



# **Temporary Duty Travel Handbook 340-1-H**

**Prepared by the Office of Administration/Office Accounting and  
Financial Management/Travel Management Section**

**May 2016**

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*U.S. Geological Survey Manual*

**United States Department of the Interior**

**U.S. Geological Survey**

**Temporary Duty Travel Handbook**

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**FOREWORD**

This Temporary Duty Travel Handbook (340-1-H) supplements the following policy guidance:

1. Federal Travel Regulations (FTR)
2. Department of Interior *Temporary Duty Travel Policy* which can be found at <http://internal.usgs.gov/ops/ofs/fop-handbook/26-2-doi-tdy-03-2014.pdf>
3. Survey Manual Chapter 340.1, Temporary Duty Travel
4. Survey Manual Chapter 205.2, Travel Delegations

This handbook has been prepared to help guide USGS travelers through the many Federal travel regulations and to ensure compliance with these regulations. The handbook is not an exhaustive or detailed exposition on the subject, but it covers many of the essential points. The guidance listed above provides more detailed travel policies. For specific guidance on permanent change of station, refer to the Department of the Interior Permanent Change of Station Policy at: <http://internal.usgs.gov/ops/finance/travel/doi-pcs-policy-final-fy12.pdf>.

Detailed temporary duty travel procedures that supplement this guidance are provided in the *Financial Operating Procedures (FOP) Handbook* located at: <http://internal.usgs.gov/ops/ofs/fop-handbook/FOPindex.html> and the Concur Government Edition Web site at: <http://internal.usgs.gov/ops/finance/travel/cge/cge.html>

Questions regarding the content of the Handbook may be directed to the Travel Management Section, Office of Accounting and Financial Management, email [GS\\_Travel\\_Policy](mailto:GS_Travel_Policy).

/s/ Katherine McCulloch for

May 6, 2016

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Jose R. Aragon  
Associate Director for Administration

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Date

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## CHAPTER 1. TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS

1. Every traveler needs a travel authorization in the Electronic Travel System (ETS) Concur Government Edition (CGE) before commencing official travel that is more than 50 miles from both duty station **AND** residence and will be gone more than 12 hours. A travel authorization must state the expected dates, routes, and modes of transportation as well as a cost estimate for travel expenses (both centrally billed and reimbursable). Any changes to the travel authorization must be justified and approved.
2. Travel made without advance authorization must be held to a minimum. When travel is performed in an emergency, without prior authorization, the authorization must be completed as soon as possible. The voucher covering the travel will include a statement signed by the traveler showing why advance authorization was not obtained and required retroactive approval. The request must be approved by the Associate Director for Administration. (See [Chapter 19, Emergency Travel](#).)
3. If the traveler does not meet **BOTH** the 50-mile and 12-hour rules, then it is considered local travel. If a traveler still wants a travel authorization for liability purposes while on local travel, then a travel authorization can be done in [SharePoint Forms](#) using form DI-1020.
4. There are several trip purpose codes to be chosen in a travel authorization. It is critical to choose the correct code. If travel is for different purposes, you can choose the one that applies to a majority of the trip **UNLESS** there is a conference involved in the trip. All trips that include conference attendance, trip purpose of conference **MUST** be selected. The purpose code identifier used in CGE is provided.
  - A. *Conference Attendance (C)* - Travel performed in connection with a prearranged meeting, retreat, convention, seminar, or symposium for consultation or exchange of information or discussion.
  - B. *Employee Emergency (G)* - Travel related to an unexpected occurrence/event or injury/illness that affects the employee personally and/or directly that requires immediate action/attention.
  - C. *Mission (Operational) (M)* - Travel to a particular site in order to perform operational or managerial activities. Travel to attend a meeting to discuss general agency operations, review status reports, or discuss topics of general interest.
  - D. *Relocation (R)* - Permanent change of station moves. The USGS does not use CGE to process relocation TAs or vouchers.
  - E. *Site Visit (S)* - Travel for field work.

F. *Special Agency Mission (N)* - Travel to carry out a special agency mission and/or perform a task outside the agency's normal course of day-to-day business activities that is unique or distinctive. These special missions are defined by the head of agency and are normally not programmed in the agency annual funding authorization.

G. *Training Attendance (T)* - Travel in conjunction with educational activities to become more proficient or qualified in one of more areas of responsibility.

