assignment and revert to a standard tour of duty for the pay period(s) during which the TDY occurs.

Any requests for annual or compensatory leave needs to be planned in accordance with Section 4.1.2.3 Personal Liability for Purchase of Indirect Route Transportation Tickets for Personal Convenience.

In cases of long-term TDY travel (in excess of 30 nights or more), the OpDiv/StaffDiv STO, may consider other approved annual or compensatory leave requirements. In addition, the OpDiv/StaffDiv STO may consider other approved annual or compensatory leave requirements due to personal/immediate family related emergencies, health related issues, and in instances of imminent dangerous circumstances.

It is HHS policy that employees will not be authorized annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with any trips that are sponsored, in whole or in part, by non-Federal sources, whether for-profit or non-profit. This includes domestic, non-foreign, and/or foreign travel. Employees should not be permitted to evade this policy by paying part or all of the expenses for the round trip airfare themselves (whether out-of-pocket or through reimbursement from another source). This policy applies to trips taken by civilian employees and officers of the Commissioned Corps U.S. Public Health Service.

## **6.6 Payment of Travel Expenses by a Non-Federal Source**

### **6.6.1 General Information**

The acceptance of payment of travel expenses from a non-Federal source for international travel should be the exception and not the rule. The acceptance of monetary payment from a non-Federal source to a Federal agency for international travel is restricted as described in detail in Chapter 7 of this manual. Departmental OpDiv/StaffDivs must not use their authorities to shift the cost of their normal international travel programs to non-Federal sources. The underlying principle of the Department's policy is that if the employee's participation in an international trip warrants the expenditure of official time, it also warrants the expenditure of HHS travel funds. Departmental employees must not solicit payment of international travel expenses from non-Federal sources. For additional guidance regarding acceptance of travel expenses from a non-Federal source, see Chapter 7 of this manual.

When a non-Federal source funds only a certain portion or type of travel expenses, reimbursement for the remaining expenses paid for by the Federal Government cannot exceed the applicable maximums established in the FTR.

HHS travel orders must reflect that an employee is accepting travel expenses on behalf of the U.S. Government, in-kind services, reimbursable expenses, or cash (if applicable) under 42 U.S.C. 3506 for travel and related expenses from a foreign Government or international organization. This does not apply if acceptance is under 5 U.S.C. 7342.

Note: The AO should consult with the OpDiv/StaffDiv Deputy Ethics Counselor and/or the Office of the General Counsel, Ethics Division to ensure that there is a thorough conflict of interest analysis conducted prior to authorizing the non-Federal source reimbursement.

### **6.6.2 Reimbursement Received from a Non-Federal Source**

HHS employees who are traveling on official business are permitted to receive airplane tickets or other common carrier transportation tickets, as well as other in-kind services incident to official travel, directly from foreign Governments or international organizations, when approved in accordance with the procedures outlined above in this Chapter and in Chapter 7. HHS employees may not accept cash from the organization to pay for the airplane tickets directly.

### **6.6.3 Reimbursement in Excess of Established Lodgings-Plus Per Diem Rates**

When attendance at an international meeting is involved, HHS OpDiv/StaffDivs may accept payment in-kind in excess of the established lodgings-plus per diem allowances prescribed in the FTR, but only if HHS would have authorized acceptance of payment for such a higher allowance, and only under the following conditions:

1. The non-Federal source provides in-kind lodging services; and
2. The expense paid by the non-Federal source is comparable in value (at the higher lodging allowance) to that offered to, or purchased by, other similarly situated meeting attendees.

An HHS traveler may only accept an actual expense for hotel lodging if HHS would have normally authorized such an expense. Under no circumstances may the 300 percent cap on actual expense allowance be exceeded. The invitation letter from the non-Federal source must contain language to this effect when an organization offers payment in-kind in excess of the maximum prescribed U.S. Government rates.

### **6.6.4 Other than Coach Class Common Carrier (Air) Travel Accommodations**

AOs must be especially mindful of accepting payments in-kind for any Other than Coach Class (business) air accommodations from private, for-profit commercial entities, and from international organizations to which the U.S. Government pays dues or assessed contributions, including, but not limited to:

- World Health Organization (WHO)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- United Nations (UN)

- United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
- Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

HHS travelers may only accept Other than Coach Class (business) accommodations under the following conditions:

1. The non-Federal source makes full payment for such transportation services in advance of travel (in-kind);
2. Transportation accommodations furnished are comparable in value to those offered to, or purchased by, other similarly situated attendees at the meeting; and
3. The condition for the use of Business Class accommodations specific to International Travel in Section 6.4.3 #2 is met, also known as the 14-hour rule.

However, the STO may consider the waiver of the business class criteria (#3 above) if # 1 and #2 above are met and the attendee is performing a vital function at the meeting (e.g., making a presentation; chairing a meeting, session, or group, etc.). The waiver should follow the same process as described in Section 6.7, Waiver of Provisions of this Chapter.

## **6.7 Waiver of Provisions of this Chapter**

The ASA has delegated to STOs the authority to waive the following provisions of the HHS Travel Policy Manual for individual trips. These provisions should only be waived for reasons they deem crucial to serving the goals of the Department:

1. Section 6.4.3 #2, also known as the 14-Hour Rule, regarding Other than Coach Class (Business) accommodations;
2. Section 6.5, regarding annual leave in conjunction with official international travel:
  - a. When using appropriated dollars; or
  - b. When applying funding from a non-Federal Sponsor.
  - c. A prohibition will remain against permitting employees to take annual leave in conjunction with trips that involve sponsorship for a spouse, in whole or in part, by non-Federal sources, whether for-profit or non-profit.; and
3. Section 6.6.4 #3, the business class criteria for acceptance of Other than Coach Class (Business) accommodations from a non-Federal Sponsor.

### **6.7.1 Waiver Process**

OpDiv STOs must make such determinations in writing, and they may not re-delegate this authority to any other person; no other person may sign waivers on behalf of the OpDiv/StaffDiv STO, nor are autopen signatures acceptable. For international trips, travelers must continue to submit NFTs through the ETS, and the electronic notification for the traveler concerned must include the justification for the waiver.

### **6.7.2 Notifications to ASTO**

The OpDiv STO must send a copy of the signed original of the waiver determination to the ASTO. At the conclusion of each Fiscal Year, OpDiv/StaffDivs who have exercised this waiver authority during the preceding Fiscal Year must send a consolidated report to PSC to list all such waivers and their justifications in detail. All HHS international travelers granted waivers under this section must continue to use official (maroon) or diplomatic (black) passports, and must obtain country clearance from the Department of State for each overseas trip.

The waiver authority described in this section applies to trips taken by civilian employees, officers of the Commissioned Corps U.S. Public Health Service, and invitational travelers.

## **6.8 Other Applicable Travel Policies**

The following policies also need to be taken into consideration while on International TDY.

### **6.8.1 Security Considerations**

Security considerations related to international travel and contacts with foreign nationals appear in HHS and OpDiv/StaffDiv security manuals including the “International Travel Safety and Security Policy” from OSSI. The points of contact for all pre and post-travel security questions are OSSI and/or the traveler’s OpDiv/StaffDiv security office.

### **6.8.2 Change of Duty Station**

Section eliminated: FTR Redundant.

### **6.8.3 U.S. Fly America Act**

Section eliminated: FTR Redundant

### **6.8.4 Acceptance of Payments from a non-Federal Source**

Provisions related to the acceptance of “in-kind” services (or reimbursement of travel expenses to a non-Federal source in exceptional situations) travel expenses from non-Federal sources, foreign Governments, or international organizations appear in Section 6.6 and Chapter 7 of this manual.

Following is the Sample Memorandum referenced in Section 6.4.3

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** OpDiv/StaffDiv Authorizing Official

**FROM:** Traveler's Name/Office

**SUBJECT:** Justification for Use of Other than Coach Class Travel

I am requesting Other than Coach Class travel accommodations based on the criteria checked below:

\_\_\_\_\_ No space is available in Coach Class and the trip cannot be scheduled on other flights/carriers or routing in time to accomplish purpose of travel, which is so urgent that the travel cannot be postponed.

\_\_\_\_\_ My physical condition, as documented by the attached letter signed by my personal physician or specialist, in accordance with the Reasonable Accommodation process, requires that I use Other than Coach Class travel service. (Letter must specify class of accommodations required by medical condition.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Other than Coach Class accommodations are required for security purpose(s), as documented by the attached letter from the Chief of Security of the Department.

\_\_\_\_\_ Travel by Coach Class on foreign carrier does not provide adequate sanitation, and use of foreign-flag air-carrier service is approved in accordance with the Fly America Act and Open Skies Agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_ Use of Other than Coach Class accommodations would result in an overall cost savings to the Government. (Cost analysis must be attached to travel request/notification and authorization.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Scheduled flight time, not including domestic layovers, is in excess of 14 hours, and a rest stop cannot be taken because of the urgency of the mission. (Travel should be urgent because of the nature of the task, not because the employee is delayed due to personal choices such as electing to take a later flight, which creates time pressure.)

A rest stop is:

1. A stop-over point during travel;
2. Of up to 24 hours;
3. Midway in the journey, or as near to the destination as the schedule permits; or
4. At the destination. See FTR 301-11.20 or JTR U4326.

(Explain in specific detail (on a separate sheet) how item(s) checked above applies to you. All requests for round-trip accommodations via Other than Coach Class must be justified as to each direction and/or segment of travel.)

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ ]

Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_ ]

Examples of Cost Comparison for Justification of Other than Coach Class Example #1: Savings to Fly Coach Class

Coach Class	Other than Coach Class
-------------	------------------------

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Ticket Cost	\$ 1,000	\$ 2,000
Per Diem (Actual subsistence costs for rest stop)	\$ 150	\$ 0
Overtime		
Productive Person Hours (Lost productive time equals employee's hourly rate multiplied by the number of hours of duty time at rest stop)	\$ 500	\$ 0
<hr/>		
Totals	\$ 1,650	\$ 2,000

Note: Compare total costs of coach class to Other than Coach Class and circle the lesser of the two. Based on this cost analysis, the traveler should fly coach class, because it is the lesser of the two.

Example #2: Savings to Fly Other than Coach Class Travel

	Coach Class	Other than Coach Class
Ticket Cost	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,500
Per Diem (Actual subsistence costs for rest stop)	\$ 150	\$ 0
Overtime		
Productive Person Hours (Lost productive time equals employee's hourly rate multiplied by the number of hours of duty time at rest stop)	\$ 800	\$ 0
<hr/>		
Totals	\$ 1,950	\$ 1,500

Note: Compare total costs of Coach Class to Other than Coach Class and circle the lesser of the two. Based on this cost analysis, the traveler should fly Other than Coach Class, because it is the lesser of the two.

## 7. Acceptance of Payment of Travel Expenses from a Non-Federal Source

This chapter defines the policy of the Department with respect to the acceptance of monetary payment or services in-kind from non-Federal sources (also referred to as “HHS- Non-Federal Sponsored Travel” or “Sponsored Travel”), the purpose of which is to fund, in whole or in part, official travel, subsistence, and related expenses. The chapter applies to HHS employees, including special Government employees, experts or consultants, and officers of the Commissioned Corps U.S. Public Health Service. In advance of travel, Travelers must complete the ethics checklist and AOs or STOs, as appropriate, should always consult with their OpDiv/StaffDiv Deputy Ethics Counselor (DEC) or Ethics Office prior to determining whether the payment of travel expenses may be accepted. Prior to approving acceptance of the sponsored travel on behalf of the agency, STOs or AOs, as appropriate, must conduct the analysis described below in section 7.5.1.1 and section 7.5.1.4.

### 7.1 Electronic Ethics Check List and Certification of Acceptance of Funds via the ETS Only

Section eliminated. Content outdated.

### 7.2 In-Kind Expenses Only

Effective April 1, 2012, offers for Reimbursable (in-Cash reimbursement to the appropriation) Sponsored Travel will no longer be approved for HHS employees/travelers except in exceptional circumstances. No new travel authorizations for reimbursable travel will be approved after that date. Employees may continue to accept offers for in-kind sponsored travel, which provides several benefits over reimbursable sponsored travel including:

1. Items for which the Sponsor agrees to pay are given directly to the traveler on behalf of the OpDiv/StaffDiv (HHS);
2. There is no billing process between HHS or the OpDiv/StaffDivs, and Sponsors; and
3. There are fewer budgetary risks for the programs as Sponsors with reimbursable agreements do not always reimburse HHS and the OpDiv/StaffDivs for all expenses offered in the letter of invitation.

Reimbursable Sponsored Travel Authorizations must not be approved on or after April 1, 2012. Reimbursable sponsored travel may be allowed under exceptional circumstances only, with the approval of the STO only, on a trip-by-trip basis. The STOs approval must be uploaded into the ETS.

Note: Reimbursable sponsored travel occurs when a non-Federal organization offers to reimburse HHS or the OpDiv/StaffDiv for all or part of an employee’s travel expenses. In-kind sponsored travel occurs when a non-Federal organization provides transportation (i.e., airline tickets) food, lodging and other travel related services to the traveler in lieu of monetary payments to HHS or the OpDiv/StaffDiv.

### 7.3 Legislative Authority

Acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source for travel, subsistence, and travel-related expenses is derived from the following legislative authorities.<sup>ix</sup>

#### 7.3.1 31 U.S.C. 1353

This section of the U.S.C. authorized GSA to promulgate regulations establishing the manner in which HHS may accept payment (or authorize an employee to accept such payment on its behalf) from a non-Federal source for:

1. Travel, subsistence, and related travel expenses in connection with attendance at “meetings and similar functions” relating to the official duties of the employee;
2. Acceptance of travel payments for an accompanying spouse in some circumstances; and
3. Acceptance of additional expenses when specific conditions are met in accordance with FTR 304-3.13.

The above applies if the non-Federal source is not disqualified due to a conflict of interest under FTR 304-5.3.

### **7.3.2 42 U.S.C. 3506**

This section of the U.S.C. provides authority for HHS to accept payment from non-Federal sources for travel expenses in connection with an employee performing “advisory services” related to HHS functions or activities.

### **7.3.3 5 U.S.C. 7342, Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act**

This act provides authority for employees and members of an employee’s family and the employee’s spouse or dependents to accept gifts of travel expenses for travel taking place entirely outside the United States, when the donor of the gift is a foreign government (including international and multinational organizations). Acceptance under this authority must be consistent with the interests of the United States, and the appropriate AO must approve the travel, even when the employee travels in his/her private capacity on non-official time.

## **7.4 Departmental Policy and Guidance**

### **7.4.1 Appropriate Legislative Authority**

AOs are responsible for assuring that the appropriate acceptance authority (31 U.S.C. 1353, 42 U.S.C. 3506, or 5 U.S.C. 7342) is cited on the Travel Authorization. The provisions of these acceptance authorities may not be combined when accepting travel expenses from non-Federal sources for a single trip with a single purpose. For example, an employee may not travel under 42 U.S.C. 3506 and the employee’s spouse travel under 31 U.S.C. 1353.

### **7.4.2 Multiple Authorities**

An employee can accept travel and subsistence expenses from multiple sponsors under different authorities (Title 31, Title 42, or Title 5) for trips that include multiple segments (TDY locations) with multiple purposes, or trips with multiple purposes at a single TDY location, as long as multiple authorities are not being used to pay for the same portion of the trip. For instance, one portion of the trip, for a meeting, can consist of expenses paid under 31 U.S.C. 1353 by Sponsor A, while another portion of the trip, to provide advisory services, can consist of expenses paid under 42 U.S.C. 3506 by Sponsor B. However, an employee cannot accept such expenses, under different authorities, from multiple sponsors for a single trip with a single purpose. Employees may not, under any circumstances, accept an honorarium or retain cash in excess of actual expenses incurred.

### **7.4.3 Cost Avoidance**

The acceptance of “sponsored travel” from a non-Federal source for official duty travel should be the exception and not the rule. OpDiv/StaffDivs shall not use the authorities set forth above to shift the cost of their normal travel programs to non-Federal sources. The underlying principle of the Department is that if the employee’s participation warrants the expenditure of official time, it also warrants the expenditure of HHS travel funds. Departmental employees shall not solicit payment of travel expenses from non-Federal sources. HHS employees cannot authorize their own travel; therefore, no delegated official can approve acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source for himself or herself.

### **7.4.4 Leave in Conjunction with Non-Federally Sponsored Travel**

It is HHS policy that employees shall not be permitted to take annual leave in conjunction with any trips that are sponsored, in whole or in part, by non-Federal sources, whether the Sponsor is for-profit or non-profit. This includes domestic, non-foreign, and/or foreign (international) travel. The ASA has delegated to the OpDiv/StaffDiv STO the authority to waive this requirement for international travel, as described in Section 6.7.

## **7.5 Additional Requirements by Legislative Authority**

### **7.5.1 31 U.S.C. 1353 Provisions – Meetings or Similar Functions**

#### **7.5.1.1 General Conditions**

An OpDiv/StaffDiv may accept payment of travel expenses from a non-Federal source, received in the form of in-kind services only (or authorize an employee to receive such services on its behalf), when the appropriate delegated official determines in advance of the travel that the following conditions are met:

1. The employee (and/or the employee's spouse, when applicable) has been issued a travel authorization before the travel is scheduled to begin;
2. The travel is related to the employee's official duties and attendance is for a meeting or similar function;
3. The travel is in the interest of the Government;
4. The payment is from a person or entity meeting the definition of non-Federal source as provided in FTR 304-2.1; and
5. The non-Federal source is not disqualified due to a conflict of interest under FTR 304-5.3 as described below.

#### **7.5.1.2 Definitions**

Please see Section 14., Glossary.

#### **7.5.1.3 Payment Method**

Reimbursement by the non-Federal source by means of services in-kind, such as transportation tickets, meals, and lodgings, may be accepted by the employee on behalf of the Agency for the employee themselves or accompanying spouse, if applicable. Note that this authority prohibits employees and/or an accompanying spouse from accepting payment in cash, an electronic funds transfer, or a check or similar instrument made payable to either traveler from the non-Federal source.

#### **Monetary Payment**

If a monetary payment is authorized due to an exceptional circumstance, see Section 7.2, reimbursement may be authorized as follows:

1. For travel under 31 U.S.C. 1353, reimbursement by the non-Federal source, other than the provision of services in-kind, must be made by check or similar instrument made payable to the OpDiv/StaffDiv. Any such payment received by the employee for his/her travel and/or that of an accompanying spouse must be submitted as soon as practicable to the OpDiv/StaffDiv finance office for credit to the applicable appropriation.

This authority prohibits employees and/or an accompanying spouse from accepting payment in cash, an electronic funds transfer, or a check or similar instrument made payable to either traveler from the non-Federal source.

#### **7.5.1.4 Conflict of Interest (COI) Analysis**

In line with 7.5.1.1 Item 5 below, AOs must be thorough in their review when determining if it is appropriate to accept payment from a non-Federal source that does business with, conducts activities regulated by, or otherwise has matters pending before the Department. This review should take into account the employee's role and whether it substantially influences upon the Department's interaction with the entity. Particular care should be exercised in situations in which there is a regulatory relationship, or in which decisions affecting Federal funding for the entity are involved.

### **Items to Consider as Part of the COI Analysis**

In making this assessment, the AO should weigh all relevant considerations, including but not limited to the:

1. Identity of the non-Federal source;
2. Purpose of the meeting or similar function;
3. Identity of other expected participants;
4. Nature and sensitivity of any matter pending at the agency which may affect the interest of the non-Federal source;
5. Significance of the employee's role in any such matters; and
6. Monetary value and character of the travel benefits offered by the non-Federal source

### **Nature of the Event is Not a Factor**

The conflict of interest analysis prescribed by FTR 304-5.3 expressly excludes "the importance of the event to the employee or the agency" as a factor to be considered. According to GSA, the evaluation standard does not employ a "balancing test." GSA purposely deleted this as a factor to remove any implication that the importance of an event can override an appearance of impropriety. If acceptance of the payment from a non-Federal source under the given circumstances can reasonably be questioned, then the inquiry is at an end and the request for approval must be denied.

### **Determination of Acceptance from Potentially Prohibited Sources**

The evaluation standard for determining a disqualifying conflict or an appearance of impropriety is not intended, however, as a flat ban on the payment from certain categories of donors simply because the non-Federal source happens to have matters pending before some component of the employee's agency. According to GSA, the FTR recognizes that an outside "group most often will wish to invite a Federal speaker who is knowledgeable about the Federal programs or operations that affect that particular group" and that, "correspondingly, employees with an interest in a private group's subject matter – whether presented in a conference, seminar, or training course – will often have duties that impact in some way on the event's sponsor(s) or other non-Federal participant(s)."

To preclude the receipt by an agency of travel expenses from "prohibited sources," defined as those persons or entities from whom an employee may not accept gifts under the Standards of Ethical Conduct regulation, or from entities substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of a particular employee's duties, would, according to GSA, be an "unreasonable regulatory limitation in view of the statute's clear intent to permit agencies with tight travel budgets to benefit from travel expenses payments donated from outside sources."

### **Appearance of Impropriety**

The considerations enumerated above and in FTR 304-5.3 are not intended to be used to condone acceptance of payment where an appearance of impropriety is present. Rather, they are a guide to assist authorized agency officials in avoiding the acceptance of payment in circumstances that might lead a reasonable person to question the integrity of the agency's programs or operations. While a flat ban on the acceptance of payment from certain categories of donors was not imposed, the FTR recognizes that the acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source in certain circumstances can give rise to an appearance of impropriety. Questions concerning the integrity of an agency's programs may arise, for example, if the circumstances make it appear that it is the donor's intent to influence the employee or agency in future actions or to reward the employee for past actions. Moreover, regardless of the donor's apparent intent, the facts surrounding an offer of payment for travel expenses

might give rise to an appearance that the offer will improperly influence an employee in the performance of their official duties or otherwise affect the integrity of the agency's programs.

The following example, which is adapted from a GSA example that accompanied the promulgation of the FTR, illustrates how the Acceptance of Payment from a non-Federal Source travel regulations apply in conflict of interest situations:

**Example:** *A large pharmaceutical association offers to fund a National Institutes of Health scientist's trip to a conference on AIDS. The scientist is at the time performing experiments in relation to a promising new hypertension drug developed by a company that belongs to the association. Assuming no other ethics factors militate against acceptance, the offer can be accepted inasmuch as the donor is not the company that is developing the drug, but instead an association, and the NIH does not directly regulate the pharmaceutical industry. If the scientist had been employed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), then FDA policy would preclude such acceptance.*

### 7.5.1.5 Limiting Acceptance

An agency may find that, while acceptance from the non-Federal source is permissible, it is in the interest of the agency to qualify acceptance of the offered payment by, for instance, authorizing attendance at only a portion of the event or limiting the type or character of benefits that may be accepted [see FTR 304-5.3(b)].

While FTR 304-5.3(a)(6) permits an authorized official to consider the value and character of offered travel benefits when determining whether to accept the payment in the first instance, paragraph (b) of the section permits acceptance to be qualified when deemed necessary to address appearance of impropriety concerns. Payment accepted under 31 U.S.C 1353 is accepted by the agency to facilitate the accomplishment of its mission, not for the personal benefit of the employee. On the other hand, in considering any qualified acceptance of travel benefits under paragraph (b), an authorized agency official should consider whether the limitation will be detrimental to the agency's interest by unduly restricting the Federal employee from participating in the event on the same basis as other participants.

AOs should be very mindful of how their approval will appear to outside entities or persons who have an interest in their organization, particularly the media, and Congress. In such cases, the AO should consult with their ethics official and if necessary, the OGC, Ethics Division.

### 7.5.1.6 Spousal Travel

OpDiv/StaffDivs may authorize acceptance of payment of travel expenses for an accompanying spouse under very limited circumstances. The spouse must be issued a separate travel authorization that clearly references the employee's travel authorization and the purpose of the trip.

In addition, the following conditions must be thoroughly documented on the spouse's travel authorization:

1. The spouse is traveling with and attending the same event as the employee. The spouse must attend and/or participate in most of the events or sessions daily in order to fulfill the requirement of supporting the agency's mission. For example, the mere appearance at a dinner party during a weeklong conference does not satisfy the requirement of supporting the agency's mission.
2. The spouse's presence will support the mission of the employee's agency or substantially assist the employee through attendance at or participation in this event. For example, the spouse could be a nutritionist who could offer advice at a conference on healthy eating for a strong heart, or due to an unfortunate personal experience, could be an active participant at a conference on certain diseases. For acceptance to be authorized, the spouse should be able to contribute something of value that enhances the purpose of the meeting. There must be a full explanation of this with the travel authorization, and it must be made part of the official travel file.
3. Acceptance of payment of travel expenses from a non-Federal source for an accompanying spouse cannot be authorized if the non-Federal source is disqualified due to a conflict of interest under the criteria stated above for evaluating employee acceptance.

### 7.5.1.7 Maximum Subsistence Allowance

OpDiv/StaffDivs may accept payment in excess of the established lodgings-plus per diem rates, as described in this manual and in the FTR when the following conditions are met:

1. Full payment, in-kind, is made by the non-Federal source; and
2. The accommodation or other benefit furnished is comparable in value to that offered to, or purchased by, other similarly situated individuals attending the meeting or similar function. The invitation letter from the non-Federal source must contain language to this effect when an organization offers in-kind payment in excess of the maximum prescribed government rates. (See FTR 304-5.4.)

### 7.5.1.8 Common Carrier Accommodations (Other than Coach Class – Business Class)

FTR Chapter 304 permits OpDiv/StaffDivs to authorize an employee to accept such accommodations when the following conditions are met:

1. The non-Federal source makes full payment for such transportation services in advance of travel (in-kind); and
2. Transportation accommodations furnished are comparable in value to those offered to, or purchased by, other similarly situated attendees at the meeting.

*Note: See Section 6.6.4 for additional information related to International Travel and acceptance of Business Class accommodations from a non-Federal Sponsor.*

**HHS Policy:** *HHS does not allow for sponsor-paid common carrier accommodations outside those that would be authorized if paid by an agency's own appropriation(s) in accordance with the FTR and this Travel Manual.*

### 7.5.1.9 Federal Grant and Contract Funds

Under limited circumstances, an OpDiv/StaffDiv may authorize acceptance of travel and related expenses from a non-Federal source receiving Federal grants or contracts. Specifically, the employee must be performing authorized official duties for their OpDiv/StaffDiv that is consistent with the OpDiv/StaffDiv's mission. In addition, the non-Federal source must indicate in the "Letter of Invitation" that it is using either Federal grant or contract monies or funds obtained through a private entity to fund the particular travel and related expenses. Any acceptance of payment by a non-Federal source, using Federal grant or contract funds, must undergo a thorough review and analysis before approval by the OpDiv/StaffDiv.

OpDiv/StaffDivs may elect to adopt a more restrictive policy related to the acceptance of grant and contract funds.

#### **HHS Funds May Not Be Accepted**

However, if the non-Federal source is using Federal grant or contract monies, they cannot be HHS funds. This includes when the negotiated grant or contract agreement included a clause for travel and related expenses.

Additional clarification regarding the use of HHS funds was provided by OGC:

#### **Guidance**

"As the section ... indicates, HHS employee travel is not to be funded by grantees or contractors using HHS funds. The [information provided] indicates HHS employees are "embedded with state & local [agencies]" and HHS still pays [their salaries], but their place of federal duty is on the site of the state and local [agencies]."

If these are the facts, then such embedded employees should only be going on travel when HHS has a need for them to do so to do their jobs (and not at the direction of any non-Federal entity, which seems to be implied by [information provided] that ‘these [employees] travel frequently for these partner organizations’).

In such circumstances the sponsoring HHS entity should pay for the travel as it would any other government travel, i.e., the employee should request authority and funding from the appropriate HHS travel approving authority. The [Sponsored Travel] process... alluded to implements the one statutory exception by which the agency can accept the gift of travel funds on behalf of an employee. Thus, the only two options are for agency funding of the travel, or use of the [Sponsored Travel] process, but even the [Sponsored Travel] process cannot be used if the grantee or contractor is using funds awarded by HHS. In the latter situation, the only available option is HHS funding.

Based upon this guidance, employees traveling for Local and State [agencies] must travel under the Sponsored Travel process but not using Grant funds or the employees must arrange for and pay for travel using the contracted... ETS and TMC.”

### **7.5.1.10 Long-term Travel and Training**

Under this Title 31 authority, acceptance of in-kind services from a non-Federal source for travel and related expenses to attend a meeting or similar function cannot be authorized for a single trip, with one purpose, for a period exceeding 13 lodging nights of per diem. If, due to exceptional circumstances, the non-Federal source is offering these services for a period of time that is 14 lodging nights of per diem or more, authorization for acceptance must come from the OpDiv/StaffDiv STO. If the trip has multiple segments with multiple purposes, no single segment of the trip, for which the non-Federal source is offering in-kind services, can exceed 13 lodging nights. If any segment exceeds 13 lodging nights, the trip will require approval of the STO.

In addition, Title 31 Authority may not be used to fund training of a Federal employee.

### **7.5.1.11 After-the-Fact Authorization of Non-Federal Sponsored Travel**

In accordance with FTR 304-3.13(a), under 31 U.S.C. 1353, OpDiv/StaffDivs may accept payment of additional travel expenses from a non-Federal source when there is approval for acceptance for some travel expenses from the non-Federal source prior to departing on travel.

