

# 054: How to Avoid the UFMS-Generated “Zero Line Error” When Using the E-Government Travel System

**Purpose:** This job aid will enable ConcurGov E-Government Travel System (ETS) users to avoid two known scenarios in which user actions cause electronic travel documents to fail processing within the Unified Financial Management System (UFMS). These two scenarios are:

- 1) [Changing all of the LOA information \(CAN, OCC, and Label\) on a travel expense voucher](#) so that none of it matches the information on the parent travel authorization; and
- 2) [Attempting to fix and re-process a document that has already rejected with a “Zero Line Error.”](#)

**Expected Outcomes:** By following this guidance, ETS users will avoid causing the “Zero Line Error” (which requires a manual payment of travel expense vouchers), thereby advancing the efficient processing of travel expense vouchers and payment of claims.

Because user actions causing the “Zero Line Error” so adversely impact the timely payment of claims, Operating Division Senior Travel Officials and travel program staff should ensure that those who administer electronic travel documents receive instruction on this topic and follow the guidance provided.

**Background:** Prior to January 14, 2020, travel authorizations and vouchers submitted for processing through the ConcurGov ETS occasionally returned from UFMS with a “*reject*” document status due to what is known as the “Zero Line Error.”

This error is not a system defect; it is a user-caused error that happens when a user performs a specific action on travel expense vouchers that they are not supposed to do and are cautioned not to do.

Programmatically, travel authorizations and travel expense vouchers adhere to a “parent-child” relationship construct. Information in the authorization—specifically expense lines and Line of Accounting (LOA) information such as the Common Accounting Number (CAN), Object Class Code (OCC), and Accounting Label—are inherited by the voucher, and the data/information on both must be congruent: the two documents *must* match.

When system users make changes to a document’s expense lines or LOA information, they disrupt the data needed to maintain the parent-child relationship of the travel authorization and travel expense voucher.

The name “Zero Line Error” comes from the way the financial management system interprets these document changes.

The ETS software code represents changes and deletions within a document with the digit zero and the null (empty) value, respectively. The ETS then transmits the data from the travel authorization and voucher documents to UFMS for processing. The financial system first processes the travel authorization, capturing the document’s data, and then attempts to process the travel expense voucher. However, UFMS treats the digit zero as a value and will not accept a null value when a value is expected. The system notes the incongruence between the travel authorization and the travel voucher and generates the “*reject*” status code, irreparably seizing the travel documents.

Thus by removing or changing values (e.g., the CAN) on travel documents, ETS users inadvertently disrupt the financial system’s processing logic and permanently halt the document’s progress. This in turn requires travel authorizations to be manually “pushed” through for processing when possible, and associated travel expense vouchers to be paid manually.

To address the issue, PSC worked closely with HHS Operating Divisions to document, verify, and test the various scenarios involving the “Zero Line Error.” PSC successfully resolved the error in all but one of the scenarios by designing code for the Common Transportation Integration Platform (CTIP), which mediates the transfer of data between ETS and UFMS. On January 14, 2020, PSC deployed its solution to the live production environment.

PSC is pleased to report that few documents created after January 14, 2020 have been affected by the “Zero Line Error.” Nevertheless, PSC has identified two scenarios in which the error continues to occur.

First, the CTIP solution that has been developed and implemented will not work for travel expense vouchers whose entire LOA information has been changed from their parent authorization documents.

Second, a number of electronic travel documents bearing the error are still processing through the systems, and any documents created before January 14, 2020 will continue to reject. Eventually, these travel documents will all filter through the system or be manually paid.

Fortunately, these two known and avoidable scenarios can be overcome through training and proper application of the correct procedures as outlined in this job aid.

**User Action Required:** ETS users must read this job aid, understand the importance of the issue and their role in preventing the error, and apply the instructions when using the travel management system.

**Continued Support:** This job aid instructs system users how to avoid the “Zero Line Error” entirely. If an error is encountered or if additional assistance is needed regarding this topic, then please submit a case through the PSC Travel Customer Support Queue: [PSCAccountMgmtSupport@psc.hhs.gov](mailto:PSCAccountMgmtSupport@psc.hhs.gov). PSC continues to explore ways to prevent users from causing further “Zero Line Errors.”