## CHAPTER 2. BLANKET TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS

1. **Limited open travel authorizations**, otherwise known as “blanket travel authorizations,” are authorizations that allow employees to conduct multiple trips without obtaining trip-specific approval. Blanket authorizations are **ONLY** to be used for recurring trips to the same geographical area for a specific purpose such as field work and site visits where there are **NO** airfare reservations and **NO** lodging or lodging cannot be booked in CGE (e.g., it is unknown until the day of travel where the employee will need to lodge). Blanket authorizations must include the time period and the anticipated costs for that timeframe, not to exceed the current fiscal year.

2. A blanket authorization is **NOT** allowed for the following activities:

A. Conferences or large meetings defined as a conference for reporting purposes.

B. Training.

C. Travel that is being paid by a non-Federal source.

D. Foreign travel.

E. Travel that includes airfare reservations.

F. Actual expense reimbursement.

3. **Reduced Per Diem.** Any travel with reduced per diem rates (e.g., camp rates) must be clearly identified on the blanket travel authorization to ensure that the employee is aware of the allowable meals and incidentals.

4. **Approval Authority.** The approval authority for limited open travel authorizations is delegated to the Bureau Director/Deputy Director(DD)/Office Chiefs reporting to the DD; Mission Area Associate Directors\Regional Directors and their Deputies; and Science Center Directors or equivalent.

5. **Procedures.** The blanket travel authorization is completed in CGE and then printed to obtain the appropriate delegated signatures. The paper blanket travel authorization provides the authority for an employee to travel. The signed blanket TA must be attached to the blanket TA in CGE. The electronic travel authorization must route to the approving official for electronic

approval in order for the trip to be vouchered. Detailed procedures are provided in the *Financial Operating Procedures Handbook*, Chapter 26-12.

### **CHAPTER 3. INVITATIONAL, CONTRACTOR, STUDENT, AND VOLUNTEER TRAVEL**

1. **Invitational.** Authorized travel of individuals either not employed or employed (under 5 U.S.C. 5703) intermittently in the Government service as consultants or experts and paid on a daily, when-actually-employed basis and for individuals serving without pay 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. Travel allowances authorized for such persons are the same as those normally authorized for employees in connection with TDY.

A. Federal employees of other Government agencies cannot be considered invitational travelers unless it is specifically for a job interview. FOP Chapter 4.11, Inter/Intra-Agency Travel Agreement, provides procedures for processing travel for employees from other Federal agencies.

B. In the event a USGS employee is going on a job interview for another agency, the employee will be on leave status and the other agency may offer to pay for the trip and treat the employee as invitational. If another agency's employee is coming to the USGS for an interview, we can offer to pay for their travel and treat them as an invitational traveler.

[FOP Chapter 26.8](#) provides detailed instructions on establishing a vendor record and profile for invitational travelers.

2. **Contractors** (excluding student services contractors) cannot be entered into CGE, and all travel performed by contractors must be written into the contract and paid through the contract via invoicing. Vendor numbers in the 700 series **CANNOT** be used for travel payments.

3. **Student Services Contractors** are treated as employees for the purposes of travel. Student services contractors are not paid through the USGS payroll and will not have a vendor code generated automatically in FBMS. A vendor form must be submitted to the vendor desk ([vendordesk@usgs.gov](mailto:vendordesk@usgs.gov)) requesting that an invitational traveler be created. Once the student services contractor vendor has been created (a 500 series vendor code), a [CGE travel profile](#) form must be completed and emailed to the CGE travel help desk at: [travel\\_helpdesk@ios.doi.gov](mailto:travel_helpdesk@ios.doi.gov). Student services contractors must obtain a Government-issued charge card if they are going to travel and must log into CGE and stamp their own vouchers signed.

4. **Volunteers.** Volunteers who will be going on official travel must have a signed volunteer service agreement as stated in the [Volunteer for Science Handbook](#). For more information on Volunteer programs, please contact your servicing human resources office.

A. Volunteers who will travel more than once must obtain a USGS-issued travel business line charge card. Those volunteers with a USGS-issued charge card will be treated as employees for

the purposes of travel and will have to log into CGE to book travel and stamp their own vouchers signed. Procedures for obtaining a vendor code in the financial system and establishing a profile in the travel system can be found in [FOP Chapters 9.5 and 26.9](#). Those volunteers who travel infrequently are treated as invitational travelers.