If the agency has approved the acceptance of some travel expenses and the sponsoring organization decides to pay for additional travel expenses while the traveler is in travel status, the traveler can accept those additional expenses:

1. If the OpDiv/StaffDiv has already authorized acceptance of payment, in-kind, for some travel expenses from the non-Federal source;
2. The additional travel expenses provided in-kind are comparable in value to those offered to or purchased by other similarly situated attendees; and
3. The agency did not decline to accept payment, in-kind, for those particular expenses in advance of travel.

**Policy Example:** *The traveler has been approved for sponsored travel prior to departing on TDY and is authorized to accept airfare in-kind. While in travel status, the sponsor decides to pay for the traveler’s lodging expense in-kind. Since the traveler is approved to receive airfare in-kind, they can accept the lodging expense in-kind and notify the appropriate AO upon return so that adjustments may be made to the appropriate funding account.*

**HHS Policy:** *Contrary to FTR 304-3.13(b), when the agency has not authorized acceptance of travel expenses from a non-Federal source prior to the traveler’s departure date, no travel expenses may be accepted from an outside organization after-the-fact. If the OpDiv/ StaffDiv did not authorize acceptance of any payment from a non-Federal source prior to the employee’s travel, the OpDiv/ StaffDiv will not authorize acceptance after-the-fact. The employee is responsible for reimbursing the non-Federal Source or the vendor.*

*If a traveler encounters a situation, where travel expenses were not authorized and a non-Federal sponsor has paid for a travel expense that was supposed to be paid for with appropriated dollars, such as a hotel room, without the traveler’s knowledge and the vendor will not accept payment, the traveler must reimburse the sponsor for the expense. The traveler will be reimbursed the amount that the sponsor was paid the first time it occurs. The Traveler will not be reimbursed for subsequent similar actions.*

## 7.5.2 42 U.S.C. 3506 Provisions – Advisory Services

Under limited circumstances, an OpDiv/StaffDiv may authorize acceptance of travel and related expenses from a non-Federal source receiving Federal grants or contracts. Specifically, the employee must be performing authorized official duties for their OpDiv/StaffDiv that is consistent with the OpDiv/StaffDiv’s mission. In addition, the non-Federal source must indicate in the “Letter of Invitation” that it is using either Federal grant or contract monies or funds obtained through a private entity to fund the particular travel and related expenses. Any acceptance of payment by a non-Federal source, using Federal grant or contract funds must undergo a thorough review and analysis before approval by the OpDiv/StaffDiv. OpDiv/StaffDivs may elect to adopt a more restrictive policy related to the acceptance of grant and contract funds.

### **HHS Funds May Not Be Accepted**

However, if the non-Federal source is using Federal grant or contract monies, they cannot be HHS funds. This includes when the negotiated grant or contract agreement included a clause for travel and related expenses.

Additional clarification regarding the use of HHS funds was provided by OGC:

### **Guidance**

“As the section ... indicates, HHS employee travel is not to be funded by grantees or contractors using HHS funds. The [information provided] indicates HHS employees are “embedded with state & local [agencies]” and HHS still pays [their salaries], but their place of federal duty is on the site of the state and local [agencies].

If these are the facts, then such embedded employees should only be going on travel when HHS has a need for them to do so to do their jobs (and not at the direction of any non-Federal entity, which seems to be implied by [information provided] that “these [employees] travel frequently for these partner organizations”).

In such circumstances the sponsoring HHS entity should pay for the travel as it would any other government travel, i.e., the employee should request authority and funding from the appropriate HHS travel approving authority. The [Sponsored Travel] process... alluded to implements the one statutory exception by which the agency can accept the gift of travel funds on behalf of an employee. Thus, the only two options are for agency funding of the travel, or use of the [Sponsored Travel] process, but even the [Sponsored Travel] process cannot be used if the grantee or contractor is using funds awarded by HHS. In the latter situation, the only available option is HHS funding.

Based upon this guidance, employees traveling for Local and State [agencies] must travel under the Sponsored Travel process but not using Grant funds or the employees must arrange for and pay for travel using the contracted... ETS and TMC.”

### **7.5.2.1 Advisory Services**

OpDiv/StaffDivs may accept payment from non-Federal sources, organizations and individuals (or authorize an employee to receive such payments on its behalf) for in-kind services, or cash for reimbursable expenses, such as meals, taxis, etc., when the appropriate delegated official determines in advance that the travel is related to the employee’s official duties and attendance is for the purpose of performing advisory services. Cash may not be accepted for the purchase of common carrier transportation as provided for in Section 4.1.4.1.

Advisory services have certain characteristics which distinguish them from the general concept of a meeting. These assignments may be longer in duration; convey a sense of urgency or immediacy about their purpose; involve providing advice and technical assistance, or conducting technical or scientific training or research; and most typically for HHS, are sponsored by international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the World Health Organization (WHO), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and/or foreign governments, particularly third world countries.

In addition, the following rules must also be applied:

1. Travel expenses cannot be accepted if the non-Federal source is disqualified due to a conflict of interest. (See section 7.5.1.4, Conflict of Interest (COI) Analysis, above);

2. The acceptance of payment for per diem expenses cannot exceed the maximum rates under HHS policy (see section 7.5.1.7, Maximum Subsistence Allowance, above);
3. The acceptance of payment of travel expenses cannot be authorized for a spouse or member of the family to accompany the employee on travel; and
4. The acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source for any additional expenses after-the-fact is prohibited.

Under 42 U.S.C. 3506, travelers may accept payment in the form of in-kind services without reporting the fact whenever the monetary value is nominal (under \$15) and the service is offered more as a courtesy than an offer to defray, in whole or in part, the expenses of the trip. An example would be the acceptance of a ride from a meeting place back to a hotel in which the employee is staying.

It is HHS policy that under this authority an employee may accept cash directly from the sponsoring organization for per diem related and miscellaneous expenses. However, an employee may not accept cash directly for common carrier transportation (e.g., airfare).

An employee may accept cash on behalf of the Government only for lodging and M&IE, not for common carrier accommodations (e.g., airfare), as a direct reimbursement for expenses. This should be done only when reimbursement directly into the proper appropriation account is not feasible and acceptance of cash by the individual is clearly in the best interest of the Government. The traveler may not, under any circumstances, accept payment in excess of authorized expenses actually incurred.

#### **7.5.2.2 Common Carrier Accommodations (Other than Coach Class – Business Class)**

Common carrier accommodations requirements are the same as in Section 7.5.1.8, Common Carrier Accommodations (Other than Coach Class – Business Class).

### **7.5.3 5 U.S.C. 7342 Provisions:**

#### **7.5.3.1 Payment of Travel Expenses by Foreign Governments and International Organizations**

When a foreign government or international organization offers to pay an employee's travel expenses as either in-kind services, or cash for reimbursable expenses, such as meals, taxis, etc., for either official or private travel, the provisions of Chapter 6, International Travel, of this manual apply.

Article I, Section 9, of the Constitution (known as the "Emoluments Clause") prohibits, absent the consent of Congress, any person who holds an "office of profit or trust" in the United States Government from accepting any present, emolument, office, or title from a foreign government. In addition, the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act, 5 U.S.C. 7342, bars the receipt by an employee and an employee's spouse of any gift of more than minimal value (a figure, currently \$375<sup>x</sup> and which is adjusted every three years) from a foreign government, any subunit of a foreign government (such as a national, state, local, or municipal authority, including a public university), or any international or multinational organization whose membership is composed of any unit of a foreign government.

Congress has provided an exception to both the Emoluments Clause and the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act, which permits the acceptance of payments for travel where both destinations (i.e., departure and arrival points) take place OCONUS. The authority to accept gifts of travel and per diem from a foreign government under the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act is for acceptance by an individual (and spouse and dependents), not an agency. Congress has consented for an agency to accept gifts of travel from a foreign government pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1353 and for this Department under 42 U.S.C. 3506 under the same rules, conditions, and restrictions as it may accept payment for travel from any other non-Federal source.

#### **7.5.3.2 Common Carrier Accommodations (Other than Coach Class)**

Common carrier accommodations requirements are the same as Section 7.5.1.8, Common Carrier Accommodations (Other than Coach Class – Business Class).

## 7.6 Authorization Procedures

The OpDiv/StaffDiv official with delegated authority must authorize or approve the acceptance of services in-kind from non-Federal sources.

### 7.6.1 Authorization Form

Section eliminated. Content outdated.

### 7.6.2 Authorization Procedures

A travel authorization, including the Ethics Checklist, must be prepared and forwarded (as soon as possible, but not later than 15 days before scheduled departure) through the ETS to the Recommending Official (RO) and the AO. The RO may be the traveler's DEC, depending on the OpDiv/StaffDiv. An employee should check with the OpDiv/StaffDiv as to who are the appropriate RO(s) and AO(s). A separate letter must reference spousal travel, if applicable, and be attached to the authorization. Additional supporting documentation may be prepared to fulfill the needs of a particular organization.

The RO(s) and/or the AO(s) must follow the criteria established above for determining whether:

1. The non-Federal source is disqualified due to a conflict of interest under FTR 304-5.3;
2. A spouse is permitted to accompany the traveler;
3. To approve acceptance of payment, in-kind, in excess of per diem rates;
4. To approve acceptance of Other than Coach-Class common carrier accommodations; and
5. To approve additional expenses paid by the non-Federal source after-the-fact.

AOs will also ensure that the authorization identifies the estimated amount of in-kind services the non-Federal source has agreed to reimburse the Government or in the case of monetary payment due to exceptional circumstances, the type, and estimated value of the reimbursement.

If acceptance is authorized, the AO will stamp the authorization in the ETS. If acceptance is not authorized, the delegated approving official will promptly notify the requesting office and/or traveler by sending the authorization back to the individual that prepared the authorization.

When foreign travel is involved, the provisions of Chapter 6, International Travel, of this manual apply.

### 7.6.3 Actual Expense

Reimbursable sponsored travel may only be allowed under exceptional circumstances with the approval of the employee's STO. In the event that the non-Federal source offers to pay more than the lodging per diem rate, and subsequently does not pay the Federal government in full, the agency is only permitted to allow and pay expenses that do not exceed the lodging per diem rate. Similarly, if the non-Federal source offers to pay Other than Coach Class - Business Class common carrier expenses and subsequently fails to do so, the agency is only permitted to allow common carrier expenses that do not exceed contract City Pair (coach) fare for the same trip.

In such circumstances, this will result in the traveler being required to reimburse the Federal government for those expenses that exceed the standard per diem rate (not actual expense) travel allowances as defined by GSA. In addition, should a sponsor not pay the Federal government in full for an accompanying spouse, the traveler is also responsible for full reimbursement to the Government for any expenses not reimbursed by the sponsor.

### 7.6.3.1 Non-Payment of Travel Expenses

Reimbursable sponsored travel may be allowed under exceptional circumstances with the approval of the employee's STO. AOs must be aware that in the event that a non-Federal source does not pay the promised amounts for the aforementioned lodgings-plus per diem (not actual expense) travel allowances, then payment of those travel expenses must come from the agency's travel budget.

## 7.7 Non-Governmental Travel Reports

Each traveler (employee and/or accompanying spouse, if applicable) will be required to complete a certification at the end of each trip for which acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source was authorized. The certification is completed, along with the voucher, and will show the estimated value of the in-kind services received and the actual amount of reimbursement in-kind by the non-Federal source or in the case of monetary payment due to exceptional circumstances, the type, and estimated value of the reimbursement.

The traveler will also be responsible for ensuring the following additional data is provided in the report for each trip:

1. The name of the employee and/or spouse, if applicable;
2. The position or title of the employee;
3. The name of the sponsor making the payment;
4. The nature of the meeting or similar function;
5. The amount and method of payment;
6. The nature of the expenses; and
7. The place and date of the travel.

The stand-alone report will be forwarded to the AO along with the voucher. This will facilitate the meeting semi-annual reporting requirements for travel expenses paid under the authority of 31 U.S.C. 1353 for the reporting periods ending March 31 and September 30 of each year.

The report will be forwarded to the appropriate fiscal office, with the travel voucher, travel order, and a copy of the invitation letter for proper accounting recordation. A voucher must be submitted even if all expenses are paid in-kind and no money was reimbursed directly to the traveler.

## 8. Travel and Transportation Expenses Connected with the Death of Employees under Certain Circumstances

This chapter provides supplemental guidance and references to FTR Part 303 for HHS OpDiv/StaffDivs regarding agency requirements for payment of expenses connected with the death of civilian employees. For officers of the Commissioned Corps, please see JTR Chapter 5 Part R.

The employee's supervisor, once notified, must contact their OHR and Travel Office to coordinate the necessary resources to ensure that all applicable benefits and entitlements are provided to the employee's estate.

### 8.1 General

OpDiv/StaffDivs must pay expenses incurred as specified in the FTR that are related to an employee's death (regardless of cause) when, at the time of death, the employee was:

1. Conducting official TDY travel, including when death occurs while on leave or on a non-workday; or
2. Performing official duties while stationed OCONUS, including when death occurs while on leave or on a non-workday; or
3. Reassigned away from his/her home of record under a mandatory mobility agreement, such as an assignment under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA).

Note that some limited expenses may be paid related to the death of an immediate family member who was residing with the employee OCONUS (see FTR Chapter 303, Subpart E).

## **8.2 Allowances**

The FTR is very carefully worded as to the allowances an agency must authorize versus the allowances an agency may authorize. Some allowances pertain to items 1 - 3 above, while other allowances only pertain to employees (and their immediate families) who are stationed OCONUS. Some allowances may be subject to time limits. OpDiv/StaffDivs must provide assistance in arranging for preparation and transportation of the employee's remains.

### **8.2.1 Expenses that Must be Reimbursed**

Allowable expenses that must be reimbursed include:

1. Preparation and transportation of the employee's remains, including costs for embalming or cremation and a casket or container suitable for shipment to place of burial;
2. Mortuary and transportation services when an immediate family member, residing with the employee, dies while the employee is stationed OCONUS, as authorized under the guidelines and conditions set forth in FTR 303-70.400, and -.403;
3. Transportation costs to return the deceased employee's baggage to the official duty station or residence, excluding insurance or reimbursement for loss of or damage to the baggage;
4. Transportation of immediate family members, baggage, and household goods as defined in the FTR, only when the employee dies at or while in transit to or from the official duty station OCONUS; and
5. Continuation of relocation expenses for an employee's immediate family, if the employee dies while in transit to the new duty station within CONUS, provided the immediate family is included on the relocation travel order and the family chooses to continue the relocation.

### **8.2.2 Expenses that May be Reimbursed**

Some of the allowable expenses that may be reimbursed include:

1. Transportation of the employee's remains to an alternate destination, provided the allowable expenses do not exceed the cost of transportation to the official duty station; and/or
2. Travel expenses for no more than two persons to escort the remains of a deceased employee to:
  - a. The home or official duty station of the deceased; or
  - b. Any other place deemed appropriate by the head of HHS, if the allowable expenses do not exceed the cost of transportation to the employee's official duty station.

When an employee is injured and subsequently dies from those injuries sustained while performing official duty or conducting official travel, under the provisions outlined in Section 8.1, death-related benefits are payable under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act, 5 U.S.C. 8134.

**Federal Travel Regulation Guideline:**

FTR Part 303-70, Agency Requirements for Payment of Expenses Connected with the Death of Certain Employees.  
FTR Chapter 303 Subpart A - General Policies  
FTR Chapter 303 Subpart B - General Procedures  
FTR Chapter 303 Subpart C - Allowances for Preparation and Transportation of Remains  
FTR Chapter 303 Subpart D - Transportation of Immediate Family Members, Baggage, and Household Goods  
FTR Chapter 303 Subpart E - Preparation and Transportation Expenses for Remains of Immediate Family Members  
FTR Chapter 303 Subpart F - Policies and Procedures for Payment of Expenses  
FTR Chapter 303 Subpart G - Escort of Remains

### **8.3 Supplemental HHS Policies**

The delegated responsible official must provide reasonable assistance in arranging for preparation and transportation of the remains of the decedent when death occurs during travel status or at an official duty station OCONUS. In addition, a designated official will provide necessary assistance for the return of the decedent's immediate family and household goods to the official duty station, when the decedent's official station was OCONUS.

The OpDiv/StaffDivs are responsible for establishing a delegation of authority level to authorize and approve these FTR allowances and for establishing internal procedures to ensure compliance with all FTR requirements. In this regard, all efforts must be made to use the modes of travel and transportation services that are most advantageous to the Government.

The agency may make payment directly to the person performing the service (who will submit an invoice) or reimburse the person who made the original payment. HHS officials who authorize and approve expenses under these guidelines should coordinate with their servicing travel, procurement, transportation, and financial payment offices to determine the proper administrative processes to follow.

## **9. Travel and Transportation Expenses under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA)**

### **9.1 Purpose**

This chapter provides policy and procedural guidance regarding travel and transportation expenses that can be authorized and paid from agency appropriations under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) of 1970 and Title VI of the Civil Service Reform Act. These two Acts authorize the temporary assignment of employees between Federal agencies and State, local, and Indian Tribal governments<sup>si</sup>, institutions of higher education, and other eligible organizations.<sup>20</sup> Assignments may be made by detail or appointment.

### **9.2 Coverage under the IPA**

The following personnel are covered under the guidelines provided in this chapter:

1. All appointed Federal civilian employees of HHS who are detailed or assigned to work in an organization or governmental agency outside of HHS under an approved IPA agreement with that outside entity; and
2. Employees of governmental agencies and organizations outside HHS who are appointed or detailed to work within HHS under an approved IPA agreement, and to whom the OpDiv/StaffDiv pays for, or reimburses, approved travel and per diem allowances directly to the assignee during the course of the agreement, per the FTR Parts 301-304.

Excluded from coverage under the two Acts are the following:

1. Members of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps;
2. Special Purpose IPA Agreements per HHS Instruction 334-1;
3. Individuals who perform work for HHS or any of its OpDiv/StaffDivs under a personal services contract, or who are employees of an organization that is under contract to provide goods and/or services to HHS or any of its OpDiv/StaffDivs;
4. Federal, State, or local government employees serving under non-career, excepted service, non-competitive, time limited, temporary, or term appointments;
5. Elected Federal, State, or local government officials;
6. Students employed in research graduate or teacher assistant and similar temporary positions;
7. Individuals assigned to HHS in any of its OpDiv/StaffDivs by other governments or organizations whose travel and per diem allowances are paid by their regular employers;
8. Individuals assigned to HHS in any of its OpDiv/StaffDivs by other governments or organizations whose travel and per diem allowances are paid to the assignee's regular employer by the OpDiv/StaffDiv to which they are assigned; and
9. Individuals who have not signed an IPA agreement.

## **9.3 General Provisions**

The IPA provides for temporary exchanges of personnel between the Federal Government and state or local governments, institutions of higher education, Indian tribes, or tribal organizations, and any other eligible organization. Each such exchange is carried out under the provisions of a specific agreement that states the purpose and duration of the exchange, the places, hours, and conditions of work, and the methods of financing the individual's pay and allowances.

### **9.3.1 Travel Approval**

Representatives of both the Federal Government and the other government or entity participating in a personnel exchange under the IPA must sign an agreement that sets forth explicitly the travel and transportation arrangements of the exchange. Travel and transportation arrangements must be approved by the official who has authority to approve travel allowances (in advance of travel, unless exceptional circumstances occur) and reimbursements of travel expenses. If that official is different from the one who is negotiating the IPA agreement for HHS, the latter must secure the approval of the official(s) authorized to approve travel or relocation allowances. Failure to secure approval from the appropriate travel AO will result in the assignee not being reimbursed for expenses incurred.

### **9.3.2 Service Agreements**

The employee must sign a service agreement for one (1) year or the length of the assignment, whichever is shorter, to be eligible for payment of per diem at the assignment location or limited relocation expenses. This service agreement must be incorporated into a written IPA Agreement (such as an Optional Form (OF) 69, Assignment Agreement, or agency equivalent) or must be documented via a separate Employment Agreement (such as an HHS-355) in accordance with each OpDiv/StaffDiv's personnel practices. The employee will be responsible for repaying any expenses if he or she fails to complete the service agreement, unless the reason for failing to complete the agreement is beyond his/her control and acceptable to the OpDiv/StaffDiv. In addition, management of the HHS OpDiv/StaffDiv may waive the requirement to pay back expenses if the waiver is considered justified, in accordance with OpDiv/StaffDiv policy.

### 9.3.3 Travel Authorization and Voucher Mechanism

When an individual is assigned to HHS by a non-Federal government or organization, all travel and transportation expenses, in the form of either a limited relocation allowance or a temporary per diem allowance, must be processed through the appropriate travel authorization and travel voucher mechanisms in accordance with this manual and the OpDiv/StaffDiv's procedures for accounting for such travel expenses.

## 9.4 Allowances

Persons who are assigned away from their places of regular employment under the terms of an IPA agreement may be authorized and reimbursed for travel or limited relocation expenses under the IPA, as provided in 5 U.S.C. 3375. When an OpDiv/StaffDiv authorizes travel or relocation allowances under an IPA agreement, it is the responsibility of the AO to select between the reimbursement of a per diem allowance at the assignment site (see Section 9.4.3) or the limited allowable relocation expenses (see Section 9.4.4). The AO may not pay both types of allowances. In making a determination, consideration should be given to the cost to the Government as well as the duration of the assignment. For example, a per diem allowance would usually be authorized for short-term assignments because it is more cost-beneficial to the Government.

For any assignment over 30 days where a per diem allowance is authorized, that allowance shall be reduced in accordance with the guidance in Section 5.1.3.3, Reduced Per Diem.

When properly authorized, the length of an IPA assignment may be extended at the current TDY site. In such instances, the per diem allowance for the extended period must remain at the same reduced (percentage) rate that was in effect at the end of the previous assignment period. However, a cost comparison should be done if the length of the extension increases the length of the IPA assignment enough that a change in the per diem reduction may be warranted. For example, an assignment of 90 days, which is extended to over a year, should be reviewed to determine if the reduced per diem should be adjusted in accordance with guidance in Section 5.1.3.3.

In addition, once a per diem allowance has been negotiated, the agreement may not be changed to authorize limited relocation allowances. Furthermore, IPAs that authorize payment of limited relocation expenses may not be modified to include additional benefits/expenses (e.g., per diem).

### 9.4.1 Return Trips Home

If an employee is on a long-term assignment, the OpDiv/StaffDiv may authorize a return trip home provided the criteria outlined below are met.

For assignments that are less than 30 days:

1. Employees will not be authorized a return trip home at Government expense.
2. Should the employee decide to return home any other time, see Section 5.4.3.4, Voluntary Return to Home or Official Station without Travel Order.

For assignments that are greater than 30 days:

1. An employee may return home not to exceed two (2) times per month at the Government's expense in consultation with the AO.
2. Should the employee decide to return home any other time, see Section 5.4.3.4, Voluntary Return to Home or Official Station without Travel Order.

An OpDiv/StaffDiv may choose to implement this policy in a more restrictive manner within its own OpDiv/StaffDiv.

## 9.4.2 Temporary Duty Travel Away from the IPA Assignment Location

Travel orders shall be issued to authorize travel expenses, including a per diem allowance, for official TDY assignments away from the designated post of duty. Such travel must be approved by the designated travel AO. On occasion, an employee may continue to receive lodging entitlements under an IPA assignment concurrent with authorized TDY travel away from the IPA assignment location. However, the employee cannot receive an M&IE allowance under both the IPA assignment and TDY concurrently.

Note: If both the assignee's regular place of employment and the IPA official duty station are within the same city/town, these IPA travel allowances do not apply. Refer to Section 4.2, Authorization of a Per Diem Allowance at the Official Station or within the Local Transportation (formerly Local Travel) Area.

## 9.4.3 Per Diem Allowance at Assignment Location

Under an IPA agreement that does not provide for payment of limited relocation expenses, the TDY travel expenses listed below may be authorized in accordance with the FTR provisions related to TDY travel. The following allowances only apply to expenses incurred by the employee; there is no authority to pay for any expenses incurred by the employee's immediate family.

If the HHS official who negotiates the IPA agreement is not the travel AO, the negotiating official must consult the appropriate travel AO to determine the amount of the per diem allowance, if any. The travel AO is responsible for establishing the per diem allowance, and once the allowance has been set, it must be specified in the agreement, as well as on an approved travel order.

## 9.4.4 Limited Relocation Allowances

In some situations, where it is more economical or otherwise more advantageous to the Federal Government, IPA assignees may be authorized to move their immediate families and household goods to the point of their IPA assignment at the expense of the Federal Government.

When the terms of an IPA agreement provide that the employee will be entitled to relocation allowances, HHS may agree to pay the following expenses in accordance with the applicable FTR provisions in 302-3, Relocation Allowances, and Chapter 12, Relocation Allowances, of this manual:

1. Travel and transportation expenses of the employee to and from the assignment location;
2. Travel and transportation expenses of the employee's immediate family to and from the assignment location;
3. Transportation and temporary storage expenses of the employee's household goods and personal effects;
4. Temporary quarters subsistence expenses at the time the assignment commences and at the time the assignment is completed;
5. A miscellaneous expense allowance (for items such as disconnecting and connecting appliances, equipment, and utilities, cutting and fitting transported rugs, etc.). This expense may only be authorized when shipment of household goods and personal effects is authorized under item 3 above, or when storage of such items is authorized under item 6 below; and
6. Non-temporary storage of the employee's household goods and personal effects when the employee is assigned to an isolated location.

Note: Once an OpDiv/StaffDiv decides to offer limited relocation allowances in line with FTR 302-3, it must authorize payment for, and reimburse the individual for, the full costs incurred associated with any authorized service(s) as described above. In projecting the estimated obligations, the OpDiv/StaffDiv may not cap or limit the amount to be reimbursed.

Other relocation allowances listed under FTR Part 302-3, but not listed above, are not allowed. For example, an agency cannot pay expenses of selling or purchasing a residence, property management services, house-hunting trips, relocation income tax

allowance, or transportation of privately owned motor vehicles. In addition, a temporary change of station, under FTR Part 302-3, Subpart E, may not be authorized.

## **References**

- The Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970, 5 U.S.C 3371 – 3375 (Examination, selection, and placement assignments to and from States)
- 5 CFR 334 (Revised Intergovernmental Personnel Act, 5/29/97)
- HHS Human Capital Accountability System Policy, June 2, 2006
- Personnel Aspects of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, Public Law 93-638 Handbook (HHS, 10/10/2000)
- HHS Instruction 334-1 Temporary Assignments of Personnel Under the IPA, 3/28/08

## **9.5 Travel and Transportation Cost Comparison: Reduced Per Diem Allowance/ Limited Relocation Allowances versus Repeated TDY Trips to the HHS Work Site**

If an OpDiv/StaffDiv determines that the assignee is not going to be physically situated at the HHS OpDiv/StaffDiv worksite and neither limited relocation allowances nor a reduced per diem allowance is going to be authorized, then the “Comparison of Costs: Per Diem Allowance versus Relocation Allowance” worksheet must be properly completed.

Guidelines for this requirement are in Section 9.5.1 below. A sample “Intergovernmental Personnel Act Travel and Transportation Cost Comparison Worksheet” is provided at the end of this chapter.

### **9.5.1 Comparison of Costs: Per Diem Allowance versus Relocation Allowance**

If an OpDiv/StaffDiv determines that the assignee will be physically stationed at the HHS OpDiv/StaffDiv worksite, the following cost comparison should be done to determine whether an IPA assignment should be authorized as:

1. A TDY assignment (per diem allowance); or
2. A change in duty station (limited relocation allowance(s)). Both the length of the assignment as well as the costs must be considered.

For IPA assignments of relatively short duration (e.g., four months) payment of a per diem allowance may be more advantageous to the Government. For IPA assignments for extended periods (e.g., six months), it usually is less costly as well as more advantageous to the Government to authorize the applicable limited relocation allowances.

Consideration must be given to the estimated costs for each of the two alternatives. The method and amount of reimbursement will be based on this cost comparison.

If limited relocation is determined to be the least expensive method:

1. The applicable relocation allowances may be authorized; or
2. If it is not feasible for the employee to move immediate family and/or household goods, per diem may be authorized for a specified amount, which should not exceed the estimated costs of relocating.

If a TDY is determined to be the least expensive method:

1. The applicable per diem allowances may be authorized; or
2. If the employee elects to move the immediate family and household goods, relocation allowances may be authorized for a specified amount, which should not exceed the estimated costs of per diem payments.