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**Scenario 1:** “The user changes all of the LOA information (CAN, OCC, and Label) on a travel expense voucher so that none of it matches the information on the parent travel authorization.”

**Why This Occurs:** LOA information is changed when the ETS user attempts to delete, copy over, replace, or otherwise make changes to it. PSC has documented reasons why users have done this:

- The CAN originally specified in the authorization has insufficient funds, so the user attempts to swap the accounting information instead of just adding funds to the CAN.
- Funds that were on the original CAN were “swept” and applied to a different obligation before the travel was complete, so the user attempts to correct the deficiency by changing the accounting information.
- The system user selected the wrong accounting information.
- Someone changed their mind as to which accounting information to use.

The image shows two screenshots from the ConcurGov system. The top screenshot is the 'Authorizations' page for a traveler named Justin Example, with authorization ID TRIP000S5T (TANUM00WLF). The 'Accounting Details' table shows the following information:

Organization	Accounting Code	Classification Code	Amount	Percent Allocated
HHSPRH	A1	2020///3704111///21103///	499.85	100.00%

Below the table, three callout boxes highlight the Accounting Code (A1), Classification Code (3704111), and the last part of the Classification Code (21103). A red arrow points from this screenshot to the bottom screenshot.

The bottom screenshot is the 'Vouchers' page for the same traveler, with voucher ID VCH010623 (TANUM00WLF) marked as a 'Final Voucher'. The 'Accounting Details' table shows:

Organization	Accounting Code	Classification Code	Amount	Percent Allocated
HHSPRH	B2	2020///3706310///21101///	499.85	100.00%

Below the table, three callout boxes highlight the Accounting Code (B2), Classification Code (3706310), and the last part of the Classification Code (21101). A red warning triangle is located to the left of the screenshots.

*All LOA information—the Label, the CAN, and the OCC—has been changed between the parent authorization and the child expense voucher.*

**How to Avoid the “Reject” Error:** No one—not the Traveler, the Federal Travel Arranger, the Federal Funds Approver (funds certifier), the Federal Travel Supervisory Approver, or the Federal Agency Travel Administrator—should ever change a travel expense voucher’s Line of Accounting information.

Instead, always verify that the correct LOA information is applied to the travel authorization before it is approved by the Federal Travel Supervisory Approver.

Further, never de-obligate the obligated funds that were obligated to that travel authorization. The funds should remain available until either the travel expense voucher is filed or the fiscal year in which the funds were obligated expires.



Organization	Accounting Code	Classification Code	Amount	Percent Allocated
HHSPRH	A1	2020///3704111//21103///	499.85	100.00%

*The traveler and financial certifier should verify that the LOA information is correct before approving the authorization. The certifier should ensure that the obligated funds remain available until the travel expense voucher is filed.*

If a travel expense voucher’s LOA information was accidentally removed or replaced, then the user can simply re-enter the correct information—provided that information is available (e.g., in a screen shot or printed document).

Finally, if—by some extraordinary circumstance—it is necessary to reimburse travel expenses using a different Label, CAN, *and* OCC from what was originally authorized, then the user will need to do the following:

- 1) Create a new travel authorization with the correct LOA information.
  - a. Within the new authorization’s “Comments” section, record trip-related information from the old document, including the TANUM, dates of travel, and reservation/itinerary information.
  - b. Copy all of the expenses so that they mirror those of the original document.
  - c. Ensure that a second ETS system fee is added as an expense. You are creating a new travel authorization, so the ETS vendor is entitled to the fee.
  - d. [Cancel the original authorization document](#) by applying the “cancelled” status.
- 2) Submit the document for approval as though it were a new travel authorization.
  - a. A funds certifier/approver must apply the “certified” status, signifying that new funds are obligated.
  - b. An approving official must apply the “approved” status.
- 3) Submit a request to the PSC Travel Customer Support Queue to have the reservation information transferred to the new travel authorization.
- 4) Once the reservation information has been transferred, the employee may file the voucher for the trip.