#### **CHAPTER 4. MAKING RESERVATIONS (AIR, LODGING, RENTAL CAR)**

**1. Mandatory Use of CGE and the Travel Management Center (TMC).** Effective January 1, 2005, the FTR required implementation of the mandatory use of an E-Gov Travel Service for all common carrier, lodging, and car rental arrangements.

A. Airline and other transportation tickets are to be obtained by either booking online with CGE or by calling the agency-contracted TMC Duluth or El Sol directly. El Sol is for those whose duty station is in Alaska or Hawaii. Duluth is used by everyone else. Both provide services under contract with the General Services Administration (GSA). Governmentwide regulations prohibit the use of travel agents not under contract to GSA. This includes use of Web-based systems such as Travelocity, Expedia, hotels.com, etc. The use of such systems must be approved by the Associate Director for Administration.

B. DOI has provided lodging exemptions to the mandatory use of booking online with CGE or by calling the agency-contracted TMC when making lodging accommodations for the following situations:

- (1) Prearranged lodging accommodations such as a block of rooms for a conference.
- (2) From establishments which cannot be found in the ETS or through the TMC and offer rates at or below the GSA locality rate.
- (3) While en route, it is discovered that the previously booked lodging establishment is substandard or unsafe and other suitable lodging must be obtained immediately.
- (4) Overseas lodging accommodations.
- (5) Travel is preapproved; however, the exact lodging location is unknown at the time of the departure or lodging accommodations are needed for unplanned travel such as field work that requires an extra night of travel.
- (6) Emergency situations.

**Note:** Please remember that these exemptions only apply to lodging arrangements and not to common carrier transportation or rental cars.

C. If a traveler meets one of the exceptions listed above for booking outside of our agency contracted TMC, they must call the hotel directly to book. A traveler should never book lodging through a hotel Web site nor prepay for lodging through a hotel Web site for the purpose of receiving a reduced daily lodging cost. The USGS does not customarily allow travelers to

prepay lodging expenses unless there is no other way to procure the lodging. Travelers are to contact the Travel Management Section, Office of Accounting and Financial Management, for assistance and advice.

Booking lodging in CGE or by calling the TMC allows for the booking of FedRooms. FedRoom rates include more lenient cancellation policies and allow the traveler to cancel up until 4:00 p.m. on the day of arrival or to leave early with no penalty.

D. Transportation on small airlines or with bush pilots must be arranged through the appropriate TMC. Arranging transportation with these entities directly must not be done unless a justifiable reason can be shown that the TMC cannot arrange transportation between the originating and destination points of travel.

E. It is expected that travel arrangements will be made through booking online with CGE to the maximum extent possible, but if you have complex, multileg domestic or international travel and, you need to call an agent, you may contact the agency-contracted TMC by calling in your reservations. We recommend calling for most international travel to ensure that the Fly America Act is not violated. For more information regarding the Fly America Act, see [Chapter 5.6](#).

## **2. Mandatory Use of Government-Issued Charge Card**

A. The Government-issued charge card must be used for all airline and other transportation tickets as well as lodging and rental cars. Use of this card entitles you to special Government fares and certain inflight and baggage insurance. Use of the card for personal travel is prohibited. If you are making reservations through the TMC and do not have a Government-issued charge card, arrangements should be made for the airfare to be billed to the corporate charge card. Corporate cards are available in most cost centers and travelers can verify with an administrative person within their center or they can contact one of the [Government Charge Card Agency Program Coordinators](#). The USGS charge card guide is located on the Office of Acquisition and Grants (OAG) SharePoint site: <https://insight.usgs.gov/aei/offices/oa/oag/AOP/chargecard-guide.pdf>.

### *B. Employee Responsibilities.*

- (1) To obtain a Government-issued charge card and use it.
- (2) To use the Government-issued charge card for transportation tickets, lodging, and rental cars.
- (3) To use the Government-issued charge card to the maximum extent possible for all other reimbursable travel expenses.
  - (a) Refusal to use the Government-issued charge card is considered insubordination and can result in supervisory counseling and/or a series of disciplinary actions.

### *C. Exemption from Mandatory Use of the Government-Issued Charge Card.* Invitational and

travel by new appointees are exempt from mandatory use of the Government-issued charge card for travel expenses other than the purchase of the airfare which must be purchased with the corporate card. In addition, travelers with a pending charge card application are also exempt from mandatory use until the card is received.

(1) Although the Government-issued charge card is not accepted in some foreign locations, foreign travel is not exempt from mandatory use. Travelers must make reasonable attempts to use the Government-issued charge card.

