

# **User Instructions**

## **Travel Expense Planning & Estimating Tool (TEPET)**

*(Current Version – VerFY20.1 032320sw)*

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this document is to provide the user with instructions to:

- A) Save the TEPET to the Windows® desktop so the tool can be used,
  - B) Use the TEPET to estimate high-cost Temporary Duty, and
  - C) Produce the request memoranda needed to initiate Executive-level review of the TDY.
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### **Introduction:**

Temporary Duty travel by Federal employees is the so-called “low hanging fruit” of Government. This means that it is continually scrutinized by the public, by the press, by watchdog organizations, by internal auditors, and by Congress.

Congress, which is constitutionally charged with providing the funds by which the nation's business is performed, has established key fiducial obligations upon Federal employees regarding the control and use of appropriations. These are set forth in various statutes.

All Federal employees take an oath of office that includes upholding the Constitution and the laws of the land. Further, since TDY travel is "low hanging fruit," this translates into judiciously using and accounting for the public's funds for Temporary Duty travel. This is done by first establishing and promoting a climate of managing risk and asserting internal (management) control over budgets. Risk is managed and internal control is advanced through "control activities." Control activities include policies, procedures and tools like the Travel Expense Planning & Estimating Tool (TEPET).

Temporary Duty is not a "blank check" for employees to write in whatever number they see fit, nor is it permission to expend the public's money on whatever an employee feels is proper. There is too much risk to reasonably do that. Likewise, there is no such thing as "complete mission at any cost." Federal employees – executives, managers, supervisors and employees—are all charged with being judicious in determining what should and can be done with the finite funds that are made available. Federal employees must oftentimes make hard choices as to what gets attended to and what does not, which includes whether or not Temporary Duty is necessary to accomplish work. The hard questions must be asked, like "Must a person be physically present to perform that task?", "Can this be done in another way?", and "Is this for the Government's benefit or for the employee's?" Too often those persons who are responsible for asking the hard questions simply don't ask them; they don't make the correct considerations. The net effect is that taxpayers' funds are expended inappropriately. This is why high-cost travel has specific control activities established, such as requiring Executive-level approval before it is performed and –now– the TEPET.

One of the challenges with high-cost TDY is that the estimates submitted for Executive consideration often do not reflect the actual cost. The most-common reason is that employees simply fail to properly plan for all of the costs that are normally incurred while traveling.

There are some important aspects and responsibilities that must be understood when using the TEPET to request permission to perform high-cost Temporary Duty travel:

1. The request memo should be produced and submitted as the first step in planning the Temporary Duty; before the travel authorization request is created by the employee. As soon as it's determined that TDY is necessary and it's suspected that the cost will be more than \$10,000, then the TEPET should be used.
2. There are often easy-to-see indicators that a planned TDY will carry a high cost, such as:

- a. The TDY is to a Foreign/Non-Foreign area and the duration of travel is 14-hours or greater and a rest stop will not be directed, and/or
  - b. The TDY is to a Foreign/Non-Foreign area and the employee has an approved Reasonable Accommodation for use of Other Than Coach Class seating, and/or
  - c. Whether or not the employee will visit multiple Foreign/Non-Foreign areas, and/or
  - d. If there will be multiple international connecting flights, and/or
  - e. The duration of the TDY is more than two weeks, and/or
  - f. The currency exchange rate is not advantageous.
3. The request memos produced by the TEPET must be submitted 30 days prior to the planned TDY start day, per the HHS Travel Policy Manual.
  4. Absent express approval by the Agency Senior Travel Official and the Operating Division Senior Travel Official's recommendation, travel costing greater than \$25,000 shall not be performed. The approval must be received in hand *before* the employee departs. And, absent express approval by the Operating Division Senior Travel Official, travel costing greater than \$10,000 and up to \$24,999 shall not be performed. The approval must be received in hand *before* the employee departs. Again, this is per the HHS Travel Policy Manual. [HHS Travel Policy §1.3.3](#)
  5. The Agency Senior Travel Official's Executive prerogative shall not be rushed, so employees and supervisors who fail to plan for the Executive review should not expect the Executive review process to be circumvented.
  6. The Agency Senior Travel Official will not consider requests that have not been properly staffed at the Operating Division level before the planned TDY date, which includes requests that have incomplete information.
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## **1. Travel Expense Planning & Estimating Tool (TEPET) Instructions**

The TEPET is neither an IT system nor is it a desktop application. It is merely an Excel file with some simple functions written and saved within in it so that it performs calculations or displays a fly out.