**Travel Example:** *An employee of the California State Department of Education is to be assigned to the HHS San Francisco Regional Office for a one-year period. The employee resides in San Diego with his/ her spouse and two children.*

<b>Relocation Expenses</b>	
Mileage between San Diego and San Francisco	\$ 100
Travel per diem for employee and immediate family [assume the trip takes over 12 hours]	\$ 250
Transportation of household goods	\$ 4,500
Miscellaneous expense allowance	\$ 1,000
Estimated costs to return to San Diego (total of above)	\$ 5,850
<b>Total estimated costs to relocate:</b>	<b>\$ 11,700</b>
<b>Temporary Duty Expenses:</b>	
Round trip air fare, San Diego - San Francisco	\$ 200
Travel per diem for employee (round trip)	\$ 150
Per diem at assignment location for employee reduced per diem rate applies	\$16,000
<b>Total estimated costs for TDY reimbursement</b>	<b>\$ 16,350</b>

**Travel Example Continued:** *Based on the results of the cost comparison, relocation allowances should be authorized. If it is not feasible for the employee to move the immediate family, the employee may elect to be paid a per diem allowance. Under such circumstances, a monetary limitation (“cap”) should be established; for example, based upon the calculations above, the per diem authorized at the maximum rate would not exceed \$11,700 (the estimated cost of relocation) so that amount would be the cap on reimbursement. In establishing a monetary limitation, the AO must include in the calculation the proper amount of any costs for transportation associated with periodic trips home to the assignee’s residence (non-Federal person) or official duty station (Federal employee). Regardless of which cost comparison is made, if an option with a higher cost estimate is selected, a monetary limitation is to be placed on that estimate that does not exceed the lowest cost estimate. If later, the actual expenses incurred exceed the capped amount by up to 10 percent, approval for the increase must be obtained from the OpDiv/ StaffDiv STO. Actual expenses incurred that exceed the capped amount in excess of 10 percent are to be borne by the employee.*

*Note: An OpDiv/ StaffDiv should not pay a per diem allowance for an assignment expected to last more than one year, or for an indefinite period. The payment of per diem for a period of more than one year is taxable to the employee (although an income tax reimbursement allowance applies).*

## 9.6 Travel Orders

A travel order is the official authorization to perform travel at Government expense and must be prepared for all assignments where travel and per diem allowances are paid directly to the individual on the IPA assignment. This includes both limited relocation allowances and TDY per diem allowances.

In addition to authorizing the travel, a travel order specifies the employee’s entitlement to reimbursement for the allowable expenses. It should be prepared as soon as the assignment agreement is completed. Authorization for travel related to an IPA must be given by an official who has been delegated the authority to approve such travel. Caution is required in the preparation of travel orders to ensure that they properly reflect the approval to incur expenses in accordance with the FTR. Travel orders must indicate that travel and transportation expenses are authorized in accordance with the IPA and the Service Agreement. The

length of the assignment, the duty reporting date, the estimated expense, per diem allowances to be paid, and any applicable cap of reimbursement also must be included. When the assignment agreement provides for the payment of relocation allowance, a change of station travel order must be initiated listing the allowances to be paid.

The provisions above apply only travel related to formal negotiated IPA assignments. See Section 9.4.2, Temporary Duty Travel Away from the IPA Assignment Location, for information on TDY travel during an IPA assignment.

Note: An employee who performs official travel or incurs change of station expenses without a travel order, or who departs earlier than necessary to carry out the purpose of travel, does so at the risk of not being reimbursed for expenses incurred.

## **9.7 Claims for Allowances and Reimbursements**

Individuals assigned to HHS OpDiv/StaffDivs under IPA agreements, which provide that HHS will pay travel expenses and allowances, should submit their claims for such allowances and reimbursements on a travel voucher in the same manner as prescribed for permanent HHS employees. If an employee is drawing station per diem allowances, they should submit the travel vouchers at the end of each month, a minimum of every 30 days, or in accordance with the OpDiv/StaffDiv policy. Individuals claiming relocation allowances should submit their vouchers within five (5) workdays after the expense has been incurred and paid.

Note that a copy of the IPA agreement should accompany the voucher when submitted for reimbursement.

As stated in Section 9.5, the following worksheet is to be completed to provide the necessary cost comparisons for payment of per diem, limited relocation expenses, or multiple return trips home.

**Intergovernmental Personnel Act Travel and Transportation Cost Comparison Worksheet**

This worksheet is to be completed when a determination is made that the assignee is not going to be physically situated at the HHS OpDiv/StaffDiv work site during the length of the assignment.

Length of Assignment

Note: If the length of the assignment is six (6) months or less, compare the costs of Option 1 versus Option 3. If the length of the assignment is greater than six (6) months, compare the costs of Option 1, Option 2, and Option 3.

**OPTION 1: Reduced Per Diem Allowance** (This estimate represents what it would cost to pay a reduced per diem allowance had the assignee been physically situated at the HHS work site.)

- A. Total Cost of Lodging: An OpDiv/StaffDiv's established contractual agreement with an apartment rental (e.g., monthly rate)  
\$
  - B. Total Cost of M&IE: A reduced allowance based on the guidelines in Section 5.1.3.3  
\$
  - C. Total Cost of Return Travel: Airfare and ground transportation (once every two months)  
\$
- TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS OPTION 1: \$

**OPTION 2: Limited Relocation Allowances** (This estimate represents what it would cost to pay limited relocation allowances.)

- A. Travel and transportation expenses of the employee to the assignment location  
\$
  - B. Travel and transportation of the employee's immediate family to the assignment location \$
  - C. Transportation and temporary storage of expenses of the employee's household goods and personal effects \$
  - D. Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expenses \$
  - E. Miscellaneous Expense Allowance \$
  - F. Non-Temporary storage of the employee's household goods and personal effects (if applicable) \$
- TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS OPTION 2: \$

**OPTION 3: Repeated TDY Trips to the HHS Work Site** (This represents what it would cost to allow the employee to make repeated TDY trips to the HHS work site and return home.)

Number of trips anticipated:   
Total cost of airfare: \$   
Total cost of lodging: \$   
Total cost of M&IE: \$   
Total cost of ground transportation: \$   
Total cost of miscellaneous allowances: \$   
  
TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS OPTION 3: \$

Regardless of which cost comparison is made, if an option with a higher cost estimate is selected, a monetary limitation (“cap”) is to be placed on that estimate that does not exceed the lowest cost estimate. If later, the actual expenses incurred exceed the capped amount by up to 10 percent, approval for the increase must be obtained from the OpDiv/StaffDiv STO. Actual expenses incurred that exceed the capped amount in excess of 10 percent are to be borne by the employee.

Justification:

_____	Approved	_____	Date
_____	Disapproved	_____	Date

**EXAMPLE:**

Length of Assignment 6 Months

**OPTION 1: Reduced Per Diem Allowance** (This estimate represents what it would cost to pay a reduced per diem allowance had the assignee been physically situated at the HHS work site.)

A. Total Cost of Lodging: An OpDiv/StaffDiv's established contractual agreement with an apartment rental (e.g., monthly rate)

\$15,000

B. Total Cost of M&IE: A reduced allowance based on the guidelines in Section 5.1.3.3

\$6,300

C. Total Cost of Return Travel: Airfare and ground transportation (once every two months)

\$1,950

TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS OPTION 1: \$23,250

**OPTION 2: Limited Relocation Allowances** (This estimate represents what it would cost to pay limited relocation allowances.)

A. Travel and transportation expenses of the employee to the assignment location \$800

B. Travel and transportation of the employee's immediate family to the assignment location \$1,200

C. Transportation and temporary storage of expenses of the employee's household goods and personal effects \$2,500

D. Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expenses \$2,310

E. Miscellaneous Expense Allowance \$500

F. Non-Temporary storage of the employee's household goods and personal effects (if applicable) \$1,100

TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS OPTION 2: \$8,410

**OPTION 3: Repeated TDY Trips to the HHS Work Site** (This represents what it would cost to allow the employee to make repeated TDY trips to the HHS work site and return home.)

Number of trips anticipated: 18

Total cost of airfare: \$9,000

Total cost of lodging: \$9,774

Total cost of M&IE: \$5,922

Total cost of ground transportation: \$2,700

Total cost of miscellaneous allowances: \$1,620

TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS OPTION 3: \$29,016

Regardless of which cost comparison is made, if an option with a higher cost estimate is selected, a monetary limitation (“cap”) is to be placed on that estimate that does not exceed the lowest cost estimate. If later, the actual expenses incurred exceed the capped amount by up to 10%, approval for the increase must be obtained from the OpDiv/StaffDiv STO. Actual expenses incurred that exceed the capped amount in excess of 10% are to be borne by the employee.

Justification:

_____	Approved	_____	Date
_____	Disapproved	_____	Date

Note: Based upon the sample, if Option 1 or Option 3 is selected, appropriate justification and explanation for the increased costs must be provided to the AO.

## 10. Government Contractor-issued Travel Charge Card including Travel and Transportation Legislative Requirements

This chapter provides supplemental guidance to OpDiv/StaffDiv policies concerning implementation of specific regulations stemming from various legislative Acts and OMB requirements related to the use of the Government Travel Charge Card Program. This chapter applies to all HHS civilian employees, as defined in 5 U.S.C. 5701(2) and in the FTR 301-1.

### 10.1 General

The Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-194) built upon the Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-264) and other legislation. It requires all Federal agencies to establish certain safeguards and internal controls for government charge card programs, and to establish penalties for violations, including dismissal when circumstances warrant and it increases oversight by providing that each agency Inspector General periodically conduct risk assessments and audits to identify fraud and improper use of government charge cards, including the Travel Charge Card.

The OMB Circular 123, Appendix B, effective January 15, 2009, established travel charge card requirements to reduce the risk of fraud, misuse, and late payments. It mandates that agencies perform credit worthiness assessments of all new travel charge card applicants prior to issuing a card. It requires implementation of split disbursement and salary offset for travel charge card holders. It identifies reporting requirements related to the travel charge card, and it requires agencies to maintain policies that ensure administrative and/or disciplinary actions are initiated against cardholders who fail to use the charge card properly or fail to make timely payments.

### 10.2 Mandatory Use of Government Contractor-Issued Travel Charge Card

Employees must use the travel charge card, an IBA or CBA, for all official travel expenses, including cash advances through an ATM machine if they travel five (5) or more times a year unless they have an exemption under FTR 301-52.2 or an OpDiv/StaffDiv approved exemption under FTR 301-51.3. All employees must apply for a travel charge card to perform official travel. If an employee has an IBA, they should not use the CBA unless authorized by the AO and the Lead A/OPC. If the IBA is suspended or closed due to delinquency, they may not use the CBA unless authorized by the AO and the Lead A/OPC. See Section 10.3.3, HHS Travel Charge Card “Zero Tolerance Policy” for information on the proper use of the travel charge card.

It is HHS policy that the travel charge card may not be used for local transportation (formerly local travel) expenses unless one of the conditions outlined in Section 10.2.8 below is met. Employees must pay bills for use of the travel charge card in accordance with the terms of the cardholder’s agreement they sign with the agency.

#### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 301-51, Subpart A, Paying Travel Expenses B General

FTR Part 301-70, Subpart H, Internal Policies and Procedures Relating to Mandatory Use of the Government Contractor-Issued Travel Charge Card for Official Travel

#### 10.2.1 Granting Exemptions in HHS

The FTR grants authority to the head of a Federal agency or designee to exempt any payment, person, type, class of payments, or type or class of agency personnel from the mandatory use of the travel charge card, if the exemption is determined to be necessary in the interest of the agency. Exemptions must be in writing. In HHS, the ASA will grant Department-wide exemptions for specific types or classes of payments or agency personnel.

Heads of OpDiv/StaffDivs or their designees may grant additional exemptions only for individual payments or persons in their organizations. The following information must be included in a written exemption memorandum:

- Letterhead should specify the name of the issuing HHS OpDiv/StaffDiv;
- “Date:” should reflect the date that the exemption is issued;
- “To:” should name the employee receiving the exemption;
- “From:” should be the title of the manager granting the exemption;
- “Subject:” should be “Exemption from Mandatory Travel Charge Card Use;”
- The body of the memo should include a description of what the exemption is for, its duration, and reason for granting it; and
- Name and signature should reflect the “Exemption Authorizing Official.”

Exemptions should only be granted under exceptional or unusual circumstances when it is determined to be necessary and in the interest of the Agency.

Within OpDiv/StaffDivs, the authority to grant mandatory travel charge card exemptions on an individual case basis should be consistent with other travel authority delegations. HHS officials who grant exemptions will retain the original written exemption in their travel administrative files for the life of the exemption. Whenever the exemption terminates its duration (e.g., the limit is a single trip) or is canceled, it must be retained an additional six (6) years and three (3) months for audit purposes. Exemption memoranda should be maintained in an “exemption” travel file with separate “current” and “inactive” folders, in which memoranda are filed alphabetically by the employee’s last name. If a long-term or indefinite exemption is canceled, mark “canceled” on the document, initial and date, and move it from the “current” to the “inactive” folder.

Note: If an OpDiv/StaffDiv uses a Government contractor-issued CBA for certain types or classes of travel payments (e.g., airline tickets), such payments meet mandatory travel charge card use requirements and should not be listed as an exemption.

### **10.2.1.1 Notification to GSA of Exemptions**

HHS officials with exemption authority will provide written notification, within 30 days after granting new exemptions, directly to the Administrator of General Services (Attention: MTT), 1800 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20405, at the following levels:

- The ASA will provide written notification of Department-wide exemptions to GSA on behalf of all HHS components.
- OpDiv/StaffDiv officials are responsible for providing written notifications to GSA for any individual exemptions they grant in their own OpDiv/StaffDivs; a copy should not be sent to the ASA.

### **10.2.2 Department-wide Exemptions**

In addition to the Government-wide exemptions specified in the FTR, the former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Finance (DASF) granted the exemptions listed below to HHS civilian employees, under delegated authority, and each of the exemptions remains in effect. The Exemptions for Agency Employees are for the following types of personnel:

1. Members of national advisory councils and advisory committees;
2. Temporary employees, whose term of appointment are less than 120 days;

3. Intermittent or temporary consultants and experts, paid on a daily when- actually-employed (WAE) basis, serving less than one year; and
4. Special Government Employees (SGEs) (e.g., scientist and researchers from private industry and academia) who serve as second level review officials of grant applications.

Note that HHS has adopted the GSA Government-wide exemption for mandating application for the travel charge card. HHS management may exercise its discretion in appropriate cases to require infrequent travelers to apply for that charge card or permit them to retain cards issued to them previously.

The Exemptions for Types or Classes of Payments are:

1. Telephone calls (when a Government calling card is not available);
2. Purchases costing less than \$10; and
3. Relocation allowances for en route travel and househunting trips.

#### **10.2.2.1 Use of Personal Cards in the ETS**

HHS employees that are required to use the government travel charge card, IBA, may not have a personal charge card in the ETS. Only employees who do not have an IBA because they are an infrequent traveler, as defined by HHS, or meet one of the exceptions in Section 10.2.2 Department-wide Exemptions may enter a personal card in the ETS for securing hotel rooms and/or rental cars, if authorized by the AO.

#### **10.2.3 Use of Travel Charge Card for Official Travel Where Exemptions Have Been Granted**

Employees who have a government travel charge card may use the card for types or classes of official travel payments that have been given an exemption from mandatory travel charge card use. Use of the travel charge card where such a type/class of payments exemption has been given is discretionary.

#### **10.2.4 Credit Worthiness**

Effective January 22, 2007, pursuant to Section 846 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2006 (P.L. 109-115) as referenced in the OMB Circular A-123 Appendix B, all new applicants for an individual travel charge card must use the contractor form that requires the applicant to initial their agreement/refusal for a credit score check prior to issuance of a travel charge card. Examples of acceptable types of credit scores include a Fair Isaac Corporation (FICO) score, a Beacon score, etc. If a traveler does not want to authorize the credit score check, they may have to use the paper application form instead of the online application provided by the contractor bank. Any individual with a FICO score below 660, or who refuses to permit a credit score check, will be issued a restricted travel charge card. A restricted travel charge card will have a lower credit limit than the HHS standard credit limit and will not have any ATM withdrawal capability. Lead (Level 3) A/OPCs may temporarily increase limits and/or ATM capability.

Neither the contractor bank nor HHS will see any of the individual's credit file data. An individual, issued a restricted travel charge card due to a FICO score below 660, may contact the credit bureau if they believe that there is an error. There will be no fee charged by the contractor bank for the credit score check.

#### **10.2.5 Refusal to Apply for and/or Use the Government Travel Charge Card**

Employees who meet the definition of frequent travelers and refuse to apply for and/or use the travel charge card for official travel, or have had their travel charge cards canceled for misuse or abuse, will not be authorized a cash or direct deposit travel advance unless they otherwise are covered by an exemption.

## 10.2.6 Responsibility to Pay Travel Charge Card Bills in Accordance with Cardholder Agreement

Employees are responsible for reading and adhering to the policies and procedures specified in the cardholder agreement they sign in order to obtain a Government travel charge card.

Under the cardholder agreement, the travel charge card bill is due and payable in full by the date noted on the billing statement.

The employee is liable to the travel charge card bank for full reimbursement of all charges authorized by the employee, independent of any agreement or program for reimbursement that may exist between the employee and the HHS OpDiv/StaffDiv.

### 10.2.6.1 Disputed Charges

The cardholder agreement informs employees about how to handle disputed charges on a travel charge card bill. The employee should follow these procedures by submitting a signed “Cardholder Statement of Questioned Item” form to the bank within 60 days of the statement date on which the original transaction appears.

Once the form is received, the bank will issue a temporary credit to the employee’s account while the dispute is being researched.

While the bank is conducting this investigation, the cardholder does not need to pay the amount of the disputed charge and it will not be considered past due.

## 10.2.7 Improper Use of the Government Travel Charge Card

The travel charge card must only be used for official transportation and travel related expenses. Employees must not use the travel charge card to make personal purchases or ATM withdrawals for personal use.

The Department has issued several policy memos regarding the use and misuse of the Government travel charge card. The OMB Circular No. 123, Appendix B, mandates agencies to maintain policies that ensure administrative and/or disciplinary actions are initiated against cardholders who fail to use the charge card properly or fail to make timely payments.

## 10.2.8 Use of Government Travel Charge Card for Local Transportation (Formerly Local Travel)

It is HHS policy that the travel charge card may only be used for official travel and related expenses connected with TDY travel or relocation. The travel charge card may not be used for expenses within the defined local transportation area unless:

1. A travel order has been issued consistent with the limited exception described in Section 4.2.2.2;
2. Travel is performed for training under GETA as per Section 4.2.2.3;
3. An exception is authorized by the ASA as per Section 4.2.2.4; or
4. The employee is authorized to rent a car for a local transportation area site visit or similar purpose, in which case the travel charge card must be used for renting the car and gasoline expenses. See Section 4.1.10.2, Rental Vehicles, for additional information on the use of rental cars.

## 10.2.9 Internal Controls over Government Travel Charge Card

Heads of OpDiv/StaffDivs or their designees are responsible for establishing appropriate management controls over the travel charge card program to ensure compliance with FTR requirements, HHS policy guidance contained in this Chapter, and the

HHS task order with the card-issuing bank. They are also responsible for providing guidance to their managers on disciplinary issues when employees violate mandatory travel charge card usage policies.

Each OpDiv/StaffDiv must establish and follow their Government Travel Charge Card Program Zero Tolerance and Disciplinary Policy.

As part of this internal control system, each OpDiv/StaffDiv will establish a network of employees designated as A/OPCs and issue supplemental procedural guidelines to handle internal administration of the travel charge card program within their organization.

## **10.3 Government Contractor-Issued Travel Charge Card Regulations**

### **10.3.1 Purpose**

This section provides the policies and procedures governing the use of the HHS travel charge card program. GSA developed the Government travel charge card program to procure transportation services and pay for per diem and other allowable travel-related expenses incurred during official travel. The goal of the program is to reduce HHS' cash requirements by diminishing the need for travel advances and improving internal controls, cash management, and administrative procedures.

### **10.3.2 HHS Travel Charge Card Policy and Related Regulations**

The following subsections list the various regulations and policies related to the use of the Government travel charge card program.

#### **10.3.2.1 Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012, Public Law 112-194**

The Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act was signed into law on October 5, 2012; it built upon the Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-264) and other legislation. It requires all federal agencies to establish certain safeguards and internal controls for government travel charge card programs, and to establish penalties for violations, including dismissal when circumstances warrant, and it increases oversight by providing that each agency Inspector General periodically conduct risk assessments and audits to identify fraud and improper use of government charge cards, including the Government travel charge card.

#### **10.3.2.2 The Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998, P.L. 105- 264, 112 Stat. 2350**

The Travel and Transportation Reform Act (TTRA) of 1998 requires HHS to reimburse employees within 30 calendar days after employees submit a proper voucher to their travel AOs. Employees are held accountable for paying the travel charge card in accordance with the terms and conditions of their cardholder agreement.

#### **10.3.2.3 FTR Amendment 90**

This amendment implements the requirements of the TTRA including mandating the use of the travel charge card, collection of amounts owed, and the reimbursement of travel expenses.

#### **10.3.2.4 Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), 41 CFR Parts 301-51, 301-52, 301-54, 301-70, 301-71, and 301-76**

Section eliminated: FTR Redundant.

#### **10.3.2.5 GSA SmartPay2 Contract**

The GSA SmartPay program is the largest charge card program in the world serving more than 350 federal agencies. The use of the charge card program provides benefits for HHS such as detailed transaction data, the improved ability to monitor transaction details, travel insurance coverage, and tax recovery, and it eliminates the need and administrative burden to for offices to keep and track petty cash on hand.

#### **10.3.2.6 Human Resources Manual (HRM), Instruction 752: Discipline and Adverse Actions, dated March 20, 2009**

Instruction 752 is established under the authority of regulations issued by the Office of Personnel Management found at Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 752, Discipline and Adverse Actions. The Instruction clarifies roles and responsibilities for managers when addressing employee misconduct in the workplace. It also establishes guidance and criteria to ensure that corrective action is consistent with good management practices when travel charge cards are used incorrectly.

#### **10.3.2.7 Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, 5 CFR Parts 2635**

Public service is a public trust. Each employee has a responsibility to the U.S. Government and its citizens to place loyalty to the Constitution, laws, and ethical principles above private gain. To ensure that every citizen can have complete confidence in the integrity of the Federal Government, each employee shall respect and adhere to the principles of ethical conduct set forth in this regulation, as well as the implementing standards contained in this part and in supplemental agency regulations when utilizing their Government-issued travel charge card.

#### **10.3.2.8 Prompt Payment, 5 CFR Part 1315 RIN 0348-AB47**

The Prompt Payment rule ensures that federal agencies pay vendors in a timely manner. Prompt Payment assesses late interest penalties against agencies that pay vendors after a payment due date. This rate was established under the Contract Disputes Act and is referred to as the "Renegotiation Board Interest Rate," the "Contract Disputes Act Interest Rate," or the "Prompt Payment Act Interest Rate."

#### **10.3.2.9 Pay Administration; Collection by Offset From Indebted Government Employees, 5 CFR Part 550 RIN 3206-AH63**

The Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 (section 31001 of Public Law 104- 134, April 26, 1996) (DCIA) made changes to maximize the collection of delinquent debts owed to the Government while minimizing the costs of debt collection by consolidating related functions and using interagency teams.

### **10.3.3 HHS Travel Charge Card “Zero Tolerance Policy”**

This section sets forth the HHS Zero Tolerance Policy for any inappropriate charges and delinquencies. HHS’ Zero Tolerance Policy strictly prohibits the misuses itemized below for the travel charge card.

The Government contractor-issued travel charge card may only be used for official travel related expenses. Prohibited card uses include:

1. Unauthorized charges not associated with official travel, such as personal and family member use of the card.
2. Additional prohibited activities as listed in Sections 10.2.7 and 10.2.8 above.

3. Charges not related to official TDY travel including:
  - a. Use of the card for cash withdrawals from an automated teller machine, unless used in connection with official travel.
4. Shared use of the travel charge card with another employee for official travel purposes.
5. Allowing the account to become delinquent, (an account is delinquent after the due date on the statement).
6. Failure to use the travel charge card while on travel unless exempted.
7. Failure to pay accounts with sufficient funds (inadequate funds in the bank account to cover payment).
8. Failure to use the Government voucher reimbursement properly, via the ETS, to repay travel expenses.
9. Excessive cash advances, or cash advances not commensurate with official travel.

Several factors contribute to the misuse of travel charge cards, including issuing travel charge cards to employees who do not travel and the inadequate review of travel charge card expenses. An initial review of all cardholders should be made to ensure that the proper individuals have these cards. Accounts may be closed or placed in a user generated suspension status (deactivated) by the A/OPC for employees who no longer meet the criteria for having a travel charge card.

The underlying objective of the HHS Zero Tolerance Policy is to eliminate misuse and abuse in the travel charge card program so that it does not become necessary to impose disciplinary procedures on any HHS employee. Proper use of the travel charge card reduces the need to cancel travel charge card privileges, eliminates the administrative burden of taking action against employees, lessens the stress for all involved, and preserves the reputation of HHS and its employees to achieve its mission and goals with integrity.

The Government contractor-issued travel charge card will give employees financial flexibility and convenience while traveling on official Government business. Other advantages of the travel charge card include no-cost travel, accident and lost baggage insurance, direct purchase of common carrier tickets, and the opportunity to reserve lodging and rental cars when authorized in advance by OpDiv/StaffDiv management.

The spending limits issued on travel charge cards should be in line with the actual needs of each cardholder. A department-wide default limit per billing cycle is set for most OpDiv/StaffDiv travel charge cards. An OpDiv/StaffDiv must adhere to Departmental policy and guidance, but may choose to implement it in a more restrictive manner within its own OpDiv/StaffDiv. Please see the OpDiv/StaffDiv's Travel Charge Card Policy or Travel Policy Manual for additional information. This limit will be on all new cards unless OpDiv/StaffDiv management can justify a higher amount.

Possession and use of the travel charge card does not relieve the employee from observing rules and regulations governing official travel, including the use of Government City Pair contract carriers, American Flag or Open Skies carriers, Government car rental agreements, Government approved lodging facilities (FedRooms), or the use of the TMC.

Improper, fraudulent, abusive, or negligent use of a Government travel charge card is prohibited.

### **10.3.4 Responsibilities**

The offices and individuals listed below have direct responsibilities for monitoring the use of the travel charge card program.

#### **10.3.4.1 Assistant Secretary for Administration (ASA) and PSC**

The ASA and PSC issue and interpret Departmental policy and procedures on the use of the travel charge card. They also perform the following functions:

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1. Serve as the liaison to the contractor bank and GSA, with the assistance of the contracting officer, on issues dealing with the program;
2. Promote standardization, centralization, and automation of the program throughout HHS;
3. Establish department-wide operating limits for card usage, food, cash, and other expenses;
4. Review on a semi-annual basis all MCCs available on travel charge cards, and restrict, if necessary, any MCC not appropriate for use during official travel (See FTR 301-51.6);
5. Minimize the establishment of CBAs;
6. Monitor OpDiv/StaffDiv's compliance in the use of the travel charge card;
7. Implement appropriate risk management efforts in accordance with OMB Circular A-123 to include data mining analysis;
8. Promote and maximize travel charge card refunds;
9. Provide training to A/OPCs on HHS' Travel Charge Card Program in accordance with the Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012, Public Law 112-194 and OMB Circular A-123; and
10. Submit reports, as appropriate, to the OMB on HHS' travel charge card performance as covered in the HHS Travel Charge Card Management Plan.

### **10.3.4.2 Office of Human Resources (OHR)**

OHR is responsible for developing the personnel policies and disciplinary procedures for HHS. Specific excerpts related to travel charge card misuse are addressed in the Human Resources Manual, Instruction 752: Discipline and Adverse Actions, dated March 20, 2009 and subsequent revisions.

### **10.3.4.3 OpDiv/StaffDiv Heads or Senior Travel Official**

OpDiv/StaffDiv heads will establish internal procedures to promote the use of the travel charge card and to monitor fraud, waste, and abuse on the travel charge card. OpDiv/StaffDivs must ensure their employees receive training and information on how the travel charge card program operates, proper use of the travel charge card, safeguards to the travel charge card, and conveyance of the HHS Zero Tolerance Policy.

OpDiv/StaffDivs will conduct their program in accordance with the FTR, the GSA SmartPay 3 contract, the Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012, Public Law 112-194, and OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B, by taking advantage of services, technology, and refunds offered by the contractor bank. OpDiv/StaffDiv heads or their designees will:

1. Designate employee(s) and alternate(s) to act as A/OPCs. These individuals will administer the travel charge card program for their OpDiv/StaffDiv or appropriate operating unit(s).
2. Determine which employees are required to apply for and use a travel charge card, and sign the certification block on the Employee Acknowledgment Statement. (OpDiv/StaffDiv heads or their designee may delegate the signature authority to the employee's immediate supervisor.)
3. Establish procedures to classify and reevaluate travelers within appropriate travel charge card limits. (Card limits should be issued based on the frequency and/or duration of travel.)
4. Document the reason for granting employees higher limits. (OpDiv/StaffDivs are generally prohibited from increasing an employee's travel charge card limit to accommodate a traveler who has failed to pay their travel charge card in full and/or on time.)

5. Ensure A/OPCs, AOs, and cardholders are trained and recertified as required, adequately staffed, and aware of their program responsibilities. Specifically, ensure that:
  - a. A/OPCs are recertified every year; and
  - b. Travelers are recertified every three (3) years.

#### **10.3.4.4 Agency/Organization (A/OPC) Program Coordinators**

A/OPCs will ensure all cardholders have completed travel charge card training requirements before card issuance. They should regularly utilize the online reporting capabilities provided by the contractor bank to monitor for potential travel charge card misuse and delinquency trends. To increase HHS' retention of travel charge card rebates for timely payment, A/OPCs are responsible for monitoring the monthly delinquency reports provided by the contractor for employees who are in a pre-suspension status. These reports must be forwarded to supervisors for appropriate action, including counseling, disciplinary action, and salary offset in conjunction with the OpDiv/StaffDiv's policies and procedures.