D. *Do NOT Use the Government-Issued Charge Card for Inflight Meals.* You should be aware that some airlines are requiring credit card payments for in-flight boxed meal purchases. If you purchase an in-flight meal and the airline requires payment by a charge card, you must use a personal charge card. If you use your Government-issued charge card, the transaction will centrally bill. Please contact the bureau charge card purchase line program coordinator in the Office of Acquisition and Grants, to initiate a transaction transfer to individually billed. This is necessary because inflight meal charges will be billed centrally to the Bureau as an airline charge and meals are covered by the M&IE allowance. More information on transaction transfers can be found in the [Charge Card Guide – C.4, Transaction Transfer](#).

E. *Types of Travel Expenses That May Be Exempt.* If a vendor does not accept the travel charge card, then its use is not required. In addition, expenses you incur with vendors that normally operate on a cash basis are also exempt. Examples include: laundry and dry cleaning, parking, and local transportation expenses, including taxis.

F. Government-issued charge card statements must be signed and dated by employee and supervisors within 30 days of receipt and kept by the employee or in a central office location. Each line should be annotated with the date, location, and purpose of the trip. (CGE document number is desirable but not mandatory). If the traveler is in travel status during the 30 days, an extension of 30 additional days may be granted. The reason for the delay must be documented with the circumstance and dates of travel.

G. *Automated Teller Machine (ATM) Travel Advances.* ATM privileges are restricted to the travel business line and may only be used to obtain limited cash advances for official travel expenses while on official travel or not more than five calendar days prior to the beginning date of official travel. ATM advances are for travel expenses only and not to be used for purchases. Only employees with delegated purchase authority on their Government-issued charge card can make a purchase; otherwise, they are in violation of Appropriations Law.

(1) Government-issued charge cards are available to reduce the need for cash. Employees should receive a personal identification number (PIN) from JP Morgan Chase. The PIN should be used at an ATM to receive the necessary cash to fund the out-of-pocket expenses. The cash amount received from the ATM together with a 1.75 percent service charge and any surcharge added by the financial institution when the ATM was used will appear on the employee's monthly statement. Any ATM fees for machine usage or service charges from the charge card company can be claimed on the travel voucher and will be reimbursed under the limitations that the ATM advance did not exceed the allowable cash transaction expenses, usually the M&IE

portion of the per diem rate. Travelers can take no more than \$250.00 per day, not to exceed \$500.00 per week, and also must not exceed all out-of-pocket expenses (usually only M&IE). ATM fees for the use of a personal card will **NOT** be reimbursed.

H. *Government-Issued Charge Card Use for Local Travel.* Effective October 1, 2014, the Government-issued charge card can be used for local travel expenses (e.g., tolls, parking, Amtrak, shuttle services). SF-1164 will still be required to reimburse an employee for local mileage.

I. The above policies are consistent with the Federal Travel Regulations, the contract with JP Morgan Chase, and the Department's [Integrated Charge Card Program Policy Manual](#). The USGS detailed charge card information is located under the [Charge Card Program SharePoint](#) site.

**3. Cash and Personal Funds Used For Transportation.** If the transportation ticket costs \$100 or less and you are unable to use your Government-issued charge card, you may use cash or a personal credit card and be reimbursed on the travel voucher. In this situation, you must obtain approval via a written memorandum from your supervisor justifying why the ticket was purchased and upload the justification to the voucher. If the cost exceeds \$100 and cash or personal credit card is used for payment, you must obtain approval by the Associate Director for Administration in accordance with SM Chapter [205.2, Travel Delegations, E-17](#) before reimbursement can be made. This should be done via official memorandum and include the justification for why the Government-issued charge card was not used. Not only are reimbursements delayed in such cases, you may receive less than the amount you paid for the ticket if a lower Government rate could have been obtained. Many times it is impossible to obtain the contract carrier fare without using the Government-issued charge card.

**4. City-Pair Contract Flights.** GSA has contracted with airline carriers for special rates for selected city-pairs. The city-pair Web site is <http://cpsearch.fas.gsa.gov/> (note that fares are listed as one way and must be doubled for a round trip). These fares are not to be confused with a fare referred to as a "Government rate" which is explained below. It is mandatory that city-pair contract carrier flights be used except when:

A. Space is not available on a scheduled flight to accomplish the purpose of the travel, or use of contract service would require traveler to incur unnecessary overnight lodging costs, which would increase the total cost of the trip.