The TEPET functions best if when saved on a computer desktop.

Always use the most-current version of the TEPET because older versions might not have as much functionality as the current version. The most recent version can be identified by the Version number found at the top of the User Instructions. The Excel file name will contain the version number. The version number in the file name should match the version number found above on the User Instructions. If they version of the TEPET does not match the version indicated on the TEPET instructions posted to the PSC website, then be sure to download the latest version

from the PSC website first. The most-recent version will be available on the PSC website at <https://psc.gov/transportation-services/travel-training/job-aids>.

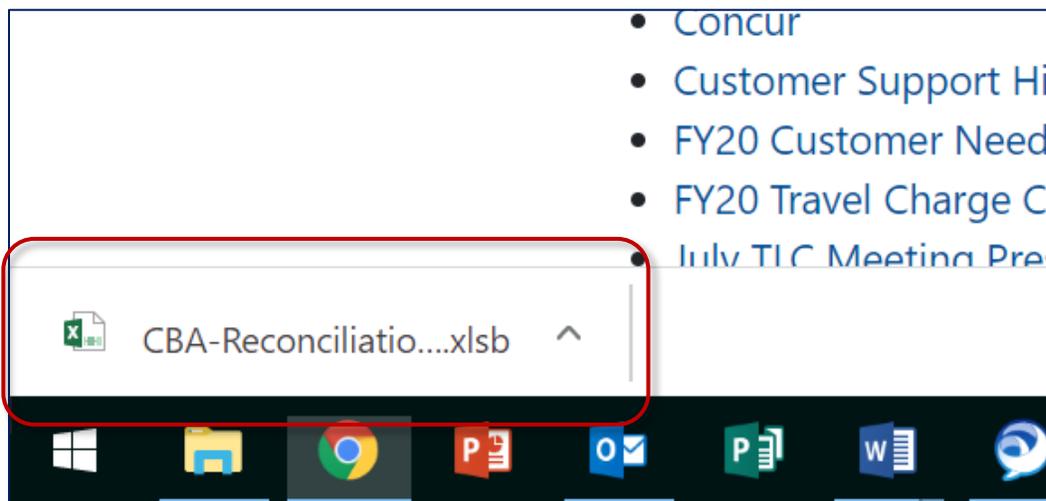
**a. How to Save the Travel Expense Planning & Estimating Tool (TEPET) to Your Desktop:**

The TEPET document can be downloaded directly from the PSC Job Aid website at: <https://psc.gov/transportation-services/travel-training/job-aids> and performs best when operating from your local computer hard drive desktop.

**Step 1:** To download the file from the PSC Job Aid website to your computer, select the “Travel Expense Planning & Estimating Tool (TEPET)” link from the PSC Job Aid website: <https://psc.gov/transportation-services/travel-training/job-aids>

*Example: Website Link To Download TEPET 1*

**Step 2:** The Travel Expense Planning & Estimating Tool (TEPET) will then download onto your computer in the Windows® Download folder and can be seen at the bottom of your browser screen.



*Example: Where to Find Downloaded TEPET 1*

**Step 3:** To open the Travel Expense Planning & Estimating Tool (TEPET) that is now downloaded on your computer, select the file by clicking once on the file icon.