Lead (Level 3) A/OPCs will also perform the following functions:

1. Verify applicant's completion of required travel charge card training requirements and assist with the completion of the card application. Note that:
  - a. Employees must receive travel charge card training prior to receiving the travel charge card, and recertify every three (3) years. In addition, A/OPCs must maintain a file of Certificate of Completion of training for all cardholders. This file may be requested by PSC for auditing purposes.
  - b. A/OPCs must receive travel charge card training and recertify every year, and a file of Certificate of Completion of training for all A/OPCs must be maintained by the Lead A/OPC. This file may be requested by PSC for auditing purposes.
2. Advise applicants of creditworthiness and the issuance of a Standard or Restricted card.
3. Monitor the use of CBAs. The use of a CBA results in significant administrative costs to the OpDiv/StaffDiv. A CBA will be used only to pay for common carrier (e.g., airfare expenses) and related transaction fees for either:
  - a. Employees not issued a travel charge card; or
  - b. All employees in the OpDiv/StaffDiv according to the OpDiv/StaffDiv policy.
4. Provide to the contractor bank a listing of the names of the coordinator(s) and alternate(s), their mailing addresses, and their telephone numbers. A/OPCs will also provide this information to PSC.
5. Provide eligible employees requesting a travel charge card with a copy of the Departmental and OpDiv/StaffDiv specific guidance on the use of the travel charge card and training requirements.
6. Ensure completeness of the Employee Acknowledgment Statement and maintain a central file of these signed documents, along with a copy of the application for all current cardholders.
7. Complete sections designated for OpDiv/StaffDiv information and authorization on the employee card account application, if applicable.
8. Forward the original copy of the application to the contractor bank, if applicable.
9. Monitor the monthly charges including attempted charges, actual charges, and delinquency reports to identify employees who:

- a. Have left HHS;
  - b. Have violated the HHS Zero Tolerance Policy;
  - c. Have had additional administrative restrictions placed on their accounts; and/or
  - d. Are in an inactive traveler status and are using the travel charge card inappropriately.
10. Notify the appropriate manager(s), employee's immediate supervisor, or the employee, in accordance with established OpDiv/StaffDiv policy and procedures of possible misuse or delinquencies of 60 days or more. For consistent notification procedures within HHS, OpDiv/StaffDivs may use the "Inappropriate Use, Unauthorized Use and Delinquent Memorandum" for warning employees of potential travel charge card misuse and delinquency.
  11. Submit quarterly reports of travel charge card misuse/abuse and the actions that were taken to PSC to meet OMB requirements as provided for in the Travel Card Management Plan. Reports are due at the end of the first business week following the end of the fiscal quarter.
  12. Notify the contractor bank of any mission-related extenuating circumstances for which an employee's delinquent account should not be suspended.
  13. Notify the contractor bank when an employee transfers between offices within HHS. Ensure that the transferring employee understands their responsibility to pay their proper travel charge card charges in full and on time. Ensure that the appropriate official signs an exit clearance or other form to document the close out of the card or transfers the card, in accordance with OpDiv/StaffDiv policy, when an employee transfers within HHS.
  14. Cut the card in half when notified that an employee's card has been cancelled because of inappropriate use or delinquency; or when an employee leaves, retires, or transfers to another Government agency.
  15. If applicable, reactivate travel charge cards when employees are authorized for travel where necessary.

A/OPCs and GSA Contracting Officers have the authority to suspend, cancel, or void accounts under their purview, and must maintain documentation of the reason for the suspension, cancellation, or voiding of the account. In the event of notification of potential fraud, the OpDiv/StaffDiv Level 3 (Lead) A/OPC must notify the OIG and/or the contractor bank.

#### **10.3.4.5 Cardholder's Immediate Supervisor<sup>xii</sup>**

The cardholder's immediate supervisor will perform the following actions:

1. Authorize cash advances in amounts in accordance with Section 3.3, Travel Advances. Cash advances should be reduced by the amount of expenses that will be charged directly to the travel charge card or to the travel voucher claim. The Supervisor must notify the A/OPC if the advance authorized is greater than 60 percent, in accordance with Section 3.3.2.1, Calculating Allowable Advance.
2. Notify the employee of any questionable or inappropriate charges and/or delinquencies and give the employee the opportunity to explain such an action. A record shall be maintained of the notification and the explanation received from the employee. All questionable charges should be reported to the assigned A/OPC.
3. Contact the OpDiv/StaffDiv servicing Human Resources Personnel Office for a determination of the appropriate disciplinary action if an explanation is inadequate to support a questionable charge. At the discretion of the OpDiv/StaffDiv, the card may be suspended. The cardholder's immediate supervisor must maintain documentation of referrals to the OpDiv/StaffDiv's servicing Human Resources Personnel Office and document the resolution of the incident.
4. Suspend the travel charge card if there is a pattern of inappropriate use or insufficient explanation for repeated delinquencies or suspected abuse/misuse.

5. Provide the employee's A/OPC with the travel charge card for cancellation when it has been suspended because of inappropriate use or delinquency.
6. Notify the A/OPC when an employee is transferring between offices within HHS.
7. Retrieve the travel charge card from the employee and return it to the A/OPC for cancellation when an employee leaves, retires, or transfers to another Government agency.
8. Ensure that the departing employee understands the responsibility to pay their proper travel charge card charges in full and on time. The supervisor will ensure that the appropriate official signs an exit clearance or other form to document close out and closure of the card or transfers the card, in accordance with OpDiv/StaffDiv policy, when an employee transfers within HHS.

#### **10.3.4.6 Employees**

Employees will complete all training requirements prior to applying for or issuance of a new Government travel charge card, and will complete refresher training every three (3) years in accordance with HHS policy, the Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012, Public Law 112-194, and OMB Circular A-123. Employees who are issued a travel charge card assume the responsibility of using the card for official travel purposes and paying their charges in a timely manner.

Use of the travel charge card does not relieve the employee of the responsibility to engage in prudent travel practices and to observe rules and regulations governing travel as set forth in the FTR, the HHS Travel Policy Manual, the HHS Zero Tolerance Policy, and OpDiv/StaffDiv specific policies and procedures. Cardholders are personally responsible for all items billed to the card, unless the card was reported lost or stolen, or the charges were disputed directly with the contractor bank.

Employees shall pay the contractor bank in accordance with the contractor bank payment terms. These responsibilities are explained in the Cardholder Agreement that each employee signs during the application process. Furthermore, employees are not relieved of their obligation to pay the travel charge card bill in those rare instances when the OpDiv/StaffDiv has not reimbursed the traveler within the 30 days after receipt of a timely submitted voucher in accordance with FTR 301-52.24.

In addition, employees must:

1. Apply for a travel charge card if expected to travel five (5) or more times a year.
2. Complete the HHS online Travel Charge Card Training, (*Health and Human Services Travel Charge Card Training (00047851, 1.0)* available via the Learning Management System) or his/her OpDiv/StaffDiv's in-house travel charge card training program for cardholders and attach a certificate of completion to the application, where applicable, or provide to the A/OPC.
3. Complete Travel Charge Card refresher training every three (3) years.
4. Comply with and periodically review the card issuer agreement and all HHS and OpDiv/StaffDiv guidance.
5. Use the travel charge card for all travel expenses associated with TDY travel unless an exemption applies.
6. Use the travel charge card only for authorized official Government travel expenses and be aware of what constitutes misuse.
7. Keep the travel charge card secure at all times, and do not allow others to use the card.
8. Report lost or stolen travel charge cards immediately to the contractor bank and to the appropriate A/OPC.
9. Submit proper reimbursement vouchers within five (5) working days following completion of the trip.
10. Pay travel charge card bills on time (regardless of voucher reimbursement status).

11. Take personal responsibility by following up with travel preparers, travel approving officials, the Office of Finance or similar office, and the contractor bank, as appropriate, to ensure timely travel voucher reimbursement as well as proper split-disbursement postings.
12. Document instances where the system did not support the traveler's efforts to obtain travel reimbursement in a timely manner. Examples of this would be if the ETS was not available for an extended period because of system issues such as year-end closing or if the traveler experienced excessive delays with document approvals, etc.

It is the traveler's responsibility to produce documentation showing that the traveler fully participated in the process, followed OpDiv/StaffDiv policies concerning timely reporting of expenses, and followed up in writing repeatedly in an attempt to obtain reimbursement. If the traveler has followed OpDiv/StaffDiv procedures and they are not reimbursed due to systematic issues or other issues beyond the control of the traveler, delays in payment will not be considered misuse or abuse. This does not relieve the cardholder from paying the travel charge card in accordance with the cardholder agreement.

13. Review and be familiar with what are allowable and unallowable travel charge card charges.
14. Review at least yearly the HHS Do's and Don'ts Handbook.
15. Respond to A/OPC inquiries about travel charge card issues within one week.

### **10.3.5 Travel Planning**

#### **10.3.5.1 Travel Charge Card Issuance**

Employees must apply for and use the travel charge card, an IBA or CBA, for all official travel expenses, unless he/she has an OpDiv/StaffDiv approved exemption under FTR 301-51-1.

#### **10.3.5.2 Use of the Travel Charge Card**

The travel charge card will be used whenever and wherever possible for airline and other common carrier transportation services, hotel/motel, restaurant, automobile rental, gasoline and other expenses incurred incident to official travel. Travelers should note the following guidelines as well:

1. Airline tickets should not be charged more than three days in advance of the trip, unless otherwise specified per their OpDiv/StaffDiv ticket issuance policy. This will minimize the situation where employees receive their monthly billing statements for tickets prior to receiving their reimbursement for the entire trip.
2. Employees who acquire common carrier transportation with their travel charge card and either lose the ticket, or fail to use all or part of the ticket, are responsible for obtaining a credit for the unused ticket or reporting a loss to the carrier. Failure to obtain a credit from the carrier will result in the employee being financially liable for the entire amount of the ticket. Employees should not submit the unused ticket charged to the individually billed travel charge card account to an OpDiv/StaffDiv payment office with the travel voucher. The unused ticket shall be returned to the TMC, or the employee must follow other procedures prescribed by the employee's OpDiv/StaffDiv policy.
3. Payment of an advance room deposit when required by the lodging facility is allowed under FTR 301-71.301. However, an advance room deposit cannot be used to circumvent the policies for travel related to conferences. See Section 1.5, Attendance at Conferences.
4. The travel charge card cannot be used to procure official travel and transportation services from commercial travel offices that are not under contract with the Government to provide such services to Government travelers such as Orbitz, Travelocity, etc., in accordance with Section 3.4.1.
5. HHS prohibits the use of the travel charge card to obtain contract City Pair fares on a common carrier for a member of the employee's family who is not on Government authorized travel while accompanying the employee.

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6. HHS prohibits the use of the travel charge card to obtain contract City Pair fares for personal side trips taken in conjunction with official travel. Travelers should refer to their OpDiv/StaffDiv policy for procedures related to travel by an indirect route for personal reasons including leave in conjunction with TDY.
7. HHS restricts most MCCs that offer services and/or products that are non- travel related expenses. As a precautionary measure, for those merchants who are misclassified within the travel charge card program, employees are prohibited from use of their travel charge card to procure the following:
  - a. Book and Magazine Subscriptions;
  - b. Membership Fees;
  - c. Training and Conference Fees;
  - d. Higher Education Expenses;
  - e. Theme Park tickets and related entertainment;
  - f. Management Consulting Services;
  - g. Automobile Purchases; Car Repairs & Services;
  - h. Clothing, Lingerie, Outerwear, Shoes & Furniture;
  - i. Hair Services, Cosmetics, Tattoos, & Massages;
  - j. Emergency Medical Services;
  - k. Office Supplies;
  - l. Computers, Televisions, or Digital Equipment; and
  - m. Any service or product obtained for personal, family, or household purposes.
8. HHS prohibits the use of the travel charge card to purchase fuel and procure minor maintenance services on GSA fleet or OpDiv/StaffDiv-owned vehicles. Use of the HHS fleet card is the appropriate payment method for purchases incurred while operating Government-owned vehicles.

### **10.3.5.3 Exceptions to the Use of the Travel Charge Card**

GSA has exempted the following official travel expenses and/or classes of employees from the mandatory use of the travel charge card:

1. Expenses incurred at a vendor that does not accept the Government travel charge card;
2. Laundry/dry cleaning;
3. Parking;
4. Local transportation systems;
5. Taxi (Only if they do not accept credit cards);
6. Tips;
7. Meals (when use of the card is impractical, for example, group meals or when the travel charge card is not accepted);

8. Phone calls (when a Government calling card is available for use in accordance with Departmental and OpDiv/StaffDiv policy);
9. Employees who travel five times or less per year, although an OpDiv/StaffDiv may issue travel charge cards to such employees, at its discretion;
10. New OpDiv/StaffDiv employees who must travel before receiving their travel charge card;
11. When an employee has an application pending for the travel charge card;
12. When individuals are traveling on invitational travel orders on behalf of another Government Agency or another OpDiv/StaffDiv; and
13. Relocation allowances except for en route travel and house-hunting trips. See Chapter 12, Relocation Allowances, for additional information.

#### 10.3.5.4 Cash Advances

An employee may use the travel charge card to obtain cash advances for exempted expenses described in Section 10.3.5.3 above if authorized in advance by his/her supervisor. These cash advances are limited to 60 percent of the M&IE rate for the TDY location and other cash expenses in accordance with Section 3.3.2.1, Calculating Allowable Advance.

Travel advances should be withdrawn not more than two (2) business days prior to the trip. HHS will reimburse travelers for service fees incurred for ATM cash advances. Cash obtained from the ATM in amounts greater than required for the travel duration are considered excessive cash advances and are subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the employee's OpDiv/StaffDiv policy. Actual use of the travel charge card may be verified from the reports available to HHS and the OpDiv/StaffDiv from the contractor bank and PSC.

#### 10.3.5.5 Travel Voucher Reimbursement

An employee must prepare and submit a travel voucher, together with any required receipts and documentation, to their AO within five (5) working days after completion of a trip or period of travel, or every 30 days if on continuous travel status, in accordance with Section 3.2.2. Within seven (7) working days of the receipt of the travel voucher, the OpDivs/StaffDivs' finance or paying office will notify employees of any error that would prevent timely payment, and the reasons why the voucher is not proper.

If employees are not reimbursed within 30-calendar days after submitting what is deemed as a proper voucher to their designated AO, the employees will receive a late payment fee in addition to the amount due. Late payment fees are calculated using the prevailing Prompt Payment Act Interest Rate beginning the 31st day after submission of a proper travel voucher and ending on the date on which the payment is made, or a flat fee of not less than the prompt payment amount.

#### 10.3.5.6 Split Disbursement

In accordance with OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B, HHS mandates the use of split disbursement for all Government travel charge cardholders. Split disbursement divides a travel voucher reimbursement between the Government travel charge card vendor and the traveler.

When used correctly for the direct payment of common carrier, lodging, rental car and other authorized miscellaneous expense transactions charged directly to the card, split disbursement reduces the cardholder's burden in making personal payments and assists in reducing delinquencies by directly reimbursing the contractor bank.

***Example:** Traveler is due \$300 in official travel reimbursement and elects to send the contractor bank a split-disbursement to pay the \$200 charged on the traveler's card for hotel, meals, and rental car expenses. The remaining \$100 reimbursement is sent to the traveler's designated financial institution*

*account.*

## **10.3.6 Travel Charge Card Internal Controls**

### **10.3.6.1 Cumulative Use of Travel Charge Card Reports**

The Departmental Coordinator and/or the Lead A/OPC's will use cumulative travel charge card activity reports for the purposes of determining whether or not employees meet program eligibility criteria, the level of participation, and for establishing budget estimates for travel.

### **10.3.6.2 Travel Charge Card Operations during Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Services including National Special Security Events (NSSE) and Similar Situations**

Employees, designated as members of an emergency response team or continuity of operation plans (COOP), are exempt from deactivation and cancellation requirements due to inactivity. OpDiv/StaffDivs should forward a listing to their A/OPC or Departmental Coordinator to ensure the members are placed in the appropriate credit limits for emergency designated personnel. In addition, HHS, in conjunction with the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), may issue HHS travel charge cards to local and state first responders in accordance with guidelines developed by PSC. See Chapter 11 of this manual for additional information.

### **10.3.6.3 Deactivation and Reactivation**

The Departmental Coordinator will work with the contractor bank to perform semi-annual deactivation of cards that remain inactive during a six-month period. A/OPCs should deactivate cards upon notification from the employee's immediate supervisor of travel charge card ineligibility.

An infrequent traveler should contact his/her OpDiv/StaffDiv A/OPC or contractor bank to determine the status of his/her travel charge card for subsequent travel. An employee with a deactivated travel charge card will need to contact his/her A/OPC or OpDiv/StaffDiv travel coordinator at least 72 hours (three (3) working days) prior to travel commencement to have the travel charge card reactivated.

### **10.3.6.4 Collection of Delinquent Payments from Employee Pay**

In accordance with their cardholder agreement, employees are obligated to pay the undisputed balance within 30 days of the billing statement date. Individual card account balances that are delinquent, and that are not disputed amounts, will be eligible for the HHS travel charge card salary offset program.

Before amounts are offset from an employee's pay, HHS must provide the employee with:

1. Written notice of the amount and the intention to collect the delinquent amount from the employee's disposable pay (i.e., salary payment);
2. The opportunity to inspect records regarding the claim;
3. The opportunity to make a written agreement with the contractor bank to repay the delinquent amount; and
4. The opportunity for review, with HHS, of its decision to collect the amount in accordance with FTR 301-54.100.

The contractor bank may request collection assistance on accounts 61 or more days past due from the statement date. Upon written request from the contractor bank, 64 days past the statement date, the Payroll Services Division (PSD) will begin the

Salary Offset process and provide due process notification to the delinquent employee, following the requirements contained in FTR 301-54.100.

A due process letter, which will be issued by the PSD, will be sent to the employee detailing his/her rights as a debtor. Following the notification of due process, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) will collect from an employee's salary payment any undisputed amounts owed to the contractor bank. Administrative offset from the employee's salary payment may not exceed 15 percent of disposable pay unless the cardholder authorizes a higher amount. No offset of disputed debts will be made except pursuant to the garnishment regulations in 5 CFR Part 582.

HHS may offset an employee's final pay to recover delinquent amounts that are not disputed and are due to the contractor bank. Salary offset may apply to an exiting employee's final payment provided the due process requirements discussed above have been followed.

### **10.3.6.5 Suspension/Cancellation of Travel Charge Cards**

The charge card contractor will suspend an account once an undisputed transaction remains unpaid for 61 days from the statement date in which the unpaid charges first appeared. The contractor will close an account once undisputed transactions remain unpaid for 91 days from the statement date in which the unpaid charges first appeared. An account may also be closed if it has been suspended twice during the preceding 12 months and becomes delinquent a third time.

The contractor will not suspend any account for disputed charges. Upon payment of the undisputed principal amount, the contractor will automatically reinstate a suspended account. The automatic reinstatements are only allowed on suspended accounts less than 90 days from the statement date. The travel charge card contractor bank maintains a suspension/cancellation/reinstatement file on all accounts.

Employees who have lost their charge card privileges due to card cancellation by the contractor bank because of delinquency or use of the card for non-official purposes and need to perform official travel must charge their airfare to their OpDiv/StaffDiv CBA. All other travel related costs must be paid by the employee using a personal charge card or with personal funds. The employee will be reimbursed once a proper voucher, including receipts, is submitted.

### **10.3.6.6 Advances for Travelers with Cancelled Cards**

A cancelled travel charge card account reflects unfavorable past performance. For this reason, employees with cancelled travel charge card accounts are considered high risk in the repayment of travel advances. In the case of extreme hardship, employees who have lost their charge card privileges may request written approval for a travel advance on a trip-by-trip basis from their OpDiv/StaffDiv STO. Consideration of such requests will be made on a case-by-case basis, and approval should not be assumed.

A written record of all such approvals, as well as the basis for each approval, will be maintained by the approving office and a copy forwarded to the PD Administrative Payments Section for system processing. The OIG shall regularly review this record during program-specific audits.

Employees are expected to comply with this policy by promptly resolving any outstanding balance on the travel charge card. The use of personal funds to finance all travel expenses (except transportation tickets) on official travel is authorized when an employee's travel charge card account has been cancelled. When personal funds are thus used, employees will be reimbursed for qualifying travel expenses by submitting a proper travel voucher.

## **10.3.7 Late Payment Fees If Traveler Not Reimbursed within 30 Days**

If a traveler is not reimbursed by the agency within 30 days for expenses properly submitted, then the traveler may be entitled to late payment fees. Late payment fees consist of two elements:

1. A late payment fee calculated using the prevailing Prompt Payment Act Interest Rate beginning on the 31st day after the required payment date and ending on the date which payment is made; and

2. An amount equivalent to any late payment charge that the card contractor would have been able to charge the employee had the bill not been paid.

### **10.3.7.1 Calculation of Late Payment Fee Equivalent to Card Contractor Late Payment Charges**

Under the current SmartPay contract, the contractor bank may impose a \$25 late fee on outstanding balances for accounts that meet cancellation criteria when they are between 121 and 150 days from the statement date. An additional \$25 late fee will be charged when the statement is 151 to 180 days from the statement date. A final \$25 late fee will be charged when the statement is 181 to 209 days from the statement date.

210 days from the statement date, the contractor bank is required under regulations to charge off the account, refer it to a collection agency, and notify the credit bureaus; no additional late fees are imposed thereafter.

### **10.3.7.2 Late Payment Fees of Less than One Dollar**

HHS will not pay late payment fees of less than one (1) dollar.

### **10.3.7.3 Finance Office Tax Reporting of Late Payment Fees**

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires different tax reporting treatment for the two types of late payment fees for travel vouchers:

1. For a late payment fee calculated using the prevailing Prompt Payment Act Interest Rate beginning on the 31st day after the required payment date on which payment is made, the HHS Finance Offices will report this late payment fee as interest income on IRS Form 1099-INT, in accordance with guidelines issued by the IRS. Current IRS guidelines state that interest paid in the course of business should be reported only if the interest totals \$600 or more for the tax year. (Note that this amount may be subject to change.) Also, refer to the HHS Departmental Accounting Manual, Chapter 10-70, Filing and Reporting Form 1099 Information Returns with the Internal Revenue Service.
2. For an additional late payment fee equivalent to any late payment (processing) charge that the card contractor would have been able to charge the employee had the bill not been paid, HHS Finance Offices will report this late payment fee as additional wages on Form W-2.

### **10.3.7.4 Collection of Undisputed, Delinquent Travel Charge Card Debts**

In accordance with the OMB Circular 123, Appendix B, Federal agencies are required to initiate necessary action to collect undisputed, delinquent charge card debt from employees to pay the bank contractor.

HHS has authorized the use of a salary offset for the collection of undisputed, delinquent charge card amounts via direct deduction from an employee's payroll disbursement on behalf of the charge card vendor. The direct deduction may not exceed 15 percent of the employee's disposable pay. Per the Circular, salary offset is mandatory.

## **10.4 Transit Subsidy Benefit Program Regulations**

### **10.4.1 Purpose**

This section provides the policies and procedures governing participation in the Transit Subsidy program.

## 10.4.2 Overview of the Transit Subsidy Benefit Program

PSC administers the transit subsidy benefit program for the majority of HHS employees using public transportation nationwide. This program does not serve AHRQ, NIH, or CDC, other than NCHS. These groups have independent transit subsidy programs.

The Transit Subsidy Benefit Program is a transportation incentive program offering transit subsidies to employees who commute to work by public transportation or vanpool. The dollar amount of the subsidy is determined by each agency and cannot exceed a maximum amount set by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for non-taxable fringe benefits.

PSC distributes and manages the *GO!card*® charge card program for individual commuters to receive and utilize their monthly benefit. For employees who use transit service providers not equipped to accept electronic payment, PSC will provide an alternate payment solution.

GSA developed the Government charge card program to procure transportation services. The *GO!card*®, provided by PSC, is used to provide transit benefits, which are automatically loaded each month so employees can purchase reloadable media, fare cards and passes directly from their transit vendor.

## 10.4.3 HHS Transit Subsidy Policy and Related Regulations

The following subsections list the various regulations and policies related to the use of the Transit Subsidy Benefit Program.

### 10.4.3.1 5 U.S.C., Subsection 2105

U.S. Code- Title 5: Government Organization and Employees, subsection 2105: Employee defines who is classified as a Federal Government employee.

### 10.4.3.2 Executive Order No. 13150

Federal agencies are required by Executive Order No. 13150 to implement a Transportation Fringe Benefit Program providing qualifies employees the option of excluding from gross income from certain commuting costs.

### 10.4.3.3 Federal Employees Clean Air Incentives Act

Congress enacted the Federal Employees Clean Air Incentives Act (FECAIA) Public Law No. 103-172 in 1993 to “improve air quality and to reduce traffic congestion by providing for the establishment of programs to encourage Federal employees to commute by means other than single-occupancy motor vehicles.”

### 10.4.3.4 Internal Revenue Code (IRC) 26 section 132 (f)

Executive Order No. 13150 must be viewed in conjunction with section 132 of Title 26, United States code, Internal Revenue Code (IRC). 26 USC § 132. Section 132(f)(1) defines “qualified transportation fringe” as “transportation in a commuter highway vehicle if such transportation is in connection with travel between the employee’s residence and place of employment; any transit pass; qualified parking (not applicable under Executive Order 13150)” The benefit amounts described in Section 2A are adjusted annually by IRS Revenue Procedures which set forth inflation adjusted items.

### 10.4.3.5 OMB Circular A-123 Appendix A Implementation Plans

Circular A-123 Appendix A prescribes a strengthened management process for assessing internal controls over financial reporting. Appendix A also requires a new management assurance statement specifically addressing the effectiveness of internal controls over financial reporting based on the results of management's assessment.

#### **10.4.3.6 OMB Memorandum, M-07-15, “Federal Transit Benefits Program”**

On May 14, 2007, OMB issued a memorandum to the Heads of Department and Agencies regarding the Federal Transit Benefit Program. The memorandum required agencies to implement, at a minimum, certain internal controls for the administration of the program.

#### **10.4.3.7 United States Code, Title 41, Section 1909**

U.S.C. Title 41, Section 1909(a) requires safeguards and internal controls be in place for the management of purchase cards, stating each executive agency that issues and uses purchase cards and convenience checks shall establish and maintain safeguards and internal controls to include maintaining a record of cardholders, assigning approving authorities, reconciling charges and disputed charges, summary reporting, promptly paying, crediting rebates and refunds properly, retaining record, conducting period reviews, providing cardholder training, and establishing policy. Specifically, the section states, “the executive agency uses effective systems, techniques and technologies to prevent or identify illegal, improper or erroneous purchases... and takes steps to recover the cost of any illegal, improper or erroneous purchase made with a purchase card or convenience check by an employee, including, as necessary, through salary offsets.”

#### **10.4.3.8 U.S. Code, Title 18, Section 1001**

Describes disciplinary action in the event of a false, fictitious, or fraudulent certification.

#### **10.4.3.9 OMB Internal Controls for Vanpools**

On April 27, 2012, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a memorandum to facilitate the timely return of any excess transit benefits accumulating on vanpool companies' accounts to the Treasury and to prevent the future accumulation of excess transit benefits. [Federal Register Volume 77, Number 250 (Monday, December 31, 2012)] [Notices] [Pages 77180-77181].

#### **10.4.3.10 National Archives and Records Administration General Records Schedules, Transmittal No. 22, April 2010**

Documents in either paper or electronic form relating to the disbursement of transportation subsidies to employees, including applications of employees no longer in the program, superseded applications, certification logs, vouchers, spreadsheets, and other forms used to document the disbursement of subsidies. Destroy when 3 years old. (N1-GRS-97-2, item 7).

## **10.5 Income Tax Reimbursement Allowance for Long-Term TDY Travel**

HHS employees (and spouses, if filing jointly) are eligible to receive an Income Tax Reimbursement Allowance (ITRA) if:

1. The employee is in a TDY travel status at one location for a period exceeding one year; and
2. The employee (and spouse, if filing jointly) incurs Federal, State, or local income taxes on amounts received as reimbursement for official travel expenses.

### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Interim Rule 7, Part 301-11, Subpart E-Income Tax Reimbursement Allowance (ITRA), Tax Years 1993 and 1994

FTR Interim Rule 7, Part 301-11, Subpart F-Income Tax Reimbursement Allowance (ITRA), Tax Years 1995 and Thereafter

Chapter 302-17.10, Claims for payment and supporting documentation and verification (Relocation Income Tax Allowances)

## **10.5.1 Documentation Required to Support ITRA Claims**

Employees will submit their claims on a travel voucher in accordance with the HHS OpDiv/StaffDiv's travel management system's procedures. They will provide standard documentation required to support an income tax allowance claim, as defined in FTR Chapter 302-17.10:

1. Certified Statement concerning income tax information being reported to HHS on this claim (see FTR 302-17.10 (a) for sample wording), signed by employee (and spouse, if filing jointly); and
2. Supporting Documentation (copies of W-2 and 1099 forms, and completed IRS Tax Return Form 1040 if the claim is for a past tax year).

## **10.5.2 Obligation of Funds for ITRA Claims**

ITRA claims should be charged to the appropriation of the fiscal year in which the taxable TDY expenses associated with the ITRA were incurred, regardless of when the ITRA claim is vouchered or paid.

# **11. Travel – Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Services including National Special Security Events (NSSE) and Similar Situations**

## **11.1 Purpose**

This chapter describes the policy and procedural guidelines as they pertain to travel associated with the provision of disaster relief and emergency response services during catastrophic and other similar situations. These situations require rapid mobilization of HHS resources to assist the American public or to support the needs of the U.S. Government.

