Arranging Travel For Employees Exempted from Using IBA Travel Charge Card

PURPOSE:

This job aid provides employees with information about arranging Temporary Duty travel and transportation for employees who are exempt by the Federal Travel Regulation from using the Government contractor-issued Individually Billed Account Travel Charge Card.

TOOLS for SUCCESS:

- E-government Travel System User Profile
- Centrally billed account
- Personal credit card

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

A Government employees' primary financial instrument to pay for travel expenses is the Government contractor-issued Individually Billed Account travel charge card.

The Federal Travel Regulation –which as regulation has the force of law-- requires that all travel expenses be paid for using the Government contractor-issued Individually Billed Account travel charge card unless an employee is expressly exempted. The FTR also expressly limits centrally billed account use to paying for common carrier transportation only.

The FTR presumes that employees will be issued the card to travel, which is why the regulation mandates that the card will be activated within 60 days of receipt. The process for obtaining a card is just an administrative formality. The onus is upon employees to use the tools the Government provides them to travel, and to avoid having personal affairs such as indebtedness adversely impact the availability of those resources.

FTR §301-1.2 provides three specific exemptions, two of which are contingent on the employee requesting a card through the bank's administrative process.

If an employee is exempt because the card is pending issuance by the bank or if the bank has declined to issue the employee a card (a rarity), and it is necessary for the employee to travel, the FTR provides a way to enable the travel.

The Government provides tools necessary for employees to be successful in their jobs, such as the IBA travel charge card. Exemption from using the IBA travel charge card is facilitated as a temporary travel exception until the employee A) receives and activates the Government contractor-issued IBA travel charge card, or B) they address the deficiency that precludes them from being issued an IBA travel charge card by the bank.

Important: Employees should continue efforts to obtain an IBA travel charge card, including ensuring any personal financial challenges that might preclude the bank from issuing even a restricted IBA travel charge card. *See 5 CFR § 2635.809 - Just financial obligations.*

PAYING FOR EXEMPT EMPLOYEES' TRAVEL EXPENSES:

Federal Travel Regulation §301-51.6 specifies how travel and transportation expenses for travelers who are exempt from having an IBA travel charge card are paid and establishes the order of precedence for the form of payment.

"(a) Personal funds, including cash or personal charge card;
"(b) Travel advances; or
"(c) Government Transportation Request (GTR)."

Employees who are expressly exempted shall have their expenses paid as follows:

- A centrally billed account shall be used to procure the common carrier transportation, and
- A personal credit card shall be used for lodging and rental car reservations.

Important: This is a temporary procedural exception not meant for all employees. It's expected that employees will only need to use this procedure

PREPARING TO ENABLE EXEMPT EMPLOYEES' TRAVEL

All Temporary Duty travel must be authorized and paid through the E-government Travel System, so an ETS User Profile must first be established for the employee. Contact the local travel system administrator or Lead Federal Agency Travel Administrator for assistance (procedures and roles vary slightly by Operating Division). Once the ETS User Profile is established, then travel may be arranged. The employee should discuss with their supervisor the form of payment and expenses needed during the travel planning period.

ARRANGING TRAVEL FOR EMPLOYEES EXEMPT FROM USING IBA

Step 1: Call the TMC and request to have travel arrangements made.

- You must identify yourself as an employee exempted from use of the Government contractor-issued IBA travel charge card.
- The TMC agent will check your ETS user profile to confirm that an IBA card is not listed and will check the list of exempted employees. If your name is not on the exemption list and/or you have an IBA travel charge card, then you will be advised that you are required to use the Government contractor-issued IBA travel charge card to have the travel arrangements made by the TMC.
- If your name is on the list, then the TMC agent will accept your personal credit card information to secure your lodging and/or rental car reservations.
- Your common carrier transportation will be applied to your Operating Division's centrally billed account. Your FTR and policy-compliant lodging and/or rental car reservations will be made to your personal credit card.
- The TMC agent will take your personal credit card information over the phone to process the charge(s). The information will not be stored in the Government IT systems.

Step 2: When your reservation has been made by the TMC agent, a TDY travel authorization request will automatically be created by the E-government Travel System's "Auto TANUM" functionality. The request will automatically be sent to your ETS desktop queue. Reservations made with the TMC will auto-populate on the TDY authorization request.

Step 3: Use the E-government Travel System to open the Temporary Duty travel authorization request that now appears in your ETS user queue.

- Add additional travel expenses that you might need.
- Submit the TDY travel authorization request so that it may be funded and considered for approval by the Designated Approving Official.