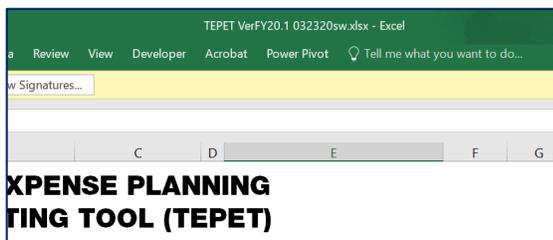
**b) Verify the TEPET version.**

The TEPET is occasionally updated to improve functionality. With each update, a new version number is produced indicating when it was last changed and updated. The TEPET file **should be the most recent version** of the file to produce the most effective results. To ascertain that the TEPET is the most recent version, it should be compared to the Current Version Number located on the top of the User Instructions, ([click here to see User Instructions Current Version Number](#)).

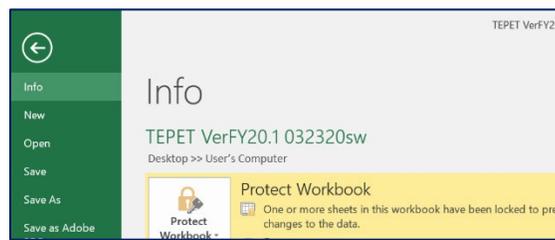
**Step 1:** To compare the Current Version Number and the TEPET version, click on the following link to view the Current Version Number. ([click here to see User Instructions Current Version Number](#)). The version number will begin with "Ver" and show the Fiscal Year in the format of "FYXX.X" followed by a date and initials, "MonthDayYearInitials", (e.g., 032320sw).

**Step 2:** Open the current version of the Travel Expense Planning & Estimating Tool (TEPET). To open the document, locate the TEPET on your desktop and double click the file. Once open, the TEPET will identify the version in two areas:

- a) The file name located at the top of the Excel file, and
- b) In the Excel menu. To access the Excel menu, click File -> Info. The Info page will identify the title containing the version number



Example: Finding Version In File Name 1



Example: Finding Version In File Menu 1

### c) TEPET Overview and Description:

The TEPET consists of six color-coded tabs arranged in a specific, logical sequence for user convenience. Starting at the top of the page of the very first tab, the user simply enters text or numbers (data) into the appropriate field. The user progresses through each successive tab depending on the how the TDY will be carried out. Some tabs might even be skipped, depending on what's needed by the user or what the management intent is. The TEPET will automatically create the estimate and then format the resulting information into a memorandum that can be saved and submitted for Senior Travel Official and Agency Senior Travel Official review.



Example: Tabs in the TEPET Document 1

It's important to fill out all editable fields completely and accurately as possible so that the best-possible estimate is produced.

Whether or not a field is available to enter information into depends on the color displayed. Data may be entered into fields that are light blue. Data cannot be entered into fields that are white or grey.

And, some fields are not visible unless the conditions are correct so that the field is triggered. When this happens a grey field will become light blue or a new field will appear.

Description	TDY Cost Estimator
<b>Estimated Travel Cost</b>	
This is the sum of the projected costs according to the information entered below.	\$0.00
<b>Per Diem M&amp;E rate*:</b>	← Editable User Field
Per Diem Breakfast (From GSA Tables):	
Per Diem Lunch (From GSA Tables):	
Per Diem Dinner (From GSA Tables):	← Not Editable
Per Diem Incidental Expenses (From GSA Tables):	
<b>Per Diem Lodging rate*:</b>	
<b>Leave Blank:</b>	\$0.00

Example: Editable Field vs Non-Editable 1

### Exercise 1: Familiarize yourself with the sequence of tabs.

#### Step 1: Maneuver the mouse pointer to bottom of the screen page and select the first tab.

- a) Each tab is numbered in operational sequence.
  - a. Note that each tab has a different label and they're each a different color.
  - b) Click on the first tab and review the worksheet contents.
  - c) When you are comfortable, then click on the next tab. Continue clicking on the tabs and viewing the contents on each worksheet.