Emergency response services necessary in the event of a disaster, natural or otherwise, or for a NSSE, often involve unique or extraordinary travel scenarios for Federal employees and those traveling on behalf of HHS. The policy guidance in this chapter is intended to address those scenarios that occur most often, but it does not address every possible scenario. An example would be limited hotel room availability. This could be due to a large number of attendees at an event, or it could be the result of a large number of lodging facilities being damaged or destroyed during a disaster.

Due to the fluid nature of response in the event of a disaster, NSSE, or other situation, please visit the PSC website for the most recent updates to the Disaster and Emergency Response Services Policy.

## **11.2 General Provisions**

### **11.2.1 Travel Authorization**

### 11.2.1.1 Disaster Response

A travel authorization may or may not be prepared in advance due to the short turnaround time of the required response service. In the event that a travel authorization has not been completed, verbal or email authorization to travel will be accepted until a travel authorization can be generated in the ETS. In the event that the ETS is neither accessible nor available, or if the individual traveler is traveling on behalf of HHS (e.g., is an Invitational Traveler), a manual authorization may be used (see Form HHS 1). The OpDiv/StaffDiv must advise the employee or individual selected to travel, not to incur any expenses until they have received the necessary verbal or written authorization from the appropriate AO.

If travel is in response to an international situation, the notification of foreign travel may be processed independently of the ETS by the OpDiv/StaffDiv travel office and coordinated with the STO, OGA, State Department, and PSC for the proper approvals. Whether the traveler is authorized through the ETS or by verbal or written authorization, the NFT process including security briefings, passports, visas, etc. as defined in Section 6, International Travel, must be completed.

### 11.2.1.2 National Special Security Events

Individual authorizations will be created prior to a NSSE by the travel office utilizing the ETS and distributed to the appropriate parties. If travel is in response to an international event, the notification of foreign travel will be processed through the ETS.

## 11.2.2 Vouchers Submitted in a Timely Manner

A voucher in the ETS or a completed copy of the ASPR Travel Expense Report or similar OpDiv/StaffDiv form, copies of all receipts for reimbursement, and a Foreign Trip Report for International Travel (see Section 6.2.9 Individual Reports) must be submitted within five (5) working days upon completion of a travel assignment.

If the funding source is through a mission assignment from FEMA or an interagency agreement, and the required paperwork is not submitted in a timely manner, the result may be a delay in reimbursement or denial of claim for reimbursement due to a lapse in funding. In addition, the incurred cost may be transferred to the employee's program office if there is a lapse of funding from the mission assignment. Funds would then have to be obligated by the employee's program office out of current year funds.

Even in the event that a traveler does not submit a claim for reimbursement, a voucher must always be created, signed, and submitted for financial close out of the mission in accordance with Section 3.2, Travel Vouchers, and U.S.C Title 31: 3702, which allows an authorized representative to submit a claim against the Government to the official responsible for settling claims.

### 11.2.2.1 Travel Charge Card

Travelers should check with the OpDiv/StaffDiv in charge of the response to the disaster or NSSE to determine how charges should be handled if the traveler is deployed on behalf of another OpDiv/StaffDiv. Charges to the traveler's OpDiv/StaffDiv-issued IBA should not be made if the OpDiv/StaffDiv office in charge of the response directs the traveler to use a CBA for airfare or lodging (if one is available). A traveler should consult with his/her home office for reimbursement of any charges related to his/her normal tour of duty responsibilities while deployed on behalf of another OpDiv/StaffDiv.

## 11.2.3 International

### 11.2.3.1 Passports

If the traveler is responding to an international incident, an official (maroon) passport must be used unless the country of response requires a tourist (blue) passport to be used for security reasons. Travelers may travel with both an official and tourist passport but can only use one at a time. For additional information, see Section 6.2.4, Passports and Visas.

### 11.2.3.2 Visas

Visas will be obtained based upon the urgency and nature of the mission. The travel office will coordinate with the STO, OGA, State Department, PSC, and personnel on the ground to obtain clearance as expeditiously as possible. For additional information, see Section 6.2.4, Passports and Visas.

## 11.3 Travel Reimbursement Policy

### 11.3.1 Transportation Expenses

HHS travel AOs, as well as HHS travelers, will follow the provisions of the FTR (or JTR if applicable) and the supplemental HHS policy guidelines found in this manual regarding authorizing, incurring, and approving transportation and travel related expenses for the response services in the case of a disaster, NSSE, or other situation.

Due to the nature and/or urgency of a response, travel AOs will select those modes of transportation and travel that are most advantageous to the Government, from a standpoint of providing the required services in a timely and safe manner. The travel must be approved by the appropriate OpDiv/StaffDiv office and arranged by the OpDiv/StaffDiv Travel Office and/or the TMC<sup>xiii</sup>.

Any self-booking of airfare, lodging, or additional travel services outside of the ETS and TMC will not be reimbursed without prior approval in accordance with Section 3.4.1, Mandatory Use of Government Travel Management Services for Reservations.

#### 11.3.1.1 Rental Car or Van

Employees must obtain vehicles from rental agencies that have negotiated agreements with the DTMO, when they have rental cars available that meet mission requirements. The terms and conditions of the agreements and rates apply to all Federal employees on official travel and include unlimited free mileage, plus full loss/collision damage waiver (LDW/CDW) on the rental vehicle as long as the Government Administrative Rate Supplement (GARS) fee of \$5.00 per day is charged. Travelers will not be reimbursed for the purchase of additional insurance CONUS and OCONUS – Non-Foreign. Travelers are advised to examine FTR 301-10.451 guidelines when renting a car in a foreign country.

#### Responsibility for Violations (Traffic, Parking, etc.)

In accordance with Comptroller General Decision B-107081, any violation (Traffic, Parking, etc.) committed while driving a government vehicle in the performance of official duties is a personal responsibility of the employee, and there is no authority for the payment of these violations from appropriated moneys.

#### Reimbursement for Rental of Car or Van

Travelers will not be reimbursed for taking out insurance at a nonparticipating provider unless authorized in advance by the mission-authorizing official in accordance with FTR 301-10.451. Travelers will not be reimbursed for any additional charges above the car rental ceiling rate without prior approval. If a car is under the Government Car Rental Agreement, it may be shared among official Government employees who are responding to the mission.

Check with the rental agency to see if drop-off is permitted at a location other than the location of pick-up in addition to what additional fees will be charged. Drop-off fees may not be reimbursed unless prior authorization is received

#### 11.3.1.2 Charter Bus

Charter Bus service may be used to move large groups of personnel or teams from one location to another. Such use must adhere to the GSA guidelines for commercial transportation. Charter buses can be procured through GSA's Schedule 48, Transportation, Delivery, and Relocation Solutions. See SIN 411-1 under Schedule 48, which includes Vans, Motor Coaches, and Buses. Additional information is available on GSA's website.

### 11.3.1.3 Common Carrier (Air)

Flights will be arranged from the airport that is most advantageous to the Government from both a cost and logistics perspective in order to accomplish the mission in a timely and safe manner. Travel reward programs will not be used to book flights due to the time, urgency, and volume of personnel traveling.

#### **Disaster Response**

Commercial flights may be used to move individuals from a given location to the mission site. All efforts will be made to use GSA contracted City Pair fares if they are available to support the timing of the mission. Air travel for disaster and emergency response services must be arranged through the TMC, outside of the ETS, by the response travel office, and the information will be distributed to the appropriate parties depending on the timing of the response services required. Each segment of the flight for mobilization and demobilization may be booked separately (one-way) if the length of the response is unknown.

#### **NSSE**

GSA contracted City Pair fares will be used for all NSSEs unless they are not available or use of a non-contract carrier service provides a significant cost savings to the Government in accordance with FTR 301-10.107 and Section 4.1.4.2, Government Liability for Authorizing Restricted, Non-Contract Fares for Common Carrier Transportation.

### 11.3.1.4 Chartered Aircraft

Chartered aircraft service will be used upon the approval of the ASA, in accordance with standard operating procedures, for emergency deployments. Justification needs to state the purpose, reason why commercial flights cannot be used, and number of people traveling, and include a cost analysis. Once approved and purchased, the chartered flight may not be changed unless it is approved by the ASA. All use of chartered aircraft is reported to GSA in accordance with OMB Circular A-126. Travel Authorizations are required for all travel on chartered aircraft in accordance with Section 11.2.1 above.

#### **Travel on Chartered Aircraft**

During a disaster response, all deployed HHS Federal employees, GS-15 or below, that are responding to a mission may be authorized to travel by chartered aircraft. Each individual's name is needed for documentation for the charter request. All HHS Senior Executive Staff must have written authorization, in advance, from the ASA. Any travel request for use of any unused seats by a federal employee from another department must be approved in advance by the ASA before they will be allowed to board.

All non-Federal travelers, including contractors supporting a federal mission, must have advance written approval from the ASA before they will be allowed to board any Government leased and/or operated aircraft. Any request to board will be based on seat availability, mission urgency, and type of government personnel on board.

If an HHS employee is requesting to travel on a charter provided by another Federal Agency or Non-Federal Organization, a cost comparison must be prepared and prior written authorization must be received from the ASA.

## 11.3.2 Lodging at a Disaster Site or NSSE

### 11.3.2.1 Room Sharing

While not required under the FTR, the sharing of commercial lodging facilities may be requested and highly encouraged especially in areas where facilities are strictly limited. If a room is shared, it may be charged to the OpDiv/StaffDiv's Emergency CBA if the OpDiv/StaffDiv has a CBA that is available and authorized for lodging.

If an Emergency CBA is not available, the charges may be placed on the employee's IBA or personal credit card for an infrequent traveler/Invitational Traveler.

Reimbursement will be 50 percent if the room is shared with a government employee, provided the hotel is able to split the charges.

A separate IBA or personal credit card must be placed with the front desk upon arrival/ check-in for all incidental expenses. No incidental expenses shall be charged to the CBA. Regardless of the payment method, a lodging receipt must be provided with the completed voucher.

### 11.3.2.2 Non-Traditional Lodging

If adequate commercial facilities are not available, lodging may be provided at a local school, recreational center, hospital, church, commercial facility, Government facility, base camp, etc. In this case, the lodging portion of the per diem will not be reimbursed. If meals are provided by the facility, and paid for by the Government, the appropriate meals must be deducted from the per diem entitlement.

If an employee is deployed for a disaster within the HHS local transportation (formerly local travel) area, as defined in Section 4.2, and is working 16 hours or more and the commute provides unsafe conditions (e.g., traffic, fatigue, etc.), lodging may be approved on a case-by-case basis by the ASA. Prior approval is needed otherwise no expenses will be reimbursed.

### 11.3.3 Communications Services

If official government communication devices (cell phone, blackberry, smartphone, etc.) are not provided, and an employee uses his/her personal cellular phone for voice or text to communicate with personnel in the field or operations, he/she may or may not be reimbursed based upon the funding source. Funds that are provided by other Federal agencies may not be able to be used for reimbursement of communication services.

If funds are available for reimbursement and an employee owned cell phone is used, the employee will only be reimbursed if:

1. The call was made outside of regular plan minutes (including text and data); and
2. The bill reflects the date, time, telephone number, and cost per minute of the business call. (If the call is within the plan minutes and shows as a cost of \$0.00, the cost of the call will not be reimbursed.)

Personal calls or calls back to the traveler's home office, if outside the scope of the mission, will not be reimbursed. Travelers should consult their home office for reimbursement of any charges related to normal tour of duty responsibilities.

### 11.3.4 Laundry

In emergency situations (e.g., natural disaster area, Presidential-declared emergency, etc.), laundry and dry cleaning requirements during TDY travel exceeding four consecutive nights may necessarily exceed the OpDiv's standard allowance (such as \$5 per night). If properly justified, the delegated travel official may authorize a higher daily allowance on the travel order or, if the additional costs were unexpected, the delegated travel official may approve the higher actual costs on the travel voucher.

In all cases (pre-approved or post-approved) where unusual circumstances necessitate the incurrence of unusual laundry/dry cleaning costs, the following requirements must be met:

1. The employee must incur a minimum of four consecutive nights lodging on official travel within CONUS; and
2. A justification for the higher laundry/dry cleaning allowance must be documented on the travel order (pre-authorized) or the approved travel voucher (post-approved).

## **11.4 Travel Reimbursement During Continuity of Operations Policy (COOP) Events**

The following guidance applies in the event of the activation of the COOP or COOP exercises. Please consult the individual OpDiv/StaffDiv for specific location and reimbursement questions, as there may be additional information in their COOP related to travel reimbursement.

### **11.4.1 Travel Arrangements**

HHS personnel designated as essential for COOP may be responsible for making their own travel arrangements during an actual event or exercise. Where possible, the ETS and TMC should be used to make necessary travel arrangements, depending on what is needed for the COOP event.

#### **11.4.1.1 From Official Station to an Offsite COOP Location**

Reimbursement for travel will be based upon the location where the COOP duties are performed. If the COOP site is away from the traveler's official station and outside of the traveler's local transportation (formerly local travel) area, he/she will be reimbursed mileage and may be authorized per diem. Per diem should be authorized in advance on the travel authorization. See Section 11.2.1.1, Disaster Response, for information regarding travel authorizations.

#### **11.4.1.2 At Official Station**

If the COOP location is the traveler's official station, per diem will not be authorized, in accordance with Section 4.2.

#### **11.4.1.3 From Residence to COOP Location in the Local Transportation (Formerly Local Travel) Area**

If a traveler departs from his/her residence and the COOP location is within the local travel area, reimbursement for per diem will not be authorized in accordance with Section 4.2. The traveler will be reimbursed for mileage with the appropriate deduction of his/her normal commuting distance in accordance with Section 4.2.3.2.

#### **11.4.1.4 From Residence to COOP Location Outside the Local Transportation (Formerly Local Travel) Area**

If the COOP destination is outside of the traveler's local transportation area, he/she will be reimbursed mileage and may be authorized per diem. Per diem should be authorized in advance on the travel authorization. See Section 11.2.1.1, Disaster Response, for information regarding travel authorizations.

### **11.4.2 Vouchers**

The vouchering process for reimbursement will remain the same as for local transportation and TDY travel and in accordance with Section 11.2.2, Vouchers, above.

## **12. Relocation Allowances**

## 12.1 Purpose

This chapter describes the scope and organization of the HHS policy for relocation allowances as defined in FTR 302. It addresses the separate requirements and entitlements that are specific and unique to relocation, which includes a Temporary Change of Station (TCS) and a Permanent Change of Station (PCS). It is intended to provide users a single authoritative reference to Department financial management policies and procedures for relocation. In addition, employees should consult HHS Instruction 572-1, Payment of Travel and/or Transportation Relocation Expenses for additional information regarding eligibility and Human Resources requirements.

This chapter includes guidelines regarding travel and transportation expenses, shipping of household goods, temporary storage, and other allowances for individuals authorized to relocate on behalf of the Department.

Each OpDiv/StaffDiv may determine on a case-by case basis which allowances they will offer to pay as addressed in the Relocation Travel Authorization and Service Agreement.

## 12.2 Introduction

This section provides clarification on the categories of allowances (i.e., both mandatory and discretionary) as contained in FTR 302, Relocation Allowances.

The discretionary items are identified in FTR 302-3.2 and 302-3.101 and this manual based on the applicable relocation scenario. Allowances that are not specifically addressed in either the FTR or this manual are left to the discretion of the OpDiv/StaffDiv. It is the OpDiv/StaffDiv's responsibility to ensure that employees are knowledgeable of any OpDiv/StaffDiv specific policies related to their relocation. The GSA provides information on mandatory FTR provisions on their website.

Certain international relocations are also subject to the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR), , and the Department of State FAM. These items should be addressed in the Relocation Travel Authorization and Service Agreement signed by the employee.

PSC received guidance from the NIH, FDA, IHS, and the Bureau of the Fiscal Service (BFS) Administrative Resource Center (ARC), Relocation Service Branch (RSB) in development of the relocation policy. Employees should always check with their own OpDiv/StaffDiv for specific policies related to Relocation. In addition, updates to this policy can be found at PSC website.

### 12.2.1 Commissioned Corps Officers

Travel policies and per diem rates for Commissioned Corps officers of the Public Health Service are governed by the JTR. The PDTATAC issues the JTR. The HHS Assistant Secretary for Health is the designated USPHS Principal to serve on the PDTATAC, chartered under the DTMO.

The ASH or its designee is responsible for developing and issuing travel and relocation policy for Corps officers, to supplement the Department of Defense's JTR. Corps policies are published in separate documents that are not part of the HHS Travel Policy Manual.

The entitlements for Relocation [Permanent Duty Travel (PDT)] for Commissioned Corps members are covered in Chapter 5 of the JTR. The entitlements must be on the PCS orders issued to the Commissioned Corps member.

Any operational or travel concerns of the Corps should be directed to the Office of the Surgeon General.

## 12.3 Initial Relocation Process

It is integral that the OpDiv/StaffDiv's human resource personnel be involved in the employee's initial relocation decisions. An OpDiv/StaffDiv should plan for relocations as far in advance as possible, whether it is for new appointees (hires) or for a transferring employee. Relocation is a process; the decision to relocate, planning for the relocation, and any decisions granting waivers or deviations from standard policy should be made only after careful consideration is given to the OpDiv/StaffDiv's human resources and mission requirements, as well as budgetary position.

Prior to the hiring process, the vacancy announcement must specifically state whether relocation benefits will or will not be provided, unless a merit promotion transfer is applied. In this case, the Comptroller General has ruled that such an action is considered to be in the Government's interest and relocation expenses may be payable as long as it is not just for the convenience of the employee. If relocation benefits are not provided, human resources personnel should document a justification for that decision. If relocation benefits are provided, as soon as the candidate accepts the position, notification must be sent to the employee (and relocation service provider if applicable) to initiate the relocation process.

The relocation of a new appointee or transfer of a current employee, at the expense of the Government, should only occur when it is in the best interest of the Government and should not be undertaken for the individual's convenience. The OpDiv/StaffDiv's travel AO is responsible for reviewing and ensuring compliance with existing travel regulations and corresponding policies.

## **12.4 General Provisions**

### **12.4.1 Travel Authorization**

A Relocation Travel Authorization (RTA) must be issued to a new appointee or transferring employee before they report to the first or new official station. An OpDiv/StaffDiv may use the manual authorization Form HHS 1. A travel authorization is not normally created in the ETS. The OpDiv/StaffDiv must advise the employee or individual selected for appointment not to incur expenses for travel in anticipation of relocation until they have received the RTA and signed a Service Agreement (see Section 12.5.1. below) The RTA will indicate the specific relocation allowances authorized as outlined in this policy section and provide instructions on the Federal procedures for acquisition of the related travel and transportation services.

NOTE: In line with several provisions in FTR 302, an employee may begin his/her move once he/she has an approved RTA and signed Service Agreement. If an employee does not have an approved Travel Authorization and signed Service Agreement, the OpDiv/StaffDiv will not reimburse the employee for expenses previously incurred.

### **12.4.2 Applicable Provisions for Reimbursement**

Because of successive changes to the statutes and the regulatory provisions governing relocation allowances and the extended period that employees retain eligibility for allowances, reimbursement will not be the same for all employees' claims. The regulatory provisions in effect on an employee's effective date of transfer or appointment shall be used for payment or reimbursement purposes as per FTR 302-2.3.

#### **12.4.2.1 Revised Relocation Regulations in the FTR**

GSA issued new regulations for relocation in the Federal Register. The final rule combined two previous proposed rules. The new regulations were effective as of August 1, 2011. For updates to the Relocation policy, visit PSC website.

### **12.4.3 Service Agreements**

#### **12.4.3.1 Transfers within the Continental United States (CONUS), Appointments, and Assignments of New Appointees and Student Trainees to Any Position within the United States**

An employee transferring between official stations within CONUS will not be allowed to incur expenses until the employee has signed a service agreement agreeing to remain in the service of the Government for 12 months following the effective date of the transfer, unless separated for reasons beyond the employee's control and acceptable to the OpDiv/StaffDiv. Such an agreement also is required from new appointees and student trainees appointed or assigned to any position within the United States as a condition of payment for travel, transportation, moving and/or storage of household goods, and allowances as provided in FTR 302-3.2. A signed agreement for 12 months service is required for each permanent change of station.

In case of a violation of this agreement, including failure to complete the transfer, any funds expended by the Government for expenses authorized in this section shall be recoverable from the individual concerned as a debt due the Government.

### **12.4.3.2 Transfers, Appointments, and Separations Involving Posts of Duty OCONUS**

An employee either transferred or appointed OCONUS, between posts located in separate countries or in separate areas of the United States OCONUS, will not be allowed to incur expenses until the employee has signed a service agreement agreeing to remain in the service of the Government for 12 months following the effective date of the transfer, unless separated for reasons beyond the employee's control and acceptable to the OpDiv/StaffDiv. These expenses include:

1. Travel;
2. Transportation;
3. Moving;
4. Storage of household goods; and
5. Other allowances.

## **12.5 OpDiv/StaffDiv Relocation Policy**

The following sections list the OpDiv/StaffDiv's roles and responsibilities regarding relocation under the FTR, as well as corresponding HHS policy on how OpDiv/StaffDivs should fulfill those roles and responsibilities, including authorizing those allowances under the FTR that are within the OpDiv/StaffDiv's discretion.

### **12.5.1 Employee Eligibility Requirements**

#### **12.5.1.1 OpDiv/StaffDiv Requirements for Determining Employee Eligibility**

PSC is responsible for implementing Travel Policy for the Department (see Section 1.1.3 of this manual). An OpDiv/StaffDiv must adhere to Department policy but may choose to implement the corresponding guidelines in a more restrictive manner (see Section 1.1.3.2). The STO for relocation will provide the traveler with instruction on the applicable policies and procedural guidance. The AO is responsible for reviewing the RTA and travel vouchers prior to approval in order to ensure compliance with the FTR, the HHS Travel Policy Manual, OHR, and OpDiv/StaffDiv policy. The OpDiv/StaffDiv STO is responsible for authorizing relocation travel.

Factors such as cost effectiveness, labor market conditions, availability of local and qualified candidates, difficulties in filling the position, as well as the position being designated mission critical must be reviewed to determine if the relocation is primarily for the benefit of the Government or for the employee.

The OpDiv/StaffDiv needs to consider all options and determine which scenario is more advantageous to the Government: PCS, TCS, or long-term TDY. AOs must ensure their decisions are not arbitrary or capricious<sup>xiv</sup>. These decisions need to be documented and kept on file in accordance with OpDiv/StaffDiv Human Resources policies as described in Section 12.3, Initial Relocation Process.

An employee may obtain an advance, when authorized, for en route travel, house-hunting trip(s), temporary quarters, transportation, and storage of household goods at the commuted rate method, or personal shipment of a mobile home. The OpDiv/StaffDiv should determine if a Government travel charge card should be used for en route travel or a house-hunting trip. Once this determination is made, employees with a Government travel charge card are encouraged to obtain advances using their travel charge card for these activities per FTR 301-51.200 and Section 3.3 of the HHS Travel Policy Manual. Direct deposit advances are more appropriate for temporary quarters subsistence expenses due to the need to make timely payments. The AO will provide direction to the traveler regarding specific travel advance situations and must include the approved request for the advance on the travel order.

Additional circumstances requiring a traveler to sign a service agreement, as defined in FTR 302-2.12 through 2.14, are determined at the AO level. The AO is responsible for providing the traveler with guidance regarding their specific relocation scenario, coordinating the agreement, determining and authorizing the conditions, and incorporating the agreement into the TRA and Service Agreement.

Any individual authorized a PCS is required to sign a service agreement prior to undertaking the move. The OpDiv/StaffDiv is responsible for monitoring the service agreement and initiating the collection or write-off of bad debt should the individual violate the service agreement. See also FTR §302-2.14.

## **12.6 Relocation Allowance by Specific Type**

This section describes the policies used to define reimbursement of relocation allowances for the various types of relocation benefits including those for transfer employees, new hires, temporary change of station, etc. It also provides tables taken from the FTR that outline these policies; these can be found on GSA's website.

### **12.6.1 Transfer Employees**

The following policies define reimbursement of relocation allowances for transfer employees, as presented in Tables 7- 12 (formerly Table 11-16) below. Please refer to the FTR Part 302-3, Subpart B, for mandatory CONUS, OCONUS/Non-Foreign, and OCONUS/Foreign items.

1. When relocating a civilian employee using Government funds, the individual is required to sign a service agreement committing to one year of employment with the Government (the period may vary based on relocation circumstances). If this agreement is breached, the OpDiv/StaffDiv has the right to collect the reimbursement. If circumstances causing the employee to leave were considered acceptable to the OpDiv/StaffDiv (e.g., circumstances beyond employee control, termination of position, or critical health issue, etc.), the AO may choose to waive collection of the relocation expenses. Decisions are made by the OpDiv/StaffDiv on a case-by-case basis.
2. The AO may recommend authorization of separate relocations for two employees that are immediate family members relocating to the same official station. This can be done when the employees are relocating on behalf of the Government and have different start dates, or in other circumstances when the AO determines that separate relocations are necessary and in the best interest of the Government.
3. The AO will consider an employee's request to extend beginning separation travel and may choose to authorize the extension when circumstances are beyond the employee's control, reasonable to the OpDiv/StaffDiv, and in the best interest of the Government. Separation travel occurs when an employee, who meets the criteria, leaves the employment of the Federal Government.

The AO may provide instruction to the traveler on arranging his or her own relocation upon separation. Cost reimbursement will be based on the Government Bill of Lading (GBL) method; it will not exceed what it would have cost the government to arrange for the shipment.

Transportation by employee and family members, if by air, must be arranged through the OpDiv/StaffDiv contracted TMC and meet government requirements, as defined in FTR §301- 10.100.

**Table 7 (Formerly Table 11) - Transfer within CONUS**

<b>Transfer Between Official Stations in the Continental United States (CONUS)</b>	
<b>Column 1</b>	<b>Column 2</b>
Relocation allowances that agency must pay or reimburse	Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation & per diem for employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	(1) Househunting per diem & transportation, employee & spouse only (Part 302-5 of the FTR)
(2) Miscellaneous moving expense (Part 302-16 of the FTR)	(2) Temporary quarters subsistence expense (TQSE) (Part 302-6 of the FTR)
(3) Sell or buy residence transactions or lease termination expenses (Part 302-11 of the FTR)	(3) Shipment of privately owned vehicle (POV) (Subpart B of Part 302- 9 of the FTR)
(4) Transportation & temporary storage of household goods (Part 302-7 of the FTR)	(4) Use of a relocation services company
(5) Extended storage of household goods when assigned to a designated isolated official station in CONUS (Part 302-8 of the FTR)	(5) Property management services (Part 302-15 of the FTR)
(6) Transportation of a mobile home or boat used as a primary residence in lieu of the transportation of household goods (Part 302-10 of the FTR)	(6) Home marketing incentives (Part 302-14 of the FTR)
(7) Relocation income tax allowance (RITA) (Part 302-17 of the FTR)	

**Table 8 (Formerly Table 12) - Transfer CONUS to OCONUS**

<b>Transfer From CONUS to an Official Station Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS)</b>	
<b>Column 1</b>	<b>Column 2</b>
Relocation allowances that agency must pay or reimburse	Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation & per diem for employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	(1) Temporary quarters subsistence expense (TQSE) is not authorized in a foreign area, however, you may be entitled to the following under the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) (Government Civilians- Foreign Areas):  (a) A Foreign Transfer Allowance (FTA) for quarters occupied temporarily before departure from the 50 states or the District of Columbia for an official station in a foreign area incident to a permanent change of station and travel to first official station overseas; (b) Temporary quarters subsistence allowance (TQSA)

(2) Miscellaneous expense allowance (Part 302-16 of the FTR)	(2) Property management services (Part 302-15 of the FTR)
(3) Transportation & temporary storage of household goods (Part 302-7 of the FTR)	(3) Shipment of a privately owned vehicle (Part 302-9 of the FTR)
(4) Extended storage of household goods (Part 302-8 of the FTR)	(4) Use of relocation service companies when transfer is to Alaska or Hawaii (Part 302-12 of the FTR)
(5) Relocation income tax allowance (RITA) (Part 302-17 of the FTR). Allowed when old and new official stations are located in the United States. Also allowed when instead of being returned to the former non-foreign area official station, an employee is transferred in the interest of the Government to a different non-foreign area official station than from the official station from which transferred when assigned to the foreign official station.	(5) Home marketing incentives when transfer is to Alaska or Hawaii (Part 302-15 of the FTR)

**Table 9 (Formerly Table 13) - Transfer OCONUS to CONUS**

<b>Transfer From OCONUS Official Station to an Official Station in CONUS</b>	
<b>Column 1</b>	<b>Column 2</b>
Relocation allowances that agency must pay or reimburse	Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation & per diem for employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	(1) Shipment of a privately owned vehicle (Part 302-9 of the FTR)
(2) Temporary quarters subsistence expense (TQSE) (Part 302-6 of the FTR). A TQSA under the DSSR may be authorized preceding final departure subsequent to the necessary vacating of residence quarters.	
(3) Miscellaneous expense allowance (Part 302-16 of the FTR)	

(4) Sell & buy residence transaction expenses or lease termination expenses (Part 302-11 of the FTR). Allowed when old and new official stations are located in the United States. Also allowed when instead of being returned to the former non-foreign area official station, an employee is transferred in the interest of the Government to a different non-foreign area official station than from the official station from which transferred when assigned to the foreign official station.	
(5) Transportation & temporary storage of household goods (Part 302-7 of the FTR)	
(6) Extended storage of household goods only when assigned to a designated isolated official station in CONUS (Part 302-8 of the FTR)	
(7) Relocation income tax allowance (RITA) (Part 302- 17 of the FTR)	

**Table 10 (Formerly Table 14) - Transfer within OCONUS**

<b>Transfer Between OCONUS Official Stations</b>	
<b>Column 1</b>	<b>Column 2</b>
Relocation allowances that agency must pay or reimburse	Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation & per diem for employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	(1) Shipment of a privately owned vehicle (POV) (Part 302-9 of the FTR)
(2) Temporary quarters subsistence expense (TQSE) (Part 302-6 of the FTR). TQSA may be authorized under the DSSR.	(2) Property management services (Part 302-15 of the FTR)
(3) Transportation & temporary storage of household goods (Part 302-7 of the FTR)	
(4) Miscellaneous expense allowance (Part 302-16 of the FTR)	
(5) Extended storage of household goods (Part 302-8 of the FTR)	
(6) Relocation income tax allowance (RITA) (Part 302-17 of the FTR)	

**Table 11 (Formerly Table 15) - Return from OCONUS for Separation**

<b>Return From OCONUS Official Station to Place of Actual Residence for Separation</b>
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Column 1	Column 2
Relocation allowances that agency must pay or reimburse	Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation for employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	(1) Shipment of a privately owned vehicle (POV) (Part 302-9 of the FTR)
(2) Per diem for employee only (Part 302-4 of the FTR).	
(3) Transportation & temporary storage of household goods (Part 302-7 of the FTR)	

**Table 12 (Formerly Table 16) - Last Move Home (SES Career Appointees)**

Last Move Home for SES Career Appointees Upon Separation	
Column 1	Column 2
Relocation allowances that agency must pay or reimburse	Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation for employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	(1) Shipment of privately owned vehicle (POV) (Subpart B of Part 302-9 of the FTR)
(2) Per diem for employee only (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	
(3) Transportation & temporary storage of household goods (Part 302-7 of the FTR)	
(4) Transportation of a mobile home or boat used as a primary residence in lieu of the transportation of household goods (Part 302-10 of the FTR)	

## 12.6.2 Temporary Change of Station (TCS)

The following policies define reimbursement of relocation allowances, as presented in Table 17 below, for a TCS. Please refer to the FTR Part 302-3, Subpart B, for mandatory CONUS, OCONUS/Non-Foreign, and OCONUS/Foreign items, on the GSA website.