B. The contractor's flight schedule is inconsistent with Government policies to schedule travel during normal duty hours.

C. Based on a cost comparison (see Chapter 10), a non-contract carrier offers a fare available to the general public that is lower than the contract fare, providing that all other costs being equal.

**5. Super Saver and Other Restricted Fares.** The use of special lower fares under these provisions does not take precedence over the mandatory use of contract airfares between selected city-pairs. Airline companies who do not have a contract with GSA for the contract carrier fare

can establish what they call a “Government rate” also known as “matching or me-too” fares. These rates will many times be comparable to the contract carrier fare with the exception that there may be penalties associated with them, and the price quoted at the time the reservation is made is not guaranteed beyond that time. **Government fare rates are subject to change daily, therefore, these tickets will be issued at the time the reservations are made.**

A. *Reduced Rates.* Throughfares, special fares, excursion fares, and reduced-rate, round-trip fares can be used for official travel when it can be determined before the start of a trip that this type of service is practical and economical to the Government.

B. *Non-Refundable Tickets.* Round-trip tickets for special lower fares, which are restricted or have specific eligibility requirements will be secured only when, on the basis of the trip planned, it is known or can be reasonably anticipated that these tickets will be used. Each situation must be carefully examined to see what is in the best interest of the Government. Bureaus may authorize the use of a non-contract carrier in any of the following circumstances:

(1) Space is not available on scheduled city-pair flights to accomplish the purpose of the TDY trip on time.

(2) Use of city-pair flights would require that the traveler incur unnecessary overnight lodging that would make the total cost of the trip higher than using the non-contract fare.

(3) Non-contract carrier offers a lower fare to the general public that would result in a lower total trip cost (based on the combined costs of transportation, lodging, meals, additional hours and related expenses). This does not apply if a city-pair carrier offers the same fare and has available seats. Group travel must be booked when 10 or more passengers are traveling together on the same flight for the same official business. Generally, a travel arranger books group travel through the TMC and selects flights that are practical and cost-effective.

(4) City-pair flights are not available between the commercial airports that service the traveler’s official duty station and the arrival airports at the TDY location.

C. *Oversold/Denied Boarding.* Any traveler who has been denied confirmed reserved space must ensure that any compensation received is forwarded to the Government to be used for official travel.

D. *Voluntary Vacating Reserved Seating.* Travelers who voluntarily give up their seats may retain any compensation received only under the following conditions:

(1) Delay will not interfere with the performance of official duties.

(2) Additional travel expenses are not incurred.

**Note:** Annual leave must be taken if vacating the seat causes a delay during normal working hours.

6. **Unused Travel Tickets.** It is the traveler's responsibility to ensure that all unused tickets are refunded to the USGS in a timely manner and that such refunds show on the traveler's Government-issued charge card statement. The traveler must cancel the reservation prior to ticketing in CGE. If the ticket is already issued, the traveler/arranger must call the TMC to cancel and ensure a refund of the ticketed cost. Fully refundable tickets should be fully refunded when the cancellation of the trip occurs.

A. Nonrefundable tickets that need to be cancelled, can be issued a voucher to use within 1 year for a fee. This fee is usually around \$250.00. (See Chapter 4 (5)B above for rules on purchasing nonrefundable tickets.) When using a voucher issued for cancelling a nonrefundable ticket, you must call the TMC to book, using the voucher as payment.

## CHAPTER 5. FOREIGN TRAVEL

1. **USGS International Programs Foreign Travel Guidelines.** The USGS International Program provides detailed guidance on all foreign travel, including processes related to the DI-1175, passports, and Visas, and medical requirements. The guidance can be found at the following site: ([http://international.usgs.gov/usgs/travel/user\\_guide/index.html](http://international.usgs.gov/usgs/travel/user_guide/index.html)).

### 2. **Volunteers, Scientist Emeritus, Contractors, and Students.**

A. Volunteers can travel internationally on behalf of the USGS provided that the volunteer has a valid Individual Volunteer Services Agreement in place. Volunteers and Scientist Emeritus are not employees of the USGS; therefore, they cannot obtain an official passport and must travel on their personal passport. Volunteers and Scientist Emeritus must submit a foreign travel clearance form (DI-1175) and obtain necessary approvals. A copy of the volunteer's Individual Volunteer Services Agreement must be provided with the DI-1175.