## 2. High-Cost Temporary Duty Request Process Flow Chart

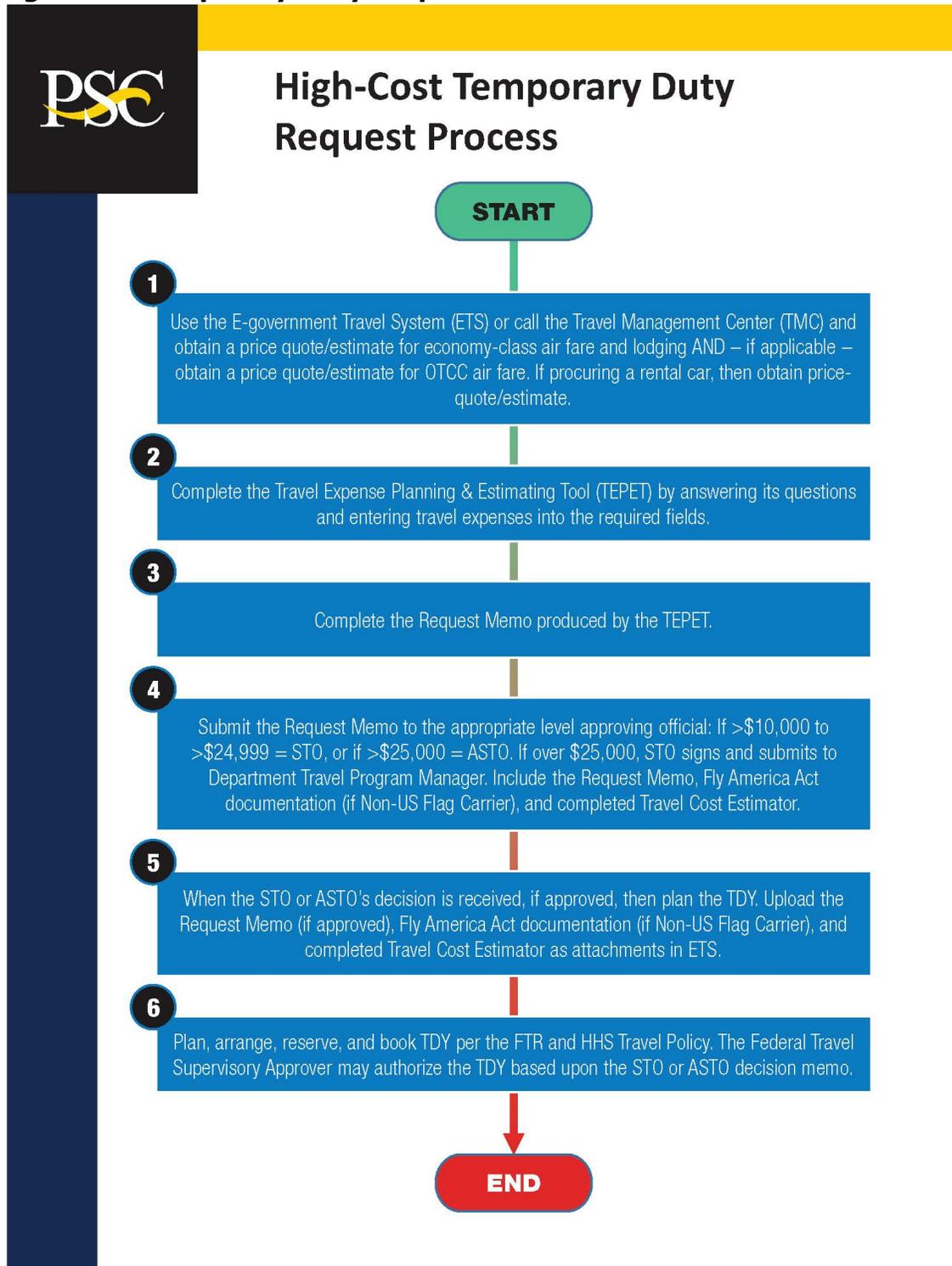


Figure: High-Cost Travel Flow Chart 1

### 3. TEPET Tab Descriptions and Instructions

Follow the instructions below to fill out the TEPET. Each of the tabs have required information to complete the High-Cost Travel Memo. Once you have completed all TEPET tabs, follow the Request Memo Tab instructions to complete the Memo.