1. The AO may choose to authorize a TCS for an employee who must relocate to fulfill a domestic assignment with a duration lasting between six and 30 months (2 and ½ years). The AO must perform a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether a TCS is more cost effective and advantageous to the Government than a PCS.

A TCS may be authorized if the employee receives a long-term assignment and it has been determined advantageous to the Government to relocate the employee temporarily instead of sending the employee on extended TDY. The OpDiv/StaffDiv may have additional specifications that will be applied to this decision.

Expenses that may be authorized for reimbursement include:

1. Travel and subsistence expenses;

2. Storage of household goods;
3. Miscellaneous expenses;
4. Transportation of a POV; and
5. Relocation income tax allowance.

The AO may also choose to provide house-hunting trips and temporary quarters for the employee.

An employee assigned to training under the GETA, 5 U.S.C. § 4109, is not eligible for a TCS.

1. The AO will provide direction to the traveler in specific situations where reimbursements are not authorized for a TCS.
2. The AO will provide direction to the traveler to determine whether the request for extended storage is in the best interest of the OpDiv/StaffDiv.
3. The AO official will determine which discretionary relocation allowances will be approved when an employee is permanently assigned to a TDY station based on the employee’s needs and the FTR allowances FTR 302-3.427.

**Table 13 (Formerly Table 17) - Temporary Change of Station (TCS)**

<b>Temporary Change of Station (TCS)</b>	
<b>Column 1</b>	<b>Column 2</b>
Relocation allowances that agency must pay or reimburse	Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation & per diem for employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	(1) Househunting trip expenses (Part 302-5 of the FTR)
(2) Miscellaneous expense allowance (Part 302-16 of the FTR)	(2) Temporary quarters subsistence expense (TQSE) (Part 302-6 of the FTR)
(3) Transportation & temporary storage of household goods (Part 302-7 of the FTR)	
(4) Transportation of a mobile home or boat used as a primary residence in lieu of the transportation of household goods (Part 302-10 of the FTR)	
(5) Transportation of a privately owned vehicle (POV)(Subpart B of Part 302-9 of the FTR)	
(6) Relocation income tax allowance (RITA) (Part 302- 17 of the FTR)	
(7) Property management services (Part 302-15 of the FTR)	

### **12.6.3 Temporary Relocation under the Government Employees Training Act (GETA)**

Under GETA, employees are entitled to the following limited relocation allowances as outlined in Table 14 below. The allowances listed in Table 14 may be authorized in lieu of per diem or actual expense allowances. This is not considered a permanent change of station.

**Table 14 (Formerly Table 18) - Relocation under GETA**

<b>Assignment Under the Government Employees Training Act (5 U.S.C. 4109)</b>
(1) Transportation of employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of this chapter).
(2) Per Diem for employee (Part 302-4 of this chapter).
(3) Movement of household goods & temporary storage (Part 302-7 of this chapter).

### 12.6.4 Overseas Tour Renewal Travel

Overseas tour renewal travel refers to travel of an employee and his/her immediate family returning to the employee’s home in the continental U. S., Alaska, or Hawaii between overseas tours of duty. If the employee travels to another overseas location (instead of the U.S.), the employee will be reimbursed only if his/her residence is within that country in which the employee is taking leave, and then the employee will only be reimbursed for authorized travel and transportation expenses. The employee will have to pay any expense(s) above the authorized amount. The policies regarding reimbursement of expenses for overseas tour renewal travel are outlined in Table 19 below.

**Table 15 (Formerly Table 19) - Tour Renewal Travel**

<b>Tour Renewal Agreement Travel</b>	
<b>Column 1</b>	<b>Column 2</b>
Relocation allowances that agency must pay or reimburse	Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation for employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	
(2) Per diem for employee only (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	

### 12.6.5 New Appointees

The following policies define reimbursement of relocation allowances, as presented in Tables 20 and 21 below, for new appointees. Please refer to the FTR Part 302-3, Subpart A, for mandatory CONUS, OCONUS/Non-Foreign, and OCONUS/Foreign items on the GSA website.

1. A new appointee is eligible for relocation allowances if the official announcement for the specific position posted by the OpDiv/StaffDiv includes relocation allowances.
2. Once the AO determines whether a new appointee is eligible to receive reimbursement for a PCS, the OpDiv/StaffDiv AO is responsible for counseling the new appointee regarding his or her entitlements, any additional allowances or benefits that he/she may be eligible to receive, and coordinating the PCS for the individual. Benefits are based on the FTR, HHS Travel Policy Manual, and OpDiv/StaffDiv policies.

**Table 16 (Formerly Table 20) - First Official Station CONUS**

<b>Assigned to First Official Station in the Continental United States (CONUS)</b>
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<b>Column 1</b>	<b>Column 2</b>
Relocation allowances that agency must pay or reimburse	Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation of employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	(1) Shipment of privately owned vehicle (POV) (Subpart B of Part 302-9 of the FTR)
(2) Per diem for employee only (Part 302-4 of the FTR).	
(3) Transportation & temporary storage of household goods (Part 302-7 of the FTR)	
(4) Extended storage of household goods (Part 302-8 of the FTR). Only when assigned to a designated isolated official station in CONUS.	
(5) Transportation of a mobile home or boat used as a primary residence in lieu of the transportation of household goods (Part 302-10 of the FTR)	

**Table 17 (Formerly Table 21) - First Official Station OCONUS**

<b>Assigned to First Official Station Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS)</b>	
<b>Column 1</b>	<b>Column 2</b>
Relocation allowances that agency must pay or reimburse	Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation of employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of this chapter)	(1) Shipment of privately owned vehicle (POV) (Part 302-9 of this chapter)
(2) Per diem employee only (Part 302-4)	<p>(2) Temporary quarters subsistence expense (TQSE) is not authorized in a foreign area, however, you may be entitled to the following under the Department of State Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians-Foreign Areas) which is available from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, DC 20402.</p> <p>(a) Foreign Transfer Allowance (FTA) (Subsistence Expense) for quarters occupied temporarily before departure from the 50 states or the District of Columbia for an official station in a foreign area incident to a permanent change of station and travel to first official station overseas.</p> <p>(b) Temporary quarters subsistence allowance (TQSA) when a transfer is authorized to a foreign area</p>

<b>Assigned to First Official Station Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS)</b>
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	(c) The miscellaneous expense portion of the FTA is authorized incident to first official station travel to a foreign area.
(3) Transportation & temporary storage of household goods (Part 302-7 of this chapter)	(3) Use of relocation service companies only when transfer is to Alaska or Hawaii (Part 302-12 of this chapter)
(4) Extended storage of household goods (Part 302-8 of this chapter)	(4) Home marketing incentives only when transfer is to a non- foreign OCONUS area (Part 302-15 of this chapter)

## 12.7 Entitlements and Allowances

### 12.7.1 Allowances for Subsistence and Transportation

The OpDiv/StaffDiv is responsible for counseling the traveler on entitlements and additional discretionary allowances in accordance with the FTR, the HHS Travel Policy Manual, and OpDiv/StaffDiv policies. The OpDiv/StaffDiv will prepare the RTA, listing all applicable allowances, and submit it to the AO for signature approval.

An OpDiv/StaffDiv should determine the employee's mode of travel based on factors such as travel time, mileage, per diem, and other costs. If an employee is not driving a POV, the OpDiv/StaffDiv should provide alternate transportation for the employee and family, and possibly allow shipment of a POV(s).

The number of authorized en route travel days and per diem is determined by considering the actual number of days required to travel, not to exceed the number of days allowed based on the distance required to travel. The distance allowed, if driving, is up to 300 miles. The estimated miles should be divided by 300, rounding up at the half point mark (150 miles), to determine the number of allowable days for en route travel reimbursement. Any exceptions require specific OpDiv/StaffDiv approval. See the example below provided in Table 22:

**Table 18 (Formerly Table 22) - En Route Travel Calculations while Driving**

Miles Traveled	Calculation	# of days of en route travel
400 actual miles traveled	$400/300 = 1 \frac{1}{3}$	1 day
500 actual miles traveled	$500/300 = 1 \frac{2}{3}$	2 days

The OpDiv/StaffDiv will reimburse the traveler for mileage driven for each authorized POV based on the distance for the most direct route obtained from the Rand McNally website or similar resource. Travelers may be reimbursed for actual mileage with up to a 10 percent variance. Standard highway mileage guides include resources such as Rand McNally, Google maps, MapQuest, or similar services. The current mileage rate for en route travel can be found on GSA's website.

If the traveler is delayed due to circumstances beyond their control (e.g., severe weather, physical handicap, or other reasons acceptable to the OpDiv/StaffDiv), the OpDiv/StaffDiv's AO may grant an exception and authorize additional reimbursement for the extra days.

In a scenario where an additional POV is requested, the OpDiv/StaffDiv's AO must authorize the expense on the RTA prior to the departure date. An additional POV cannot be added after the relocation has begun. Factors such as family size, cost of shipping the POV, and the availability of additional drivers should be taken into consideration by the OpDiv/StaffDiv.

## **12.7.2 Allowance for Househunting Trip Expenses**

The house-hunting trip (HHT) is a discretionary allowance, which may be authorized by the AO for transferring employees and/or spouses. Immediate family members, other than the spouse, are never entitled to receive reimbursement for a HHT. New appointees, employees relocating under GETA, and employees returning from an overseas assignment for the purpose of separation are not eligible to receive a HHT. A HHT should be authorized on a case-by-case basis after weighing the benefits of a HHT against a temporary quarters subsistence allowance.

The following guidelines pertain to HHT requests:

1. The HHT should be made available and individual decisions to authorize a HHT should be based on the best interest of the Government. The HHT will be granted to allow the employee and/or spouse time to look for a residence at the new domestic official station. The employee and spouse may take separate HHTs if authorized by the OpDiv/StaffDiv. The total duration of the HHT, whether taken together or separately, may not exceed 10 consecutive calendar days. The AO will determine the duration of the HHT based on the traveler's request. The cost of the trips may not exceed the constructed cost of what it would have cost if the HHT had been taken together. The employee's HHT must be completed prior to reporting to the new official station. The purpose of the HHT is to facilitate and accelerate the employee's move to a permanent residence, thereby lowering the OpDiv/StaffDiv's overall PCS cost.
2. The HHT request must be included on the RTA, and the AO must authorize the request before HHT travel can begin.
3. The OpDiv/StaffDiv, in accordance with its policy, may reimburse the employee by providing a fixed amount or actual expense per diem reimbursement method for a HHT. An OpDiv/StaffDiv may provide both fixed amount and actual reimbursement methods. If an OpDiv/StaffDiv offers both, the employee may choose the method of reimbursement.

The fixed amount reimbursement method simplifies the budgeting process and requires no receipts. It allows the employee to have immediate access to funds and reduces administration issues. The fixed househunting allowance will need to be calculated in accordance with FTR 302-5.13 for each relocation based on whether both the employee and spouse will be taking the trip and the locality rate. In addition, under the fixed method, the employee is reimbursed their actual transportation costs.

4. The AO will advise the traveler regarding which mode of transportation (e.g., POV, flight, rail, etc.) is most advantageous to the Government for the HHT.

## **12.7.3 Allowance for Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expenses (TQSE)**

The temporary quarters allowance is discretionary and may be offered to transferring employees and/or immediate family member(s) during the relocation process. New appointees, employees relocating under GETA, and employees returning from an overseas assignment for the purpose of separation are not eligible to receive temporary quarters.

The following guidelines pertain to TQSE:

1. The AO may authorize temporary quarters for an employee and their immediate family member(s) when it is determined to be in the best interest of the Government, the old and new duty stations are 50 miles or more apart, and it is justified in connection with an employee's transfer to a new official station.

Temporary quarters is lodging obtained for the purpose of temporary occupancy from private or commercial sources such as rental of a furnished or unfurnished apartment on a month-to-month basis or extended-stay hotel. Additional information regarding long-term lodging can be found on GSA's website as well as the PSC website.

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The purpose of temporary quarters is to allow an employee time to find a residence at the new official station, and/or for the immediate family member(s) to obtain accommodations when the old residence is sold prior to the family relocating to the new duty station. Temporary quarters may be authorized at the old and new official stations at the same time, if necessary.

The OpDiv/StaffDiv should administer the allowance in order to minimize or avoid other relocation expenses such as a HHT.

2. The AO will advise the employee on temporary quarters by evaluating the needs of the employee and immediate family member(s), ensuring the distance between the old and new duty station is 50 miles or greater, and determining that temporary quarters is in the interest of the Government, prior to authorizing the request.
3. The OpDiv/StaffDiv may reimburse the employee by offering the option of either a fixed amount as calculated in FTR 302.6-201 or actual TQSE per OpDiv/StaffDiv policy. If an OpDiv/StaffDiv offers both options, the employee may choose the method of reimbursement.
4. The AO will advise the employee on the acceptable duration for temporary quarters and authorize the amount on the travel order. The duration of temporary quarters should be determined in conjunction with the HHT. In a scenario where an extension or interruption of temporary quarters is required, the OpDiv/StaffDiv AO will determine a solution that is in the best interest of the Government.

The circumstances leading to the request for an extension or interruption of temporary quarters must be determined reasonable and beyond the control of the employee. Upon an employee's request for an extension or interruption of temporary quarters, the OpDiv/StaffDiv AO will ensure that the request is in accordance with the FTR 302- 6.305, the HHS Travel Policy Manual, and OpDiv/StaffDiv Policy. If the request is deemed appropriate, the RTA will be amended to include the extension or authorized interruption and approved by the AO. If the request is deemed inappropriate, the employee may be liable to repay the Government for any reimbursement claimed related to the extension or interruption.

### 12.7.4 Transportation and Temporary Storage of Household Goods (HHG) and Professional Books, Papers, and Equipment (PBP&E)

The OpDiv/StaffDiv or relocation service provider is responsible for administering the HHG program. The OpDiv/StaffDiv or relocation service provider may authorize additional expenses related to transportation of HHG (e.g., special crating, shuttle services, etc.). When the additional services exceed the original obligation amount, the employee must obtain authorization from the AO official to amend the RTA prior to incurring the additional expense.

The AO will advise employees in certain professional disciplines that they may be eligible for shipment of professional books, papers, and equipment (PBP&E) with their HHG. Before authorizing, the AO must conclude that shipment of PBP&E is necessary, meets the requirements within the FTR, is processed as an administrative expense, and is in the best interest of the Government. The AO may want to consider a separate shipment for PBP&E when the shipment exceeds 18,000 lbs.

However, if the weight of any PBP&E causes the lot to exceed 18,000 pounds, the PBP&E may be transported to the new duty station as an administrative expense of the OpDiv/StaffDiv.

Authorization for such shipment is granted solely at the discretion of the OpDiv/StaffDiv and subject to its policies governing such shipments. An OpDiv/StaffDiv should require that the carrier provide separate inventory lists for PBP&E to enable clear accountability.

For shipments with an OCONUS origination or destination, the initial period of storage of HHS is 90 days, and may be extended for an additional 90 days not to exceed 180 days of storage. Extension requirements are the same as for CONUS.

The OpDiv/StaffDiv will collect any excess costs or charges for transportation and/or storage of HHG from the employee.

The employee will process the claim with the carrier under the provisions of the GSA Standard Tender of Service, which serves as the base document for the transportation of Freight shipments for Federal civilian agencies. If the claim is not resolved, the

OpDiv/StaffDiv is responsible for advising the employee on the Government's liability for any loss or damage claims under 31 U.S.C. 3721-3723. An OpDiv/StaffDiv should only use GSA Scheduled carriers that are part of the Centralized Household Goods Traffic Management Program (CHAMP). Carriers are required to ensure that international HHG shipments by water are made on ships registered under the laws of the United States, whenever such ships are available. HHG invoices are subject to prepayment audit as well as specific auditing requirements by GSA.

### **12.7.5 Allowances for Extended Storage of Household Goods (HHG)**

OpDiv/StaffDivs need to establish a process for deciding what types of assignments and which locations warrant extended storage (non-temporary storage) of HHG under the guidelines of the FTR 302-8.1. The OpDiv/StaffDiv's AO will authorize extended storage for HHG based on the FTR, the HHS Travel Policy Manual, OpDiv/StaffDiv policy, and other regulations. Extended storage of HHG may be authorized in lieu of shipment when:

1. The employee is assigned to an isolated duty station within CONUS;
2. The employee is assigned to an overseas official station where the agency limits the amount of HHG the employee may transport to that location;
3. The employee is assigned to an OCONUS official station and the agency determines extended storage is in the public interest or cost effective to do so; or
4. It is necessary for a TCS.

Extended storage of HHG is not permitted for a career SES employee eligible for last move home benefits.

The AO needs to determine if requests for extended storage (non-temporary) are appropriate based on the FTR 302-8, and tour length.

Both temporary and extended storage may be authorized, particularly on international relocations where the employee could place HHG into extended storage. However, the HHG being shipped may require temporary storage while awaiting placement on a vessel as it can take a few months waiting for country clearances for the shipments to be obtained from the host country for shipment to the foreign location.

Procedures for the payment of third-party invoices for extended storage of HHG will be determined by the OpDiv/StaffDiv based upon the OpDiv/StaffDiv's payment process. Prompt Payment Act guidelines apply.

The OpDiv/StaffDiv's AO will determine whether a location meets the criteria to be considered an isolated official station and will determine whether reasonable conditions exist for allowing extended storage at Government expense.

The AO will instruct the employee as to whether extended storage is being authorized. The HHG program administrator will work with the employee to determine the duration and location of extended storage. The authorization must indicate the duration of the extended storage. Any extension requires approval by the OpDiv/StaffDiv.

### **12.7.6 Allowances for Transportation and Emergency Storage of a Privately Owned Vehicle (POV)**

The AO may authorize transportation of a POV. The AO must determine if the shipment of the vehicle is most advantageous to the Government by performing a cost-benefit analysis. The AO will advise the employee accordingly based upon the results of that analysis.

Emergency storage of a POV may be recommended by the AO in the case of a natural disaster or circumstances beyond the traveler's control that require immediate evacuation of the employee and their immediate family, or any other similar scenario where such action is determined reasonable and in the best interest of the Government. The HHG program administrator will

work with the AO and carrier to determine the duration and location of emergency storage. The AO may authorize the transportation of a replacement POV if the circumstances warrant such an action per the provisions outlined in FTR 302-9.172.

The AO will advise the employee as to whether, given a change in the circumstances at the new duty post, the transportation of a POV is in the best interest of the Government. The AO will apply the provisions in FTR 302-9.170, all corresponding cost factors, and any special circumstances that pertain to the relocation scenario when making this decision.

The AO will determine whether the transportation of a POV, as opposed to driving the POV to the new duty station, is in the best interest of the Government. The AO will apply the provisions in the FTR 302-9.504 and all corresponding cost factors and any special circumstances that pertain to the relocation scenario when making this decision.

### **12.7.7 Allowances for Transportation of Mobile Homes and Boats Used as a Primary Residence**

The employee is entitled to transportation of a mobile home or boat in lieu of transportation of HHG if the employee certifies that the mobile home will be used as their primary residence at the new official station. If this determination is made, the employee cannot be reimbursed for shipment of HHG. Instead, the employee may be reimbursed for transportation of a mobile home, not to exceed the expense that the Government would have incurred for shipping 18,000 lbs. of HHG and 90-days of temporary storage.

The AO determines if such an action is in the best interest of the Government by following the provisions of FTR 302-10.204 and FTR 302-10 Subpart E. An OpDiv/StaffDiv may want to arrange for a carrier to inspect the property and provide an estimate of costs. The OpDiv/StaffDiv should also counsel the employee on the risks of moving a mobile home, including potential damages and extra costs associated with the move.

A travel advance may be authorized in conjunction with the transportation of a mobile home or boat used as a primary residence, but it must not exceed the estimated allowable amount described above.

### **12.7.8 Allowances for Expenses Incurred in Connection With Residence Transactions**

The following list covers many of the normal expenses relating to the sale and purchase of real estate which may be reimbursed to the employee. Note, however, that this list is not all inclusive of other expenses that may be reimbursed to the employee in accordance with the HUD-1 Settlement Statement and how it itemizes expenses. Other expenses may be reimbursed depending on the validity of the particular expense for reimbursement.

**Table 19 (Formerly Table 23) - Allowable Residence Transaction Expenses**

Type of Expense	Old Station	New Station
Abstract	Yes	Yes
Advertising	Yes	No
Application fee (FHA and VA only)	Yes	Yes
Appraisal fee (determine market value of residence)	Yes	No
Appraisal fee (lender's)	No	Yes
Assumption fee (not in addition to origination fee)	No	Yes
Attorney's fee	Yes	Yes

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Broker's commission	Yes	No
Construction charges	No	No
Cost of litigation	No	No
Credit report	No	Yes
Escrow agent's fee (not escrow deposits)	Yes	Yes
Hazard insurance	No	No
Inspection fees	Yes	Yes
Interest on loans	No	No
Lender's service fees except as specifically listed)	No	No
Loan discounts (points)	No	No
Inspection fees	Yes	Yes
Loan origination fee (not to exceed 1%)	No	Yes
Losses due to prices on market conditions	No	No
Mortgage insurance	No	No
Mortgage prepayment penalty (see FTR par. 302- 6.2.D(1)(g))	Yes	No
Mortgage title insurance (lender's coverage)	No	Yes
Mortgage title insurance (owner's coverage)	Yes	No
Notary fees	Yes	Yes
Operating and maintenance costs	No	No

Pest inspection fee (no services performed)	Yes	Yes
Pest eradication services	No	No
Property taxes	No	No
Recording fees	Yes	Yes
Record title insurance	Yes	Yes
Repair costs	No	No
State, county, city, revenue stamps	Yes	No
Survey	Yes	Yes
Title insurance binder (instead of title search) and/or title insurance option	Yes	Yes
Transfer charges	Yes	Yes
Unexpired lease termination (see FTR par. 302- 6.2.h)	Yes	No

Direct reimbursement of expenses is a mandatory entitlement for transferring employees; however, OpDiv/StaffDivs may include the option of using a relocation services company as covered in Section 12.7.9, Relocation Services Company.

An AO may authorize or approve a residence transaction expense allowance when an employee is performing a PCS in the interest of the Government, has signed a service agreement, and one of the following conditions is met:

1. The old and new official stations are located in the United States; or
2. The employee has completed an agreed upon tour of duty overseas and is returning to the United States to an official station that is at least 50 miles away from the employee's last official station in the United States; or
3. When the employee has been permanently assigned to a temporary official station.

The OpDiv/StaffDiv's AO is responsible for ensuring that appropriate conditions in FTR 302-11 have been met before authorizing a reimbursement for residence transactions.

Employees may be reimbursed for up to 10 percent of the value of a home sold and five percent of the value of a home purchased.

### **12.7.8.1 Employees Not Eligible for Residence Transactions**

New appointees, employees returning to CONUS for separation, and employees assigned under the GETA (5 U.S.C. 4109) are not eligible to receive residence transaction expense allowances. The OpDiv/StaffDiv's AO is responsible for identifying those employees not qualified for residence transactions, according to FTR 302-11.4.

### **12.7.8.2 Documentation**

In order to be properly reimbursed, employees must document all residence transaction expenses. For a list of acceptable documentation for reimbursement of residence transaction expenses, see Section 12.8, Real Estate Instructions.

The OpDiv/StaffDiv's Financial Services provider, in conjunction with the OpDiv/StaffDiv's AO, will review and determine acceptability of documentation that is submitted.

In order to receive reimbursement for residence transaction expenses, an employee is required to submit:

1. A copy of his/her financial documents that prove that only the employee, and/or a member(s) of the immediate family, made payments on the property;
2. A copy of his/her financial documents that prove that he/she and/or a member(s) of the immediate family received all proceeds from the sale of the property;
3. Documentation that is acceptable by OpDiv/StaffDiv verifying any interest that the employee has in the property; and
4. Any additional documents that the OpDiv/StaffDiv needs to verify payments.

### **12.7.8.3 Internal Controls**

When paying allowances for expenses incurred in connection with residence transactions the following guidelines apply:

1. The OpDiv/StaffDiv's STO or the designated AO will authorize and approve residence transaction expenses.
2. The OpDiv/StaffDiv's Financial Services provider, in conjunction with the OpDiv/StaffDiv's STO or the designated AO, will review applications for reimbursement of residence transaction expenses.
3. The OpDiv/StaffDiv's STO will authorize any extensions beyond the one-year limitation for completing sales, purchase, or lease transactions per FTR 302- 11.420 and 302-11.421.

Employees will submit documentation in accordance with Section 12.8, Real Estate Instructions, or on a form designated by the OpDiv/StaffDiv. Employees must submit a claim with appropriate documentation to support their payment of the expenses claimed, which must include at a minimum:

1. The sales agreement;
2. The purchase agreement;
3. Property settlement documents;
4. Loan closing statements; and
5. Invoices or receipts for other bills paid.

If the employee uses the Guaranteed Home Sale (GHS) program, the vendor invoices must be supported by appropriate documentation. Employees are required to submit requests for reimbursement to the OpDiv/StaffDiv Financial Services provider or to the Relocation Service Provider.

When transferring between OpDiv/StaffDivs or agencies, employees must submit travel claims to the either the hiring agency in the locality of the new official station or to the relocation service provider for review and approval of the claim, unless the hiring agency review and approval functions are performed elsewhere as provided in FTR 302-11.405. The OpDiv/StaffDiv must follow guidelines set in FTR 302-11.406, the HHS Travel Policy Manual, and OpDiv/StaffDiv policy.

#### **12.7.8.4 Claims Administration**

To administer an employee's claim the AO must:

1. Review the employee's claim to determine whether the expenses claimed are reasonable in amount and customarily paid by the buyer/seller in the locality where the property is located;
2. Disallow any portion of the employee's claim that is inflated or is higher than normal for similar services in the locality;
3. Execute final administrative approval of payment of a claim by an appropriate OpDiv/StaffDiv AO; and
4. Return disapproved applications to the employee with a memorandum of explanation.

The AO must determine if:

1. The aggregate amount of expenses claimed in connection with a sale or purchase of a residence is within the prescribed limitation for either;
2. All conditions and requirements under which allowances may be paid have been met; and
3. The expenses themselves are authorized as reimbursable.

AOs must note that when following guidelines set forth in FTR 302-11.406, caution must be taken not to authorize expenses listed in FTR 302-11.202 or 302-11.304. In addition, the OpDiv/StaffDiv must follow guidelines set by the FTR for claims payment under FTR 302-11.200 and 302 Relocation Allowances Subchapter E.

#### **12.7.9 Relocation Services Company**

It is in the best interest of the employee and OpDiv/StaffDiv to market the residence as soon as possible upon learning of an employee's relocation. An employee should look at using a relocation services company with aggressive marketing. The OpDiv/StaffDiv should encourage the employee to continue marketing their residence to maximize the benefit to the OpDiv/StaffDiv and the employee – leading to an amended value sale as opposed to an appraised value sale, in other words, GHS.