RECENT AUTHORIZATIONS									
<a href="#">View All</a>		<a href="#">Create New</a>		Original document with incorrect LOA					
Name / TA Number	Description	Ticket By	Departure	Last Stamped	Total	Status	In Use By	Additional Detail	
TRIP000SST TANUM00WLF	Mission to Fort Collins (original)		01/10/2020	01/16/2020	499.85	CANCELLED		<a href="#">View</a>	
TRIP000RL0 TANUM00VYR	Mission to Fort Collins (new with updated LOA)		01/10/2020	02/19/2020	499.85	REVIEWED		<a href="#">View</a>	

  

RECENT VOUCHERS									
<a href="#">View All</a>		<a href="#">Create New</a>		New documents with matching corrected LOA					
Name / TA Number	Description	Departure	Last Stamped	Total	Status	In Use By	Additional Detail		
VCH010429 TANUM00VYR	Mission to Fort Collins (with updated LOA)	01/10/2020	02/19/2020	499.85	CREATED		<a href="#">View</a>		

*All of the LOA information (CAN, OCC, and Label) for a completed trip needed to be changed from what was listed on the travel authorization. The traveler 1) created a new authorization with the updated LOA, copying over all the original trip information and expenses and canceling the old document; 2) routed it for approval; 3) submitted a request to PSC to transfer the reservation information; and 4) created a new voucher matching the corrected LOA information.*

**Why This Is Important:** Incorrect financial information in the original travel authorization document results in more work for the system user later on. In addition, the disruption of UFMS processing delays the payment of the employee’s travel expense voucher claim, possibly obligating the Government to pay the employee interest if the voucher cannot be processed within 30 days.

Furthermore, Federal Appropriations laws and HHS financial policy establish that travel expenses must be reimbursed with the same funds that were obligated for that travel. Once the travel starts, the funds obligated for that travel must remain available until the travel is complete. Thus, users should never change the LOA information within a travel expense voucher from what is already established in its corresponding authorization. Likewise, unless a trip is cancelled, funds obligated to a travel document should never be “swept,” even if the employee is still on travel.

**Why This Cannot be a Manual Payment:** The travel expense voucher can be paid much more quickly, securely, and cost-efficiently through the E-Government Travel System than by taking the document offline and processing it manually.

**Other Options:** None.

**Scenario 2:** “After a document has rejected with a ‘Zero Line Error,’ the user changes the Line of Accounting, and then re-submits the document for processing. The document continues to fail.”

**Why This Occurs:** The user may not understand the parent-child relationship between travel authorizations and travel expense vouchers, erroneously believing that simply changing information in the document fields will correct the system error. In reality, the document is irreparably broken and cannot continue to process.



Document History				
Date/Time	Status	Name	Adj. Level	Comments
02/13/20 9:09 AM	SIGNED	JUSTIN EXAMPLE	0	This document should not be re-submitted.
01/10/20 9:08 AM	Reject	EAI EAIUser	0	EAI Document Status Update WS A1: Cancellation is not permitted as invoice or advance is matched to purchase order line.  (Trxid/Line) = (M00WLF001-05) A1: One or more lines of this Travel Authorization has an error.  (Trxid/Line) = (M00WLF001-02) Changed CAN on voucher. One or more lines of this Travel Authorization has an error.
01/10/20 8:30 AM	PENDING	SYSUTILITY	0	EAI Obligation Submitted
01/10/20 8:30 AM	APPROVED	JOHN APPROVER	0	
01/10/20 8:00 AM	CREATED	JUSTIN EXAMPLE	0	

*This document, which was created before January 14, 2020, was rejected due to the “Zero Line Error.” Changes were made to the document’s LOA, and it was re-submitted for processing. It will still result in a reject.*

**How to Avoid the “Reject” Error:** Never re-submit a travel document that has already been rejected for this error. Instead, create a new travel authorization by following the instructions listed under [Scenario 1](#).

**Why This Is Important:** The document is irreparably broken. It simply will not process. The user may believe that simply changing the LOA will fix the problem, but it will not.

**Why This Cannot Be a Manual Payment:** The travel expense voucher can be paid more quickly, securely, and cost-efficiently through the E-Government Travel System than by taking the document offline and processing it manually.

**Other Options:** None.