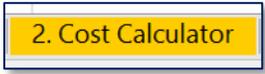
#### a) 1. Travel Information Tab (Blue)

**Step 1:** Select the "1. Travel Information" Tab (Blue).

**Step 2:** Complete all available user fields by answering the corresponding question(s). For lines 1 through 22f, answer each available question by selecting from the drop-down menu or entering the appropriate response. For additional assistance, refer to the following information.

- Line 1: The term "Non-Foreign" refers to non-contiguous states or U.S. Territories. They include Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa.
- Line 2: The FedRooms® program is the official U.S. Government hotel program. FedRooms® should be booked through the Electronic Travel System (ETS).
- Line 3: Federal travelers are required by 49 U.S.C. 40118, commonly referred to as the "Fly America Act," to use U.S. air carrier service for all air travel and cargo transportation services funded by the U.S. government.
- Line 5: For more information, refer to: FTR §301-11.6 Where do I find maximum per diem and actual expense rates?
- Line 7: For more information, refer to: FTR PART 301-13—TRAVEL OF AN EMPLOYEE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
- Line 8: This shows the cost difference for a Reasonable Accommodation. Nothing can be manually entered in this field.
- Line 14a: For more information on nonconventional lodging, refer to: FTR §301-11.12 How does the type of lodging I select affect my reimbursement?
- Line 15: For more information, refer to: HHS Travel Policy Manual §5.1.3.4 HHS Maximum Subsistence Rate Guidelines for Extended/Long-term TDY Assignments
- Line 16a: For more information, refer to FTR §302-3.400—What is a "temporary change of station (TCS)"?
- Line 18a: For more information, refer to HHS Travel Policy Manual §4.2.2.4 Exceptions Authorized at the Agency Senior Travel Official (ASTO)
- Line 18g: For more information, refer to FTR §301-51.200 For what expenses may I receive a travel advance?
- Line 20a: For more information, refer to HHS Travel Policy §301-51.200 For what expenses may I receive a travel advance? Subsection "Dual Lodging."

**Step 3:** Upon completing the Travel Information Tab, proceed to "2. Cost Calculator" tab (Yellow) by clicking the "Please CLICK HERE to continue" link or selecting the yellow tab labeled "2.Cost Calculator".



2. Cost Calculator

**b) 2.Cost Calculator Tab (Yellow)**

**Step 4:** Select the "2. Cost Calculator" tab (Yellow).

**Step 5:** Complete all available user fields by answering the corresponding question(s). For lines 23 through 31b, answer each available question by selecting from the drop-down menu or entering the appropriate response. For additional assistance, refer to the following information.

- Line 23 & 24: For more information, refer to <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates> for CONUS. For information on Foreign rates, refer to [https://aoprals.state.gov/Web920/per\\_diem.asp](https://aoprals.state.gov/Web920/per_diem.asp).
- Line 25, 25a-b: For more information, refer to FTR 301-70.300, 301-70.301, In the Matter of Trevor E. Strand, CBCA 5406-TRAV (2017); In the Matter of Martin C. Kehoe, CBCA 5844-TRAV (2017)
- Line 26: This total includes the combined Common carrier air fare costs for the TDY.
- Line 28: Unless an actual cost for taxi/shuttle lodging is known, use \$50 to estimate a one-way cost.
- Line 28a-c: The cost for taxi/shuttle lodging to obtain meals is reimbursable.
- Line 29, 29a: For more information, refer to Chapter 4, "Reasonable Accommodation," of the HHS Equal Employment Office (EEO) and Diversity Management Policy and Procedures Manual (EEO Manual) Reasonable Accommodation and §301-13.1 of the FTR.
- Line 30: For more information, refer to §301-10.450
- Line 31, 31a-b: For more information, refer to FTR 301-70.300, 301-70.301, In the Matter of Trevor E. Strand, CBCA 5406-TRAV (2017); In the Matter of Martin C. Kehoe, CBCA 5844-TRAV (2017)

**Step 6:** If the TEPET recommends a Temporary Change of Station or the final projected cost of travel is equal to or above \$25,000, please fill out the answers to questions #1 thru #8 located in cells I8 thru I22. (*Note: These cells are not shaded blue, but are formatted green and white. If these are not visible, the criteria above has not been met and no further actions in this section are necessary. See example below.*)