B. Contractors may be authorized for international travel only when the USGS contract expressly covers the requirements and costs of such travel. All arrangements are handled by the contractor or his/her employee(s). The USGS is not required to prepare a DI-1175 for contractors and their employees. The contractor must obtain any visas necessary for international travel on their own. As a courtesy, the USGS International Programs will obtain country clearance for USGS contractors or their employees if they receive a memorandum from the USGS office providing all pertinent travel information in a timely manner.

C. Students are employees of the USGS and subject to the same international travel policies and procedures as any other employee.

D. *Trip-by-Trip.* All foreign travel authorizations must be issued as trip-by-trip travel authorization.

3. **Foreign Travel Request/Certification (DI-1175).** A DI-1175 must be initiated prior to booking any foreign travel reservation.

4. **Acquisitions.** All purchasing needs must be considered prior to initiating foreign travel. If services are required to assist in obtaining lodging, flights within foreign soil, and other services,

contact the Office of Acquisition and Grants to determine if a purchase request is required. If a traveler knows that there will be purchasing needs at the foreign location, he/she should work with their servicing acquisitions office from the onset to determine the best course of action. If cash purchases are required on site, they must follow the procedures outlined in FOP Chapter 16.7, Attachment C.

**5. International Travel and Use of Electronic Devices.** The Department of the Interior and the USGS Enterprise Information Office issued guidance on the requirements for international travel and use of electronic devices. The following link provides all the information a science center needs to complete the requirements to allow Government devices on international travel: [https://insight.usgs.gov/aei/projects/ittrans/info\\_assurance](https://insight.usgs.gov/aei/projects/ittrans/info_assurance) . DOI policy, released in January 2014, prohibits devices on travel to high-risk countries and adds additional security assurance to devices of low-risk countries. A waiver and risk acceptance to the DOI policy has been approved, provided the USGS follows the steps needed to assure the safety and security of the devices on travel. The USGS waiver is also located at the above Web site.

**6. Fly America Act.** Travelers are required by 49 U.S.C. 40118, commonly referred to as the “Fly America Act,” to use U.S. flag air carrier service for all air travel funded by the U.S. Government, except as provided in FTR [§301-10.136](#) and [301-10.137](#), or when one of the following exceptions applies. The USGS recommends contacting the TMC for all foreign travel to ensure Fly America Act compliance.

A. Use of a foreign air carrier is determined to be a matter of necessity in accordance with [§301-10.138](#); or

B. The transportation is provided under a bilateral or multilateral air transportation agreement to which the U.S. Government and the government of a foreign country are parties, and which the U.S. Department of Transportation has determined meets the requirements of the Fly America Act.

(1) Information on bilateral or multilateral air transportation agreements impacting U.S. Government-procured transportation can be accessed at <http://www.gsa.gov/openskies>,

(2) If determined appropriate, GSA may periodically issue FTR bulletins providing further guidance on bilateral or multilateral air transportation agreements impacting U.S. Government-procured transportation. These bulletins may be accessed at <http://www.gsa.gov/bulletins> .

C. You are an officer or employee of the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Information Agency, U.S. International Development Cooperation Agency, or the Arms Control Disarmament Agency, and your travel is paid with funds appropriated to one of these agencies, and your travel is between two places outside the United States.

D. No U.S. flag air carrier provides service on a particular leg of the route, in which case foreign air carrier service may be used, but only to or from the nearest interchange point on a usually traveled route to connect with U.S. flag air carrier service.

- E. A U.S. flag air carrier involuntarily reroutes your travel on a foreign air carrier.
- F. Service on a foreign air carrier would be 3 hours or less, and use of the U.S. flag air carrier would at least double your en route travel time.
- G. The costs of transportation are reimbursed in full by a third party such as a foreign government, international agency, or other organization.

H. *Exceptions.*

(1) If a U.S. flag air carrier offers nonstop or direct service (no aircraft change) from your origin to your destination, you must use the U.S. flag air carrier service unless such use would extend your travel time, including delay at origin, by 24 hours or more.

(2) If a U.S. flag air carrier does not offer nonstop or direct service (no aircraft change) between your origin and your destination, you must use a U.S. flag air carrier on every portion of the route where it provides service unless, when compared to using a foreign air carrier, such use would:

- (a) Increase the number of aircraft changes you must make outside of the U.S. by 2 or more.
- (b) Extend your travel time by at least 6 hours or more.
- (c) Require a connecting time of 4 hours or more at an overseas interchange point.