In addition to the GHS, varieties of Buyer Value Option (BVO) programs are available. Before deciding on a BVO program, the OpDiv/StaffDiv needs to consider the program structure and the resulting tax consequences. The benefits of a BVO for the transferring employee include equity access, tax protection, access to experienced real estate experts for home sale at the old and new official station, integrated mortgage finance assistance, and expedited settlement into the new location. OpDiv/StaffDiv benefits include increasing the productivity at the new official station in a shorter timeframe, improving transferee satisfaction, reducing administrative burden, and eliminating the tax gross-up on the home sale portion of the relocation. To control cost, the OpDiv/StaffDiv may consider establishing a home value cap based on requirements set by FTR 302-12.111.

All employees that qualify should be considered eligible for the program. A relocation services company should provide all home sale services and other services available, as needed (e.g., rental assistance and property management). Ultimately, the OpDiv/StaffDiv's AO will determine whether an employee may use a relocation services company and what services will be offered.

### **12.7.10 Home Marketing Incentive Payments**

OpDiv/StaffDivs may offer a Home Marketing Incentive payment to encourage the employee to participate in the GHS program and aggressively market their home. The Home Marketing Incentive is an option available as a discretionary item.

The Home Marketing Incentive should only be considered if it is likely to reduce the overall relocation costs. Items to consider in establishing a Home Marketing Incentive plan include mandatory marketing periods, list price guidelines, closing requirements, and residence value caps. The OpDiv/StaffDiv's AO may authorize a home marketing incentive payment if the property qualifies for the home sale program and the employee agrees to actively marketing their residence. If the Home Incentive program is used, employees should be encouraged to market their residence as soon as possible. Note that the Home Marketing Incentive must comply with the limitations of FTR 302-14.6.

The OpDiv/StaffDiv's AO will determine whether a home marketing incentive payment is authorized based on the OpDiv/StaffDiv's policy.

### **12.7.11 Allowance for Property Management Services**

The OpDiv/StaffDiv may authorize payment for property management when it results in an overall cost savings, or relieves the employee of the cost of maintaining a residence while stationed at a remote or foreign duty station or other circumstances acceptable to the OpDiv/StaffDiv.

The OpDiv/StaffDiv's AO determines whether payment for property management services is advantageous and cost effective to the OpDiv/StaffDiv. The OpDiv/StaffDiv should do a cost comparison to determine whether the property management service is more cost effective than selling the employee's residence.

In the case where an employee requests to change from a property management service to selling of his/her residence, the OpDiv/StaffDiv is responsible for reviewing the reasons for such a request and making a decision based on costs and particular circumstances. The employee would have to provide justification for such a request.

To determine if an offset is warranted, the OpDiv/StaffDiv should research the cost incurred for property management and estimate the cost of sale for the residence in question.

### **12.7.12 Allowance for Miscellaneous Expenses (MEA)**

The OpDiv/StaffDiv must allow \$650 to a transferring employee relocating without family and \$1,300 to an employee traveling with family per FTR 302-16.102 for miscellaneous expenses without supporting documentation of the expenses.

For amounts in excess of the \$650 for an employee, or \$1,300 for a family, the OpDiv/StaffDiv will need to determine if the expenses fall within the guidelines in FTR 302-16.1 and FTR 302-16.103. The authorization of the excess amount is subject to the OpDiv/StaffDiv's AO approval.

Payment requests will be reviewed and processed based on the FTR guidelines. The flat MEA is generally processed along with the en route travel voucher. If the amount is in excess, additional supporting documentation review will be required (e.g., bills or receipts to support costs in excess of flat rates).

**12.7.12.1 Allowable Miscellaneous Expenses**

Miscellaneous expenses are costs associated with:

1. Discontinuing a residence at the old official station; and/or
2. Establishing a residence at a new official station.

Allowable expenses include, but are not limited to, those listed in Table 24 below:

**Table 20 (Formerly Table 24) - Allowable Miscellaneous Expenses**

General Expenses	Fees/Deposits	Losses
Appliances	For disconnecting/connecting appliances, equipment, utilities (except for mobile homes see §302-10.200), conversion of appliances for operation on available utilities	
Rugs, draperies, and curtains	For cutting and fitting such items, moved from one residence quarters to another	
Utilities (See §302-10.200 for mobile homes)	Deposits or fees not offset by eventual refunds	
Medical, dental, and food locker contracts		Forfeiture losses not transferable or refundable
Private Institutional care contracts (such as that provided for handicapped or invalid dependents only)		Forfeiture losses not transferable or refundable
Privately-owned automobiles	Registration, Driver's license, and use taxes imposed when bringing into certain jurisdictions	

Transportations of pets	Only costs associated with dogs, cats and other house pets are included. Other animals (horses, fish, birds, various rodents, etc.) are excluded because of their size, exotic nature, or restrictions on shipping, host country restrictions, and special handling difficulties. Costs are limited to transportation and handling costs, required to meet the more stringent rules of air carriers, not included are inoculations, examinations, boarding quarantine, or other costs in the moving process	
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## 12.8 Real Estate Instructions

The real estate voucher claim is used to reimburse employees for expenses incurred in connection with residence transactions. Employees should check with their OpDiv/StaffDiv or their relocation services provider for the correct form to be used.

### 12.8.1 Required Items

In the event that an employee purchases a residence as part of a new appointment or transfer, the checklist(s) provided below should be used to ensure that all applicable required documents are submitted for each of the following circumstance(s).

#### 12.8.1.1 Real Estate Purchase

The following checklist is for expenses related to the purchase of a new residence.

- Purchase contract.
- Settlement statement (HUD-1) with all signatures (unless the State does not require signatures). If a HUD-1 is not available, submit proof from the bank or settlement agent that the transaction occurred.

\*Note: All names listed on the HUD-1 must be included on the travel order or the reimbursement will be pro-rated.

- If any costs were paid outside of closing (POC), please provide proof of payment for each expense. If the POC is included on the HUD-1, they will be notated with P.O.C. (B\*).
- If the expense for "Owner's Title Insurance" is listed in the Borrower's column, please contact the settlement agent to verify that all three of the following requirements are met in order to be reimbursed for this expense:
  1. The expense is customarily paid for by the buyer.
  2. The expense does not exceed the charges normally paid in the locality.
  3. The expense was a pre-requisite to financing – OR – it was a pre-requisite for the transfer of the property – OR – the cost of the owner's title insurance policy is inseparable from the cost of the other insurance, which is a pre-requisite.
- If an expense for a property inspection or environmental test is listed on the Borrower's column, please contact the settlement agent to prove that either Federal, State, or local law, or the lender, required the expense.

\*Note: If proof is not submitted for the owner's title insurance, property inspections, or environmental testing, it will not be reimbursed on the current voucher. If later, proof can be provided, a supplemental voucher will be prepared.

### 12.8.1.2 Real Estate Sale

The following checklist is for expenses related to the sale of an existing residence.

- Sales contract.
- Settlement statement (HUD-1) with all signatures (unless the State does not require signatures). If a HUD-1 is not available, submit proof from the bank or settlement agent that the transaction occurred.

\*Note: All names listed on the HUD-1 must be included on the travel order or the reimbursement will be pro-rated.

- If any costs were paid outside of closing (POC), please provide proof of payment for each expense. If the POC is included on the HUD-1, they will be notated with P.O.C. (S\*).
- If the expense for "Owner's Title Insurance" is listed in the Seller's column, please contact the settlement agent to prove all three of the following requirements in order to be reimbursed for this expense:
  1. The expense is customarily paid for by the seller.
  2. The expense does not exceed the charges normally paid in the locality.
  3. The expense was a pre-requisite to financing – OR – it was a pre-requisite for the transfer of the property – OR – the cost of the owner's title insurance policy is inseparable from the cost of the other insurance, which is a pre-requisite.

\*Note: If proof is not submitted for the owner's title insurance, it will not be reimbursed on the current voucher. If later, proof can be provided, a supplemental voucher will be prepared.

### 12.8.1.3 Lease breaking

The following checklist is for expenses related to the breaking of a lease.

- Receipts or proof of payment for all lease-breaking expenses. Lease agreement.

\*Note: All names listed on the lease agreement must be included on the travel order or the reimbursement will be pro-rated.

## 12.9 Submitting Expenses

Once all of the required items have been gathered, the voucher packet shall be submitted to the contact provided by the OpDiv/StaffDiv or relocation services company.

## 12.10 Reimbursable Expenses for Real Estate Purchase & Sale

Text removed: FTR Redundant.

## 12.11 HHS Travel and Relocation Test Programs

The following guidelines pertain to requests to GSA for authority to conduct a travel or relocation test program:

1. For test programs within the OS, requests will be submitted to GSA under the signature of the ASA.

2. For test programs within the OpDiv/StaffDivs, requests will be submitted to GSA under the signature of the OpDiv/StaffDiv Head or their designee. An advance draft copy will be submitted via memorandum to PSC, for review and comment prior to submission to GSA.
3. OpDiv/StaffDivs whose travel management system is administered by the PSC must obtain concurrence by the PSC's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) before forwarding their request to GSA. This is to ensure that the travel management system will be able to support the travel or relocation program changes being proposed.
4. OpDiv/StaffDivs will comply with labor-management requirements to obtain union concurrence if the pilot program will involve bargaining unit employees.

### **Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines**

FTR Part 300-80, Travel and Relocation Expense Test Programs

## **12.12 Payment Audits of Transportation Bills**

HHS OpDiv/StaffDivs, which pay transportation bills, must establish and/or maintain an approved prepayment audit program or obtain a waiver of this requirement from GSA in accordance with GSA regulations. Transportation bills cover services for the movement of products, people, household goods, and any other objects, as well as activities directly related to or supporting that movement, such as storage, crating, or connecting appliances. They include express, courier, and small package shipments of objects.

Transportation audits entail a thorough review and validation of bills by examining the validity, propriety, and conformity of the charges with tariffs, quotations, agreements, or tenders, as appropriate. Audit procedures must prevent duplicate payments and only allow payment for authorized services when the bill is complete with required documentation.

OpDiv/StaffDivs, which perform prepayment audits, must audit all transportation bills and payments that are not covered by an approved waiver.

Exception: OpDiv/StaffDivs may use a statistical sampling technique to audit transportation bills at or below \$2,500. Prepayment audit documentation must be forwarded monthly to the GSA Audit Division, which will store it for three (3) years under the General Records Schedule 9, Travel and Transportation.

Under the Prompt Payment Act, OpDiv/StaffDivs must notify the transportation service provider of any billing errors and related adjustments it will make in payment via an electronic or written statement of difference within seven (7) days of receipt of a transportation bill. This notice must contain the information elements specified in the GSA regulation.

OpDiv/StaffDivs that have a waiver for some or all transportation bills must forward all paid, un-audited transportation bills, with required information annotated on the bills, to the GSA Audit Division for a post payment audit.

If the OpDiv/StaffDiv conducts prepayment audits of its transportation bills, the Finance Office certifying officer is held liable for verifying transportation rates, freight classifications, and other information on the bill and for any overpayment made. If the OpDiv/StaffDiv has a waiver from GSA and forwards bills for post payment audit to GSA Audit Division, the Finance Office certifying officer is not personally liable for verifying transportation rates, freight classifications, and other information on the bill or for any overpayment made.

### **Federal Management Regulation Guidelines:**

Federal Property Management Regulation, Part 101-41

Federal Management Regulation Part 102-118, Subpart D, Prepayment Audits of Transportation Services

Federal Management Regulation Part 102-118, Subpart E, Post payment Transportation Audits

The CFO for each HHS OpDiv/StaffDiv that pays transportation bills is responsible for the development and implementation of a Prepayment Audit Program Plan that meets the requirements of the Federal Management Regulation, Subpart D, Prepayment Audits of Transportation Services, unless a waiver is being requested or has been granted. It is HHS policy that

CFOs may establish a minimum dollar threshold for transportation bills subject to prepayment audit up to \$2,500. The initial Prepayment Audit Program Plan, and any future planned changes to approved Plans, should be submitted by the CFO to the DASF for review and submission to the GSA Audit Division for final approval.

The CFO for each HHS OpDiv/StaffDiv that pays transportation bills is responsible for determining whether a waiver for some or all bills is justified and for submitting a written Request for Waiver through the DASF or the GSA Audit Division for approval. The Request for Waiver must meet the requirements of the Federal Management Regulation, Subpart D, Prepayment Audits of Transportation Services. It must identify the mode or modes of transportation to which the waiver will apply and provide a detailed explanation as to why a waiver should be granted, such as cost-effectiveness, Government efficiency, public interest, agency mission, or not feasible for the OpDiv/StaffDiv to implement. GSA will provide a written response to the HHS request within 30 days of receipt. Waivers cannot exceed a two-year period. CFOs of OpDiv/StaffDivs must reapply with a new Request for Waiver every two years to document to the Department and GSA that conditions still warrant a waiver.

## **13. Travel During a Lapse in Appropriations**

This section provides instructions and information concerning transportation and other expenses incident to travel in the event of a Lapse in Appropriation for HHS.

Travel in the event of a Lapse in Appropriations often involves unique or extraordinary travel scenarios for Federal employees and those traveling on behalf of HHS. However, all travel must be conducted in accordance with the FTR.

The policy guidance in this chapter is intended to address those scenarios that occur most often, but it does not address every possible scenario. Due to this, this section is primarily in a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) format.

Due to the fluid nature of a lapse in appropriations, please visit the PSC website for the most recent information related to travel in the event of a lapse in appropriations.

### **13.1 Authority**

A lapse in appropriations can occur under varying circumstances. For example, The Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended by the Budget Control Act of 2011 and the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 may affect appropriations.

During a lapse in appropriations, the Federal government may enact an Emergency Furlough. During an Emergency Furlough, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) may issue guidance related to travel for employees impacted by an administrative furlough. Guidance may be found on OPM's administrative furlough guidance webpage [Furlough Guidance](#).

OPM does not administer the FTR; therefore, for more information about this guidance, please see the General Services Administration (GSA) website for the FTR at or contact GSA at [travelpolicy@gsa.gov](mailto:travelpolicy@gsa.gov).

### **13.2 Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel FAQs**

Moved to Appendix A.

### **13.3 Attendance at Conference FAQs**

Moved to Appendix A.

### **13.4 Relocation FAQs**

Relocated to Appendix A.

## 13.5 Commissioned Corps

Travel policies and per diem rates for Commissioned Corps officers of USPHS are governed by the JTR. ASH or its designee is responsible for developing and issuing travel and relocation policy for Corps officers, to supplement the Department of Defense’s JTR.

Corps policies are published in separate documents that are not part of the HHS Travel Policy Manual. However, certain sections of this Travel Manual, by their terms, govern travel by Commissioned Corps officers as well as by civil service employees. Any operational or travel concerns of the Corps should be directed to the Office of the Surgeon General.

## 13.6 Administrative Guidance

The following information is provided to assist managers in executing shutdown activities in the absence of the enactment of annual appropriations. In addition to the list below, there may be other program related actions, which need to be taken to insure the public is provided the appropriate information in a timely manner. Please coordinate these activities with your OpDiv/StaffDiv leadership.

### 13.6.1 Travel Administrative Activities

1. Cancel pending travel authorizations for travel scheduled to start within the furlough period. Submit outstanding travel vouchers for payment.
2. Arrange for immediate return flights home for non-excepted employees on official government travel who are impacted by the furlough.
3. Ensure that all travel AOs designate at least two alternate approvers to handle any emergency travel transactions.
4. PSC will provide updates on scheduled travel on a daily basis to the OpDiv/StaffDivs designated excepted points of contact. Ticketing for travel will be approved on a daily and case-by-case basis, based upon guidance from HHS.

## 14. Glossary

The glossary includes terms not defined in the FTR related to Temporary Duty Travel, Relocation, the Travel Charge Card Program, and Travel for Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Services including National Special Security Events (NSSE) and similar situations. Not all terms in the Glossary are used in the HHS Travel Policy manual but come from the related regulations including the FTR.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Abbreviation or Acronym</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Definition or Explanation</b>
Abuse of Government Travel Charge Card (See also Misuse of Government Travel Charge Card)		Travel Credit Cards	Use of a Government travel charge card to buy authorized items, but at terms (e.g., price, quantity) that are excessive, is for a questionable Government need, or both. Examples of such transactions would include multiple ATM withdrawals on same day, purchasing unrelated travel expenses

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			(e.g., purchases of computer and electronic equipment, or paying for express mailing services at a conference or hotel).
Account Deactivation		Travel Credit Cards	A method by which an OpDiv/StaffDiv can prevent the cardholder’s ability to make transactions on the account, temporarily, without canceling the account. While the account is deactivated, any transaction that the cardholder attempts will be declined at the point of sale (POS). The Agency can deactivate and reactivate an account through the travel charge card vendor’s Electronic Access System (EAS) or by calling the charge card vendor. The charge card vendor’s A/OPC guide or EAS will provide guidance to the Agency on the deactivation and reactivation process.
Agency/ Organization Program Coordinator	A/OPC	Travel Credit Cards	Agency-designated coordinator, including alternates, who administer the Government travel charge card program.
Agency Senior Travel Official	ASTO	Travel	See Federal Travel Regulation Bulletin 14-08, “Designation of Agency Senior Travel Officials” and Executive Order (E.O) 13598, Section 3(b).
Attendance		Travel	Being present during all or any part of a conference, administrative meeting, or other event.
Authorization		Travel	See Federal Travel Regulation.
Authorization		Travel Credit Cards	The process of verifying, at the POS, that a purchase is allowable given the requirements, prohibitions, and controls established by the agency for the card.
Authorized Point of Origin		Relocation	The previous official station for a transferring employee. For a new appointee or student trainee it is the place of actual residence.
Approving Official	AO or “Approver”	Travel	Person with delegated authority to approve travel authorizations and travel vouchers. This person should be aware of how the authorized travel will support the Agency’s mission, and should be knowledgeable of the employee’s travel plans and the Agency’s travel policies and procedures. The official must understand that by authorizing or approving the travel that he/she is instructing the Funds Certifier to commit funds on behalf of the Government. (This Official cannot both approve travel and certify funds for the same travel document. See definition of Funds Certifier.)
Authorizing Official	AO or “Approver”	Travel	See Approving Official.
Automated Teller Machine	ATM	Travel	An electronic device that allows cash withdrawals from participating banks.

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ATM Advance		Travel	A cash withdrawal at an ATM using the contractor bank issued Government travel charge card, which is used to cover anticipated out-of-pocket incidental travel expenses, such as ground transportation, or occasional meals, and that generally cannot be purchased with the travel charge card.
Attendant/Escort			An individual, such as a family member, who is authorized to accompany the patient/research subject in order to make the trip possible. For purposes of this section, employees performing official duty on HHS- paid travel when accompanying a patient/research subject are not included within the definition of “escort or attendant.”
Billing Error		Travel Credit Cards	Transaction appearing on a cardholder’s account as questionable charge, duplicate billing, or unauthorized charge.
Business Class		Travel	A class of accommodation offered by common carrier service (air, rail, etc.) that is higher than Coach Class and lower than First Class, in both cost and amenities. This class of accommodation may be referred to as “Business, Business Elite, Business First, World Business, Connoisseur, or Envoy, etc.” depending on the common carrier.
Cancelation		Travel Credit Cards	Permanent termination of Government travel charge card privileges after the travel charge account is 126 calendar days past due based upon the closing date of the statement.
Cardholder			The legal agent (employee) using the Government-provided travel charge card to buy goods and services in support of official travel and Government business. The card holder holds the primary responsibility for the card’s proper use and payment.
Cardholder Statement			A statement, listing all transactions during the billing period, which is sent to each cardholder.
Cash Advance			Monies obtained from a Government contractor-issued travel charge card, via an ATM, or bank teller. Cash advances must be obtained in limited amounts commensurate with actual travel. The standard amount is 60 percent of the M&IE for the TDY location.
Centrally Billed Account	CBA		A card or account established by the travel charge card vendor at the request of the HHS accounting office. This may be a card or cardless account. Payments are made directly to the charge card vendor by the HHS office responsible for the reconciliation of the account. A CBA may be used to pay for airfare, rail, TMC, and ETS vendor fees. CBAs are not used for

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			other common carrier methods or lodging unless an exception has been granted by PSC.
City Pair Program	CPP	Travel	The airline City Pair Program provides discounted air transportation services for Federal travelers Government-wide. CPP fares are unrestricted; some of the benefits offered under the CPP include no advance purchase requirement, no minimum length of stay, and fully refundable tickets with no airline cancellation of change fees.
Civilian Board of Contract Appeals	CBCA	Travel	The CBCA was established by Section 847 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 to hear claims by Federal employees under Title 31 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 3702 for reimbursement of expenses incurred while on official TDY travel or in connection with relocation to a new official station.
Coach Class			The basic class of accommodation by common carrier (air, rail, etc.) that is normally the lowest fare offered regardless of terminology used. For reference purposes only, this class may also be referred to as “Tourist Class,” “Economy class,” or as “Single class” when the common carrier offers only one class of accommodations to all travelers.
Commissioned Officer			A person appointed (“commissioned”) as officers of the Health and Human Services Public Health Service pursuant to 42 U.S.C 209.
Constructed Cost			The sum of transportation expenses the employee would reasonably have incurred for round-trip travel between the official station and the alternate location, plus per diem calculated for the appropriate en route travel time.
Consultant			A person who can provide valuable and pertinent advice generally drawn from a high degree of broad administrative, professional, or technical knowledge or experience. When an agency requires public advisory participation, a consultant also may be a person who is affected by a particular program and can provide useful views from personal experience (See 5 CFR 304.102). Section 1.7 provides travel policy guidance for Consultants.
Continuity of Operations	COOP		The continuous performance of essential Government functions and operations in the event of an emergency or disaster.
Contract Carriers			U.S. certificated air carriers, which are under contract with the Government to furnish Federal employees and other persons authorized to travel at Government expense, with passenger transportation

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			service under the CPP. This also includes GSA's scheduled airline passenger service between selected U.S. cities/airports and between selected U.S. and international cities/airports at reduced fares.
Contract Fares (“YCA” or “_CA”)	“Dash CA”		Contract Fares are offered under the airline CPP. Travelers are required to use the contact fare per FTR 301-10.105 and 106 unless an exception is authorized. Contract fares include the YCA Fare, which is the guaranteed GSA economy class Airline City Pair fare. The _CA is the limited capacity, GSA economy class Airline City Pair fare. The first letter of the three-letter fare basis code will vary by airline (e.g., QCA, LCA, etc.). The difference between the YCA and _CA is that there are a limited number of seats on the lower _CA Airline City Pair rate.
Contractor			A person who is performing services under the auspices of a contractual relationship between a company and the Government.
Cost Comparison		Relocation	The preparation of a cost estimate of either alternate travel modes or HHG shipping methods, for a self-move under the GBL, to determine which is most advantageous to the Government. This is done prior to preparing the Relocation Travel Authorization. This information should be attached to the travel document or typed in the comments section of the travel document to be retained for auditing purposes.
Data mining			An automated process used to scan databases to detect patterns, trends, and/or anomalies for use in risk management or other areas of analysis.
Delinquency/ delinquent account			A Government travel charge card account balance that is unpaid or more than 61 days past the statement date based upon the closing date of the statement.
Dependent			An immediate family member of the employee.
Disaster			Usually, an unexpected occurrence, man-made or natural, that causes loss of life, health, property, or livelihood, inflicting widespread destruction and distress and/or having long-term, adverse effects on Agency operations.
Deputy Senior Travel Official			Each OpDiv Head may designate a Deputy STO, who is a full time Federal employee. The Deputy STO will support the STO and handle those responsibilities of the STO, which can and are re-delegated to them. All re- delegations to the Deputy STO must be reported to the ASTO.

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Discretionary Allowances			Allowances over which agencies have discretionary authority to pay or reimburse to employees when authorized. Allowances must be authorized in advance on the relocation order.
Disposable Pay			The part of a salary payment that remains after the deduction of any amount required by law is withheld. Required deductions do not include discretionary deductions such as health insurance, savings bonds, charitable contributions, etc. Deductions may be made from basic, special, and incentive salary payments.
Dispute			A written challenge of an unresolved or disputed transaction on the cardholder's billing statement. Cardholders must assert a dispute, or a billing error, in writing within 60 days of date of the statement reflecting the transaction in question in order not to be liable for payment of the transaction in question.
Due Process			The legal process to which an agency must adhere prior to the collection or salary offset on any undisputed delinquent amount on behalf of the Government contractor travel charge card vendor.
Electronic Access System	EAS		The Government travel charge card vendor's internet-based system, which provides a variety of reports related to the travel charge card program. The reports assist in the effective management of the travel charge card program.
Emergency Deployment			Immediate humanitarian support and relief.
Employee			<p>An individual employed by an agency, regardless of status or rank; an individual employed intermittently in Government service as an expert or consultant and paid on a daily when-actually-employed (WAE) basis; or  an individual serving without pay or at \$1 a year (also referred to as an "invitational traveler").</p> <p>Employees include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appointed officers or employees of HHS, under 5 U.S.C. 5707;</li> <li>2. Special government employees under 18 U.S.C. 202;</li> <li>3. Experts or consultants appointed under authority of 5 U.S.C. 3109;</li> <li>4. Any individual appointed under Title 42 excepted service authority; or</li> </ol>

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			A commissioned officer appointed under Title 42.
En Route Travel			Travel between an employee's old and new official stations.
Entitlements			Costs associated with relocation that agencies must pay or reimburse employees if relocation is authorized.
Entry Level (For Purposes of Pre-Employment)			Any grade of employee lower than a General Schedule Grade 9 (GS-9), unless allowed by statute.
Escort/Attendant			An individual, such as a family member, who is authorized to accompany the patient/research subject in order to make the trip possible. For purposes of this section, employees performing official duty on HHS- paid travel when accompanying a patient/research subject are not included within the definition of "escort or attendant."
Excessive Advance			Cash advances obtained in amounts greater than anticipated out-of-pocket travel expenses such as for ground transportation or occasional meals.
Expert (Subject Matter Expert [SME])			A person who is specially qualified by education and experience to perform difficult and challenging tasks in a particular field beyond the usual range of achievement of competent persons in that field. An expert is regarded by other persons in the field as an authority or practitioner of unusual competence and skill in a professional, scientific, technical, or other activity. (See 5 CFR 304.102.) Section 1.8 provides travel policy regarding experts.
Excepted Employee			In the context of furloughs, the term "excepted employees" is used to refer to employees who are funded through annual appropriations who are nonetheless excepted from the furlough because they are performing work that, by law, may continue to be performed during a lapse in appropriations. "Excepted employees" include employees who are (1) performing emergency work involving the safety of human life or the protection of property, (2) performing minimal activities as necessary to execute an orderly suspension of agency operations related to non-excepted activities, or (3) performing certain other types of excepted work. Agency legal counsels, working with senior agency managers, determine which employees are designated to be handling "excepted" and "non- excepted" functions. Other employees are "exempt" from furlough because they are not affected by a lapse in appropriations. This includes

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			employees who are not funded by annually appropriated funds. It also includes those Presidential appointees who are not subject to a Federal employee leave system-i.e.; who are entitled to an annual salary without consideration of the hours of duty required and thus cannot be placed in non-duty/non-pay status. (NOTE: Non-career SES and Schedule C employees do not fall into this category.)
Extended TDY(See Also Long- term TDY)			Temporary Duty Travel that lasts between 14 nights and 29 nights.
Extra Fare Train Service			A train that operates at an increased fare due to the extra performance of the train (i.e., at faster speed or fewer stops, such as the Amtrak).
Federal Advisory Committee Consultant			An individual appointed under the Federal Advisory Committee Act who is paid through the HHS payroll system for his/her time served. For members of those councils and committees having legislative authority for payment of actual travel and subsistence expenses, please reference Section 1.8, Travel of Consultants, Experts, and Invitational Travelers
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Approved Accommodation			Any place of public lodging that is listed on the national master list of approved accommodations, which is compiled, periodically updated, and published in the Federal Register by FEMA. The list is also available on the U.S. Fire Administration's website.
First Class			The highest class of accommodation offered by the common carrier in terms of cost and amenities. This is generally termed "First Class" by airlines and reservation systems.
Frequent Traveler			An employee who travels five or more times per fiscal year and is thereby mandated to apply for and use a Government contractor bank-issued travel charge card.
Funds Certifier/Certifier			Person with delegated authority to certify that the organization has funding available for the purpose of the proposed travel.
Gateway City			A city that serves as a departure or arrival point for international flights. A city that serves as an airline's entry or departure point to or from a country.
Government Bill of Lading	GBL		This is used for the procurement of commercial transportation (moving) services.
Government Employees Training Act	GETA		Provides Federal agencies general authority for employee training.
Guaranteed Home Sale	GHS		Home sale based on upon the appraised or amended value. The employee has the benefit of a guaranteed offer (GO) for their home residence.