Based on the number of days, a temporary change of station should be considered. Please answer questions below.	
Question	Answer
1. State in your own words what the business or mission, (the official Government business/purpose), that will be performed by the employee that justifies the temporary duty.	
2. Can this be done through a Temporary Change of Station?	
3. Can this be done through a Permanent Change of Station?	
4. Can the work be deferred or not performed?	
5. Is there any way that the same results can be achieved without requiring expensive travel? (e.g., Teleconference, delaying or not performing the work, reducing Per Diem M&IE, Per Diem Lodging, having another employee perform the work, temporary change of station, relocating the employee, or hiring a new local employee,	
6. Is it most-effective for this employee to perform the work or is it most-effective for a different employee to perform the work?	
7. Would it be appropriate to relocate an employee through Permanent Change of Station?	
8. If repeated or continuous TDY to this location is necessary to perform the Government's business, has it been considered if it's more cost-effective to establish a new position at this location or to fill an existing position at this location?	

Example2: Over \$25k Additional questions 1

**Step 7:** Upon completing the Cost Calculator Tab, proceed to "3. Per Diem M&IE" tab (Dark Grey) by clicking the "Please CLICK HERE to continue" link or selecting the yellow tab labeled "3.Per Diem M&IE Adjustment".

3. Per Diem M&IE Adjustment

**c) 3.Per Diem M&IE Adjustment Tab (Dark Grey)-**

**Step 8:** Select the "3. Per Diem M&IE Adjustment" tab (Grey).

**Step 9:** If you do not intend to reduce Per Diem M&IE or authorize Actual Expense up to 300%, then there is no need to complete this tab. Please proceed to the (green) "4. Per Diem Lodging Adjustment" tab. If you plan to adjust Per Diem, continue to Step 9.

**Step 10:** Complete all available user fields by answering the corresponding question(s). For additional assistance, refer to the following information.

- For lines 32 through 34, answer each available question by selecting from the drop-down menu or entering the appropriate response. By completing lines 32 through 34, you will be comparing the average cost of food for purposes of adjusting the Per Diem M&IE.
- Lines 32-34 compare three common grocery items to determine the potential for a reduction of Per Diem M&IE or an Actual Expense increase in Per Diem M&IE.

**Step 11:** Upon completing the Cost Calculator Tab, proceed to "3. Per Diem Lodging Adjustment" tab (Green) by clicking the "Please CLICK HERE to continue" link or selecting the green tab labeled "4.Per Diem Lodging Adjustment".

#### 4. Per Diem Lodging Adjustment

#### d) 4. Per Diem Lodging Adjustment Tab (Green)

**Step 12:** Select the "4. Per Diem Lodging Adjustment" tab (Green).

**Step 13:** If you do not intend to reduce Per Diem Lodging or authorize Actual Expense, then there is no need to complete this tab. Please proceed to the (Blue) "5. Memo Fields" tab. If you plan to adjust Per Diem Lodging, continue to Step 13.

**Step 14:** Complete all available user fields by answering the corresponding question(s). For additional assistance, refer to the following information.

**Step 15:** For line 35, enter information for three separate hotels to complete a hotel cost comparison.

**Step 16:** Upon completing the Per Diem Lodging Adjustment Tab, proceed to "5 Memo Fields" tab (Blue) by clicking the "Please CLICK HERE to continue" link or selecting the blue tab labeled "5. Memo Fields".

#### 5. Memo Fields

#### e) 5. Memo Fields Tab (Purple)

**Step 17:** Select the "5. Memo Fields" tab (Purple).

**Step 18:** If you do not intend to create and send a High-Cost Temporary Duty Request memo to the ASTO for approval, then there is no need to complete this tab. You have completed the tasks to estimate the cost of TDY travel. If you plan to send a High-Cost Temporary Duty Request memo to the ASTO, continue to Step 17.

**Step 19:** As you complete the available user fields, the verbiage used will be emplaced into the High-Cost Temporary Duty Request memo for ASTO approval. Carefully complete all available user fields by answering the corresponding question(s). For additional assistance, refer to the following information.

- To create a Request Memo, fill in the available fields by answering the questions.
- "Brief Description of Tasks" – Succinctly state the mission and objectives.
- "This travel is necessary because..." - Complete this sentence to provide additional details regarding the travel.
- "The work has been arranged to maximize travel efficiency by..." – Complete this sentence to provide proof of efficiency due diligence.
- "The primary driver of the cost is for..." – Complete this sentence to briefly explain the reasons for the requested costs.
- "Additional Comments" – Used to allow additional data information to be presented regarding the travel.

**f) 6.LINK MASTER Tab (Lt Grey)**

**Step 20:** The "6. Link Master" tab (Lt Grey) is designed to assist in creating a Microsoft Word formatted Request Memo for the STO and ASTO. The TEPET allows for multiple formats to be used based upon the OpDiv preferential output including MS Word, MS Excel, and .PDF formats.

**Step 21:** To output in a MS Word format, see Link Restoration Instructions at the end of this document. To output in MS Excel or a .pdf format, proceed to "7. Request Memo" tab (Red).

**g) 7.Request Memo Tab (Red)**

**Step 22:** The Request Memo can be created and exported as a signed .pdf file to be sent to the Agency Senior Travel Official (ASTO). Additional options include linking a MS Word file to be sent, (see Link Restoration Instructions).

**Step 23:** For travel that will exceed \$25,000, the Senior Travel Official must sign the Request Memo prior to sending for approval from the Agency Senior Travel Official.

**Step 24:** The signature can be signed directly in Excel. Once the document has been signed, no additional edits can be made to the document nor can the document be saved, copied or emailed to protect the integrity of the inputted data.

**Step 25:** Once the signature has been signed, convert the sheet to a .pdf. To convert the sheet to a .pdf, select "File > Save to Adobe PDF". The PDF file can now be saved and/or emailed. While in the PDF format, Adobe can be used to sign any additional signature lines. If you do not have the option of "Save to Adobe PDF", proceed to #5.

**Step 26:** Save the file as a PDF. Select "File > Save As". Choose a directory folder.

**Step 27:** Using the dropdown menu, change the "Save as type:" to "PDF (.pdf)".

**Step 28:** Press "Save".

**Step 29:** The PDF file can now be saved and/or emailed. While in the PDF format, Adobe can be used to sign any additional signature lines.

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## 4. Linking Documents for a Memo Output

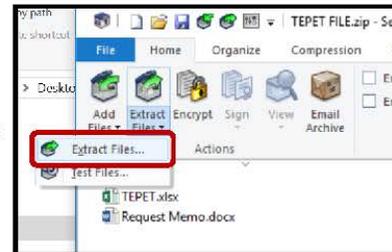
# Link Restoration Instructions

**Summary.** *The Request Memo is designed to link with fields in the Travel Expense Planning & Estimating Tool (TEPET). These fields break every time the files are moved and must be restored to use this tool. The following instructions will guide you through restoring those links.*

1. Create data folder. Choose or create a folder to save the TEPET FILE.zip file into.



2. **Extract the files.** Double-click the TEPET FILE.zip file. Highlight both files and click the “Extract Files” down carat and then click “Extract Files...”. Extract the contents of the TEPET FILE.zip file into the chosen/created folder. *(Both the TEPET.xlsx file and the Request Memo.docx files must be in the same folder.)*



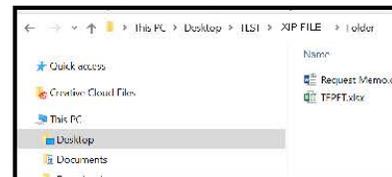
3. **Open files.** Open both the TEPET.xlsx file and the Request Memo.docx files. The TEPET file is an MS Excel file and the Request Memo file is a MS Word file. (NOTE: In the next several steps, you will be going back and forth between the two documents.)