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Home Sale Programs: Amended Value Sale			This occurs when the relocating employee receives a bona-fide offer from a qualified buyer. If the contract is acceptable, the Relocation Services Company signs the contract and amends its guaranteed offer to reflect the accepted contract price.
Home Sale Programs: Amend-from-Zero Sale			This occurs when the employee receives a bona-fide outside offer prior to the completion of the appraisal process. Since there is no guaranteed purchase offer, the relocation company amends from zero to match the outside offer. The value of the home is established by the buyer offer, not the appraised value or guaranteed offer from the relocation services company.
Home Sale Programs: Appraised Value			A contract of sale extended to a relocating employee from the relocation company to buy the employee's property based upon the average of a specific number of appraisals.
Home Sale Programs: Buyer Value Option (BVO)			This is a variation of the Amended Value transaction and can be structured in numerous ways.
Home Sale Programs: Direct Reimbursement			A program where the employer reimburses some or all home-sale expenses incurred by the employee.
Househunting Trip	HHT		A trip made by the employee and/or spouse to a new official station locality to find permanent living quarters to rent or purchase.
Individual Billed Account	IBA		A Government contractor-issued travel charge card, which is used by a Government employee, to pay for official travel and transportation-related expenses for which the HHS employee is liable to pay.
Intermittent Consultant or Expert			Employment without a regularly scheduled tour of duty (5 CFR 340 Subpart D) for not more than 130 days in a service year. If an intermittent consultant or expert serves for all or any part of a day beyond 130 days in a service year, the appointment ceases to be intermittent and becomes temporary. Intermittent consultants are designated either "WAE" (when-actually-employed) or "WOC" (without compensation, or at one dollar per year). See Section 1.8 for travel policy for intermittent consultants.
Intermittent Employment			Employment without a regularly scheduled tour of duty. (See 5 CFR 340 Subpart D.)
International Travel			The terms "international travel" and "outside the United States," as used in this manual, are defined as meaning all travel on official duty time (except change of official stations) outside the 50 United States, Guam, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana

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			<p>Islands, and any other territory under U.S. jurisdiction. (The term foreign travel may also be used.)</p> <p>Trips to the former U.S. Trust Territories in the Pacific, which are now independent (the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, and the Marshall Islands), are considered international travel.</p> <p>Note: An HHS traveler stationed outside the United States who conducts official travel solely between foreign countries must follow U.S. Department of State regulations and guidance.</p>
Invitational Traveler			<p>A person not appointed as a consultant/expert who is requested by the OpDiv/StaffDiv to confer on Government business (see FTR 300-3.1).</p>
Limited Open Authorization			<p>A travel authorization allowing an employee to travel on official business without further authorization under certain specific conditions (e.g., travel to specific geographic area(s) for specific purpose(s), subject to trip cost ceilings; or for specific periods).</p>
Long-term TDY (See Also Extended TDY)			<p>Temporary Duty Travel lasting 30 nights or longer.</p>
Meeting or Similar Function			<p>A conference, seminar, speaking engagement, symposium, training course, or similar event that takes place away from the employee's official station. The term does not include a meeting or other event that is required to carry out a statutory or regulatory function of HHS, such as investigations, inspections, audits, site visits, negotiations, or litigation. It also does not include promotional vendor training or other meetings held for the primary purpose of marketing the products or services of the non-Federal source, nor long-term TDY or training travel per FTR 304-2.1.</p>
Merchant Category Code	MCC		<p>A numerical identifier assigned by the bank for classification of products and services.</p>
Miscellaneous Expense			<p>The cost associated with discontinuing the residence at the old official station and/or establishing a residence at the new official station. Miscellaneous expenses are related to expenses that are common to living quarters, furnishings, household appliances, and to other general types of costs inherent in relocation of a place of residence.</p>
Mission Assignment			<p>A work order issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) after a Presidentially- declared disaster to another Federal agency directing the completion of a specific task, and citing funding, other managerial controls, and guidance.</p>

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Misuse of Government Contractor Bank-Issued Travel Charge Card (See Abuse of Government Contractor Bank-Issued Travel Charge Card)			Use of the travel charge card in an unauthorized, illegal, or adverse manner. Examples of misuse include unauthorized cash advances, purchase of non-reimbursable personal expenditures, use of the travel charge card when not in an official travel status, becoming delinquent in payments to the travel charge card vendor, etc.
Monetary Payment from a Non-Federal Source (Reimbursable Sponsored Travel)			A monetary payment (Reimbursable Sponsored Travel) from a non-Federal source to a Federal agency for travel, subsistence, related expenses by check, or other monetary instrument payable to the Federal agency (e.g., EFT, money order, charge card, etc.); or payment in-kind; see FTR 304-2.1. Reimbursable sponsored travel may be allowed only under exceptional circumstances with the approval of the employee's STO.
National Special Security Event	NSSE		A significant domestic or international event, occurrence, contest, activity, or meeting, which by virtue of its profile and/or status represents an attractive target for terrorist attack. Examples include State funerals, political conventions, presidential inaugurations, public sporting events, state of the union address, etc.
Non-ATM Advance			An advance for travelers who do not have the contractor-issued Government contractor bank-issued travel charge card. The travel advance must not exceed 60 percent of the total, estimated M&IE, lodging, and other miscellaneous expenses authorized on the travel order.
Non-Contract Fare			A fare offered by an airline that is not part of the CPP.
Non-Excepted Employee			In the context of furloughs, the term "non-excepted employees" is used to refer to employees who are funded through annual appropriations who are nonetheless NOT excepted from the furlough because they are performing work that, by law, may NOT continue to be performed during a lapse in appropriations.
Non-Federal Source			Any person or entity other than the Government of the United States. The term includes any individual, private or commercial entity, nonprofit organization or association, international or multinational organization (irrespective of whether an agency holds membership in the organization or association), or foreign, State or local government (including the government of the District of Columbia). See FTR 304-2.1.

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Object Class Code	OCC		Object class codes are prescribed by the Office of Management and Budget and are used uniformly through the Government in submitting budget estimates and budget reports to OMB and Congress. The major object class codes are a numeric code structure and are extended by adding two digits, numeric/alpha, to further identify specific objects.
Open Skies Agreement			A bilateral or multilateral air transport agreement to which the United States Government and the government of a foreign country are parties, and which the Department of Transportation has determined meets the requirements of the Fly America Act.
Other than Coach Class			Any class of common carrier accommodations above Coach Class (e.g., First Class, Business Class, or Premium Class).
Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS) (See International Travel)			See Non-Foreign Area—The States of Alaska and Hawaii, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands and the territories and possessions of the United States (excludes the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands).
Patient			An individual who is receiving health care services from one of the OpDivs of HHS (e.g., an eligible beneficiary of health care services provided by or through IHS).
Payment			A monetary disbursement from a non-Federal source to a Federal agency for travel, subsistence, related expenses by check or other monetary instrument payable to the Federal agency (e.g., electronic funds transfer [EFT], money order, charge card, etc.) or payment in-kind. See FTR 304-2.1.
Payment In-Kind			Transportation, food, lodging, or other travel-related services provided by a non-Federal source, instead of monetary payments, to the Federal agency for these services. Payment in-kind also includes waiver of any fees that a non-Federal source normally collects from meeting attendees (e.g., registration fees). See FTR 304- 2.1.
Permanent Change of Station	PCS		An assignment of a new appointee to an official station or the transfer of an employee from one official station to another on a permanent basis.
Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Travel			Travel and other relocation expenses involved in the permanent change of an employee's official station.
Premium Class Accommodations			Any class of service that is higher than Coach Class (i.e., First Class or Business Class).

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Premium-Other-Than-First Class Accommodations			Any class of service between Coach Class and First Class and is commonly called “Business Class.”
Prudent Person Rule			An employee traveling on official business is expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a <u>prudent person</u> would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds. Excess costs, circuitous routes, delays, or luxury accommodations and services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business are not acceptable under this standard. Employees will be responsible for excess costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience.
Recommending Official			The Recommending Official grants authorization/approval for acceptance of in-kind payments from non-Federal sources, The Recommending Official may be the Deputy Ethics Counselor depending on the OpDiv/StaffDiv. Check OpDiv/StaffDiv policy to determine who has been assigned the Recommending Official role.
Relocation Income Tax Allowance	RTA		This is authorized to reimburse eligible transferred employees for substantially all of the additional Federal, State, and local income taxes incurred by the employee, or by the employee and spouse if a joint tax return is filed, as a result of certain travel and transportation expense and relocation allowances which are furnished in kind, or for which reimbursement or an allowance is provided by the Government.
Relocation Travel			Travel and other relocation expenses involved in the temporary and permanent change of an employee's official station.
Relocation Travel Authorization (Order)	RTA		Written or electronic permission to travel on official business of the U.S. Government for the purpose of relocating to an official station or post.
Research Subject			An individual who has been authorized to participate in a clinical study or research protocol conducted by one of the OpDivs of HHS (e.g., a person selected to participate in a clinical trial at the Clinical Center of the National Institutes of Health [NIH]). A research subject may qualify as an invitational traveler, at the discretion of the OpDiv.
Residence			The place from which an employee regularly commutes to work each day. Also defined as the place from which the employee commutes daily as referenced by the CBCA in cases B-197360, B-210660, etc. Similar terms include “home” and “place of abode.” The term residence is used when

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			determining reimbursement for mileage when using a POV or determining travel by an indirect route for personal convenience.
Restricted Fare			An airline fare that is not part of the CPP, may not be fully refundable, and has one or more additional restrictions such as requiring a Saturday night stay, requiring purchase within 24-hours, etc. It may also include a cancellation or a change fee.
Salary Offset			An amount an agency deducts from an employee's salary payment to pay a contractor bank for undisputed delinquent travel charge card balances incurred in connection with official Government travel.
Senior Travel Official	STO		A full time Federal employee at the SES level or equivalent and who, for purposes of serving as the STO, reports directly to the OpDiv/StaffDiv Head on all matters of travel policy, programs, and practices.
Sensitive Countries			HHS/OGA has identified countries in this category as those where internal political and/or social turmoil exists. Travel to countries designated as sensitive by OGA requires additional clearance and approval by the ASA, in consultation with OGA and Office of Security and Strategic Information (OSSI).
Service Agreement			A written agreement between the employee and his/her agency, signed by the employee and an agency representative, stating that the employee will remain in the service of the Government for a period of time as specified in FTR 302-2.13, after the employee has have relocated.
Split Disbursement			Split disbursement divides a travel voucher reimbursement between the Government travel charge card vendor and the traveler. OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B, HHS mandates the use of split disbursement for all Government travel charge cardholders.
Suspension			The temporary termination of travel charge card privileges.
Temporary Change of Station	TCS		The relocation to a new official station for a temporary period (not less than six months or more than 30 months) while performing a long-term assignment, and subsequent return to the previous official station upon completion of that assignment.
Temporary Consultant or Expert			A consultant or expert whose employment does not exceed one year. An expert or consultant serving under a temporary appointment may have a full-time, part-time, seasonal, or intermittent work schedule. (See 5 CFR 304.102) Section 1.8 provides travel policy for Temporary Consultants.
Temporary Duty (TDY) Location			A place, away from an employee's official station, outside of the local transportation

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			(formerly local travel) area, where the employee is authorized to travel.
Temporary Duty(TDY) Assignment			Refers to a Government employee travel assignment at a location other than the employee's official station.
Temporary Quarters			Lodging obtained for the purpose of temporary occupancy from a private or commercial source.
Training			The process of providing for and making available to an employee, and placing or enrolling 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. See 5 U.S.C. 410.101 and Section 5.3 Reimbursement for Travel and Related Expenses Incidental to Training under the Government Employees Training Act (GETA).
Travel, Subsistence, and Related Expenses			Expenses for transportation, food, lodging, or other travel-related services for official travel away from the employee's station. This includes conference or training fees and benefits that are incident to the meeting, which are made available by the meeting sponsor(s) to all attendees. See FTR 304-2.1.
Trip-By-Trip Authorization			A travel authorization allowing an individual or group of individuals to take one or more specific official business trips, which must include specific purpose, itinerary, and estimated costs.
Unlimited-Open Authorization			A travel authorization allowing an employee to travel for any official purpose without additional authorization.
Voucher			A written request, supported by documentation and receipts where applicable, for reimbursement of expenses incurred in the performance of official travel, including PCS travel.
Widely Attended Gathering	WAG		A gathering that is attended by a large number of persons and it is open to members throughout the interested industry or profession, or if those in attendance represent a range of persons interested in a given matter. An employee may accept an unsolicited gift of free attendance at all or appropriate parts of a widely attended gathering of mutual interest to a number of parties from the sponsor of the event or, if more than 100 persons are expected to attend the event and

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			the gift of free attendance has a market value of \$250 or less, from a person other than the sponsor of the event.
Y-Up Fares (Up Fares)			Y-Up Fares are Coach Class fares that are “booked” in First Class seats.

Table 22: Web Links

Item	Owner	Link
Car Rental: U.S. Government Master Rental Car Agreement	Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO)	<a href="http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/rentalCar.cfm">http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/rentalCar.cfm</a>
Civilian Board of Contract Appeals		<a href="http://www.cbca.gsa.gov/">http://www.cbca.gsa.gov/</a>
Commissioned Corps Website (travel)	U.S. Public Health Services	<a href="https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/travel/ASSIGNMENTS_travel_reimburse_m.aspx">https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/travel/ASSIGNMENTS_travel_reimburse_m.aspx</a>
Customs and Border Protection	U.S. Department of Homeland Security	<a href="https://www.cbp.gov/">https://www.cbp.gov/</a>
Department of State		<a href="https://www.state.gov/">https://www.state.gov/</a>
Department of State Standardized Regulations	Department of State	<a href="https://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=282&amp;menu_id=75">https://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=282&amp;menu_id=75</a>
Department of State Travel Warnings		<a href="http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis_pa_tw_1168.html">http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis_pa_tw_1168.html</a>
E-Government Travel System	Program Support Center	<a href="https://ams.hhs.gov/amsLogin/SimpleLogin.jsp">https://ams.hhs.gov/amsLogin/SimpleLogin.jsp</a>
Federal Meeting Space Available		<a href="http://fedmeetingspace.cfoc.gov">http://fedmeetingspace.cfoc.gov</a>
Federal Travel Regulation (FTR)	General Services Administration	<a href="http://www.gsa.gov/federaltravelregulation">www.gsa.gov/federaltravelregulation</a>
General Services Administration (GSA)		<a href="https://www.gsa.gov/">https://www.gsa.gov/</a>
General Services Administration (GSA)/Hotel Tax Information (Exemptions)		<a href="http://www.gsa.gov/statetaxforms">www.gsa.gov/statetaxforms</a>
General Services Administration (GSA) City Pair Program		<a href="https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/transportation-airfare-rates-pov-rates-etc/city-pair-program-cpp">https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/transportation-airfare-rates-pov-rates-etc/city-pair-program-cpp</a>

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GSA (GSA) Long-term Lodging		<a href="https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/lodging/long-term-lodging">https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/lodging/long-term-lodging</a>
General Services Administration (GSA) SFTR Reporting Tool		<a href="https://gsa.inl.gov/travel/">https://gsa.inl.gov/travel/</a> .
HHS Travel Policy Manual	Program Support Center	<a href="https://www.psc.gov/transportation-services/travel-policy">https://www.psc.gov/transportation-services/travel-policy</a>
Joint Travel Regulation (JTR)	Defense Travel Management Office	<a href="http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/travelreg.cfm">http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/travelreg.cfm</a>
Office of Government Ethics (OGE)		<a href="https://www.oge.gov/">https://www.oge.gov/</a>
Program Support Services		<a href="https://www.psc.gov/">https://www.psc.gov/</a>
SmartPay Website	General Services Administration	<a href="https://smartpay.gsa.gov/">https://smartpay.gsa.gov/</a>
Transportation Policy Development Site	Program Support Center	<a href="https://max.gov/maxportal/home.action">https://max.gov/maxportal/home.action</a>
Transportation Policy Process Revamp Site	Program Support Center	<a href="https://max.gov/maxportal/home.action">https://max.gov/maxportal/home.action</a>
Transportation Security Administration	U.S. Department of Homeland Security	<a href="https://www.tsa.gov/">https://www.tsa.gov/</a>

## Appendix A: Guidance

Section	Topic	Question	Answer	Reference
5.1.3.3	Reducing Per Diem	“When can a per diem be reduced?”	An agency cannot reduce per diem unless it is done in advance and with evidence that the employee has access to assistance such as a kitchenette.	<i>In the Matter of Harry John Habverson, CBCA 2551-TRAV (2011)</i>
5.1.3.3	Reducing Per Diem	“Can a per diem be reduced once it has been included and approved in the travel order?”	No. As a general rule, once travel is authorized, the employee’s right to reimbursement of travel costs vests as the travel is performed, and valid travel orders cannot be revoked or modified retroactively, after the travel is completed, to decrease rights that have already become fixed.	<i>In the Matter Douglas W. Morris, CBCA 5574-TRAV (2017)</i>
5.1.3.3	Reducing Per Diem	“If an Agency believes the employee may have access to free meals while on TDY, may it reduce the employee’s per diem?”	No. An agency cannot assume an employee will receive free meals or will not spend the entire amount.	<i>In the Matter of Steven L. Meints, CBCA 2921-TRAV (2013); In the Matter of W. Lynn Hodges, CBCA 1900-TRAV (2010)</i>
5.1.3.3	Reducing Per Diem	“May a per diem be reduced after the travel is complete?”	No. An agency must reduce per diems in advance, not after the travel is complete.	<i>In the Matter of Jeremy L. Parr &amp; Courtney A. Stern, CBCA 4641 – TRAV, 4642-TRAV (2007)</i>
5.1.3.3	Reducing Per Diem	“Can per diem be reduced solely as a cost-saving measure?”	No. Per diems cannot be reduced as a way of saving money only.	<i>In the Matter of Patrick S. Twoby, GSBCA 15491 – TRAV (2001); In the Matter of Frank C. Sanders, B-217383 (1985)</i>
13.2	Government Shutdown	“What if I am on travel during a Lapse in Appropriations?”	<p>If you are identified as a non-expected employee who is to be placed in a furloughed status due to a lapse in appropriations while you are on TDY, you will need to arrange to return home within the next 24 hours or the first available flight. However, if your OpDiv/StaffDiv has identified you as an expected employee, you may be eligible to stay in a TDY status.</p> <p>Please contact the TMC to make any necessary travel arrangements. Once Congress passes and the President signs a new appropriation or continuing resolution, accommodations for a return to TDY will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. HHS will only pay</p>	

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			expenses for the time that it takes you to return to your official duty station. After that, you will be in a furloughed status and the agency will not pay for any additional expenses.	
13.2	Government Shutdown	“Must agencies cover travel expenses during a furlough day, if an employee’s travel status requires a stay that includes a furlough day?”	<p>Yes, agencies must provide per diem or actual expenses to excepted employees whose travel status requires a stay that includes a furlough day. If you are identified as a non-excepted employee, you will need to arrange to return home with the next 24 hours or the first available flight.</p> <p>If excepted employees are authorized Per Diem (Lodging, Meals &amp; Incidental Expenses) they are entitled to the full amount of Meals and Incidental Expenses or 75% on a travel day. If an excepted employee is on actual expenses, they can be placed on Actual Expenses for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Up to 300% of Lodging Only</li> <li>▪ Up to 300% of M&amp;IE Only</li> <li>▪ Up to 300% of both Lodging and M&amp;IE</li> </ul> <p>If an employee is on actual expenses, the employee is required to provide a receipt for all items, including meals. Without a valid receipt, the OpDiv/StaffDiv would not be responsible for reimbursement. It should be clearly stated that they are on actual expenses and that receipts are required for all expenses, even those that fall below the \$75 threshold.</p>	
13.2	Government Shutdown	“Can I still use my Government Travel Card?”	<p>The Government travel charge card may remain active during a lapse in appropriations but only excepted employees should use them. You should contact the travel charge card vendor’s customer service at the number on the back of the card should you experience problems with your card.</p> <p>In addition, you will not be able to submit your voucher until the Federal</p>	

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			Government reopens for business. The Government will not reimburse you while there is a lapse in appropriations (more commonly referred to as a "shutdown"). As always, all charges on your government issued travel card are your responsibility.	
13.2	Government Shutdown	“Can I stay at my TDY location while in a furloughed status?”	<p>In general, the Department cannot obligate funds for TDY expenses or accept voluntary services in the absence of appropriations for non-excepted activities. By remaining on TDY, you are acting in an official capacity. Therefore, the general rule state above pertains: if you are identified as a non-excepted employee who is to be placed in a furloughed status due to a lapse in appropriations while you are on TDY, you will need to arrange to return home with the next 24 hours or the first available flight. If you are not an excepted employee that is currently on TDY, long term or not, and elect to stay at the TDY location, you need to be aware of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Once you are furloughed you will no longer be covered under the Federal Employee’s Compensation Act for workers compensation insurance;</li> <li>2. You will not be reimbursed for per diem, including lodging, meals and incidental expenses (M&amp;IE); you will be responsible for all costs incurred once you are in a furlough status;</li> <li>3. If you are currently in long-term housing under a lease arrangement, your situation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, depending on when the next lease payment is due; and</li> <li>4. During the furlough, no work is allowed to be performed as agencies may not permit voluntary performance of non-</li> </ol>	

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			<p>excepted services as covered in 31 U.S.C. 1342.</p> <p>a. These restrictions are enforced by criminal penalties. An officer or employee of the United States who knowingly and willfully violates the restrictions shall be fined not more than \$5,000, imprisoned for not more than 2 years, or both. 31 U.S.C. 1350.</p>	
13.2	Government Shutdown	“Can I use the ETS?”	<p>No, since you will not be on official Government travel, you cannot use the ETS; you will also not be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use the ETS to make travel authorizations or submit vouchers;</li> <li>2. Use City Pair Fares for flights;</li> <li>3. Use the Government Car Rental Agreement managed by the Defense Management Travel Office (DTMO); and</li> <li>4. Use the FedRooms program; Hotels may choose to offer you a “government rate” but that is at the hotel’s discretion.</li> </ol>	
13.3	Government Shutdown	“Can an employee use personal funds by travelers to complete the Agency’s mission by attending an already planned conference?”	<p>No. In attending a conference on behalf of the Department, you are acting in an official capacity. The Department cannot accept voluntary services in the absence of appropriations for non-accepted activities.</p>	
13.4	Government Shutdown	“Do relocation benefits stop during a Government shutdown?”	<p>No, the monies for relocation come from already approved money and must be obligated up front for a relocation move, also referred to as a Permanent Change of Station (PCS). Each agency should have a plan in motion for those who may need assistance to include extensions to Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expenses (TQSE), etc.</p>	

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13.4	Government Shutdown	“Do people who are in Temporary Quarters still receive benefits?”	As TQSE is reimbursed at the new PDS, there is no "old" PDS to recall the employee to. Since no permanent residence has been purchased yet, TQSE is the employee's only option. There is no case law that covers this issue; however, based upon the reasoning above, GSA legal is of the opinion that the expenses can still be incurred, particularly if the relocation monies have been obligated prior to beginning the move, but reimbursement cannot be made until the lapsed funds can be accessed again.	
13.4	Government Shutdown	“Can the employee accept an offer during the shutdown period and therefore bind the government to the fee? Can contractors continue to order appraisals and inspections during the period the government has no money?”	First, there is no case law on this point. Thus, it is GSA legal's contention that if the fair market value of the home was obligated when the contract with the Relocation Service Provider (RSP) was executed, and the amount is from a revolving fund or a fund that does not lapse under a furlough situation, then the offer can be accepted.  However, if the fair market value of the home was not obligated, then there are no funds available to bind the Government, and the employee must wait until the applicable appropriation is passed to accept an offer. General rules regarding continuation of contractual arrangements should be followed. As for appraisals and inspections, these need to wait until the applicable appropriation is passed if the transactions are not covered by a revolving fund or a fund that does not lapse under a furlough situation.	
13.4	Government Shutdown	“Can I proceed to start my en route travel to an OCONUS foreign post during a government shutdown?”	Per the State Department Regulation, staff policy office: “This is not to be treated any differently than a domestic move. All monies spent on relocation are monies already approved and pre obligated. In addition, the employee may present their credentials to the foreign country with no problems.”	
13.4	Government Shutdown	“What about other types of relocation allowances such as pre-departure,	If relocation has been approved and obligated prior to the shutdown, it may move forward. If it has not been	

		<p>temporary quarters, and Household Goods (HHG)? Are these considered entitlements that should be obligated and expenses incurred, or should these future relocation expenses be stopped and not obligated?”</p>	<p>approved and obligated prior to the shutdown, it cannot be started until after the budget is resolved.</p> <p>However, even if the funds have been obligated for a relocation, an agency should confirm with Human Resources if an employee should perform a House Hunting Trip (HHT) during the furloughed timeframe since an employee is normally in a “pay status” while on a HHT. It also applies for an en route travel – they are in a pay status for the authorized number of days.</p> <p>Question that may come in to play include “are the employees covered (insurance/disability) during those days if they travel and also furloughed.” Check with your HR office for further guidance.</p>	
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## Appendix B: Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> ETS1, GovTrip, was in effect at the time the 2012 manual was published. GovTrip.com will be used until HHS and/or an OpDiv/StaffDiv transitions to the ETS2 system Concur Government Edition (CGE).

<sup>1</sup> Omega World Travel was the TMC at the time the 2012 manual was published. Omega World Travel will remain the TMC under ETS2 for all OpDiv/StaffDivs except ASPR. Under ETS2, ASPR will be supported by Duluth/Travel Incorporated.

<sup>1</sup> ETS1, GovTrip, was in effect at the time the 2012 manual was published. GovTrip.com will be used until HHS and/or an OpDiv/StaffDiv transitions to the ETS2 system Concur Government Edition (CGE).

<sup>1</sup> The form HHS1 is only available on the HHS Intranet and not accessible via the public internet.

<sup>1</sup> Members of the Commissioned Corps follow the JTR policy related to reimbursement of laundry expenses.

<sup>1</sup> An Agency may determine that there are multiple reasonable accommodation options. If that is the case, then a cost comparison should be done if multiple options are available to accommodate the particular reasonable accommodation request.

<sup>1</sup> It is the policy of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that requests for International Travel must be submitted 45 days in advance.

<sup>1</sup> Each authorized, accompanying child, including infants, must have his or her own passport. Family members /dependents who are not U.S. citizens must travel under their own passports.

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the authorities identified in section 7.2, a traveler may be able to accept expenses from a non- Federal source: a) under 5 U.S.C 4111 for acceptance of contributions, awards, and other payments from tax- exempt entities for non-Federal sponsored training or meeting (see regulations issued by OPM at 5.C.F.R 410.), b) Under 5 USC 7324(b) when payment is for travel to be performed for a partisan rather than an official purpose in accordance with the Hatch Act, or c) Pursuant to the applicable Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, 5 C.F.R. Part 2635, the regulations concerning personal acceptance of gifts.

<sup>1</sup> As of July 2014

<sup>1</sup> Indians as defined in Section 4(c) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (P.L. 93-638) by virtue of the section entitled “Personnel Aspects” are now allowed to participate in the IPA program.

20 Other eligible organizations means: 1) A National, Regional, State-wide, area-wide, or metropolitan organization representing member State or local governments; 2) An association of State or local public officials; A nonprofit organization which has as one of its principle functions the offering of professional advisory, research, education, or developmental services or related services; and 4) A Federally-funded research and development center.

<sup>1</sup> Some duties assigned to the employee’s immediate supervisor may be handled by the OpDiv/StaffDiv lead A/OPC, depending on an OpDiv/StaffDiv’s policies and procedures.

<sup>1</sup> Omega World Travel was the TMC at the time the 2012 manual was published. Omega World Travel will remain the TMC under ETS2 for all OpDiv/StaffDivs except ASPR. Under ETS2 ASPR will utilize Duluth/Travel Incorporated for TMC services.

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## Appendix C: Summary of Changes in This Edition

<b>Edition</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Change</b>
November 2014	Spelling, grammar, and sentence structure improvement	Reviewed text for glaring spelling, grammar, and sentence structure errors, and corrected.
November 2014	Format	Changed format to: 1) Add Table: “Summary of Changes in This Edition” page, 2) Remove credits, 3) Removed hypertext links, 4) Add Table: Web Links, 5) Add Table: Guidance 6) Apply required formatting and branding, 7) Remove references to Program Support Center sub-units, 8) Add Glossary, 9) Convert footnotes to end notes, 10) Use screen shots of templates and other examples to overcome MS Word format conversion issues, 11) Document will be published in Portable Document Format to improve Rehabilitation Act, Section 508 compliance (readability and electronic reader functionality), to support online publishing and to enable enhanced search option.
November 2014	Travel Policy Update Process	Implemented new travel policy update process to have an FY-based edition published Oct. 1 annually and having three quartile updates.
November 2014	Ticket Exchanges	Removed references to the practice of exchanging tickets. Practice is not permitted by Title 18 USC (Conversion of Government property)
November	Reduction of Per	Provided new guidance at Section 5.1.3.3.

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2014	Diem Lodging and Per Diem Meals and Incidental Expenses	
November 2014	Transportation Network Companies	Added TNCs as a form of conveyance and rules for usage at Section 4.1.10.5.
November 2014	Local Travel	Change term “local travel” to “local transportation” to reflect that the act and associated expenses are not covered by the FTR.
November 2014	TSA Pre-Check Fees	Updated language at Section 5.2.1.8.
November 2014	FTR Redundancy	Removed duplicative/redundant recitations and questionable interpretations of the FTR.
November 2014	Recommendation of Disciplinary Action	Removed all text recommending disciplinary action for violating FTR and HHS Travel Policy Manual. Violations of FTR and Agency policy is covered by the Department’s HR policy and the HHS Table of Offenses and Penalties. It is supervisory obligation to manage employee compliance with law, regulations and policy according to the Department’s HR policies.
November 2014	Executive Order language	Reviewed references to all Executive Orders to ensure they were still in place and accurate.