4. **Select “LINK MASTER” tab.** In the open TEPET file, click the tab "LINK MASTER" to reveal a worksheet to help collect the link addresses necessary to link the two documents.



5. **Open File Explorer.** Open Windows File Explorer, (NOTE: To open, hold down the Windows key on the keyboard and press “E”).



6. **Locate folder.** Locate and open the chosen/created folder containing the two files.

*Example 3a: Linking Docs for Output 1*

7. **Highlight folder address.** Click the folder icon on the left of the address bar. This will highlight the entire folder address.

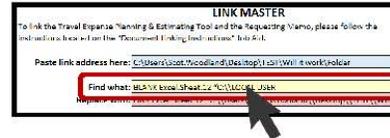


8. **Copy folder address.** Copy the highlighted address using either CTRL+C or right-click the mouse and select “Copy” to copy the contents.

9. **Paste folder address.** In the TEPET.xlsx file (Excel), on the “LINK MASTER” tab, paste the address in the BLUE field labeled “Paste Link address here:” by pressing CTRL + V or right-click the mouse and select “Paste”.



10. **Copy current link address.** Click once in the yellow "Find what:" (NOTE; Cell E7), field and press CTRL+C to copy address.



11. **Reveal Link codes.** In the Request Memo.docx file (Word), press ALT+F9 to reveal all Link codes.

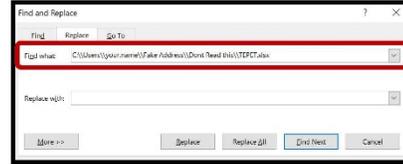


12. **Display Find & Replace menu.** In the Request Memo.docx file, press CTRL+H to display the Find & Replace menu.

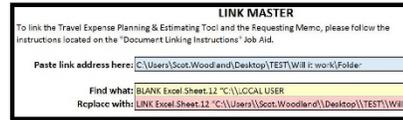


Example 3b: Linking Docs for Output 1

13. Paste current link address. In the Find & Replace menu, click the "Find what:" field and press CTRL+V to paste the copied data. (NOTE: Do not press the "Enter" key after entering the copied data.)

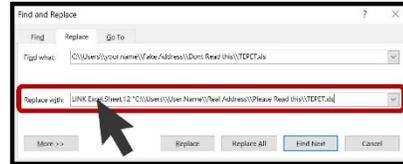


14. Select Cell C8. In the TEPET.xlsx file, click once in the pink "Replace with:" (NOTE: Cell E8), field.



15. Copy file address. Press CTRL+C to copy the cell contents.

16. Find & Replace menu. In the Request Memo.docx file, click the "Replace with:" field in the Find & Replace menu.

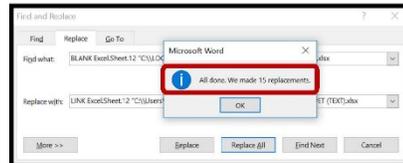


17. Paste file address. Press CTRL+V to paste the copied data. (NOTE: Do not press the "Enter" key after entering the copied data.)

18. Perform link replacement. Click "Replace All". (NOTE: This step replaces each original link in the memo with the corresponding field in the tool.)



19. Message. The message, "All done. We made 15 replacements" will display. If the message returns "0 replacements", a step was missed and the process was not successful. Please return to the beginning without saving files. Otherwise, continue to the next step if the replacement was successful.



20. Continue. Press "OK" to continue.



Example 3c: Linking Docs for Output 1

21. **Hide Link codes.** Press ALT+F9 to stop seeing the Link codes.

22. **Selecting all data.** Select all data in the Request Memo.docx by pressing CTRL+A.



23. **Update Links.** Press F9 to update all links.

24. **Save document.** Save the Request Memo.docx file. (*NOTE: Do not select "Save As". Choose "Save" to allow both files to remain in the same folder.*)



25. **Complete.** The Request Memo is now linked to the TEPET file. (*NOTE: Both the Request Memo and the TEPET files must remain in the same folder. Moving or emailing the files requires you to perform the Link Restoration Instructions again from the beginning.*)