(3) Foreign air carrier service cannot be used solely based on cost of the ticket. More detailed information can be located in the FTR Chapter 301-10.131 through 301-10.143.

7. **Receipts.** All receipts must be annotated with the U.S. dollar and the conversion exchange rate used. A currency converter can be found at several Web sites such as <http://www.xe.com/>.

## **CHAPTER 6. FIRST- AND BUSINESS-CLASS ACCOMMODATIONS**

1. **General.** It is the policy of the Department and the USGS that tourist or coach accommodations shall be used for all modes of passenger transportation except as outlined below and shall apply to both domestic and international travel by USGS employees while on official business. Any utilization of premium-class airline accommodations (e.g., first and business class) must have prior approval, regardless of funding source. The following guidance also applies to extra-fare train accommodations. The use of air accommodations exceeding tourist or coach class (e.g., first and business class) for transportation on official business will be restricted to an absolute minimum. After-the-fact approval will not be granted unless the travel was urgent and under emergency conditions that precluded advance approval. The employee will be liable for all increased costs resulting from the use of first- and business-class air accommodations if the required approval is not obtained.

A. Requests for approval under the above conditions will be kept to a minimum and must be fully justified. These conditions will not be to meet the personal preferences of the traveler. The traveler may upgrade to business class at their own expense, including through redemption of frequent flyer miles. The excess costs of higher class airline accommodations procured for personal convenience will not be charged to or paid by the USGS.

B. First- or business-class travel for either temporary duty or permanent change of station travel will not be authorized when the employee is not required to report to duty the following day.

C. If first-class travel is being requested based on a justifiable reason, the detailed documented justification and request must be on a trip-by-trip temporary duty travel (TDT) authorization. Requests for approval should contain the following information:

(1) Name, grade, and position or title of the employee for whom the use of the premium-class air accommodation is requested.

(2) Origin, destination, and date of each segment of travel, including any segment where coach- or tourist-class accommodations will be utilized.

(3) Additional cost resulting from the difference between premium-class air accommodations and contract air accommodations (coach or tourist accommodations if the segment of travel is not serviced by contract air).

(4) Explanation of circumstances justifying the use of premium-class air accommodation. If a foreign air carrier is to be used, provide the name of the foreign carrier.

(5) Explanation of efforts taken to obtain coach- or tourist-class accommodations, including the name and phone number of the TMC used.

(6) Name and address of the person to whom the request for approval is to be returned after action by the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management, and Budget.

(7) If the request is based on medical necessity, provide current medical documentation from the medical provider to support the request. This certification must be updated annually, unless the physical impairment is a lifelong impairment.

[\(See SMC 205.2 Delegations of Travel, E-21\)](#)

## **2. First-Class Accommodations.**

A. Requests to use first-class accommodations can only be approved by the Director of the Office of Financial Management (PFM) and the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management, and Budget. Requests should be submitted, on TDT authorization, by the Director to the Director, PFM, and the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management, and Budget; at least 15 calendar days prior to commencement of the trip. If medical reasons are involved, the request must also go through the DOI Occupational Health Program Manager, Office of Occupational Health and

Safety. These requests must be routed through managerial channels, including the appropriate Associate Director or Regional Director, through the Associate Director for Administration, to the Director. First-class accommodations can only be approved for the following conditions:

- (1) Space is not available for coach- or tourist-class accommodations on any scheduled flight in time, within 24 hours, to accomplish the purpose of the official travel, which is so urgent that it cannot be postponed. An explanation is required as to why the matter is so urgent that it cannot be postponed and how a delay of the trip would endanger the mission.
- (2) First-class accommodations are necessary because the employee is so handicapped or otherwise physically impaired that other accommodations cannot be used, and such condition is substantiated in writing by competent medical authority. Requests for approval based on physical handicap must be supported by a current statement by a competent medical authority.
- (3) First- or business-class accommodations are required for security purposes or because exceptional circumstances make their use essential to the successful performance of a Departmental mission.

**3. Business-Class Accommodations.** All the above conditions apply in addition to the following:

- A. Requests to use business-class air accommodations must be approved by the USGS Associate Director for Administration.
- B. Tourist- or coach-class accommodations on foreign carriers do not provide adequate sanitation or health standards.
- C. Regularly scheduled flights between the origin/destination points (including connecting points) provide only other than coach-class accommodations and you certify such on your voucher.
- D. Your transportation costs are paid in full through agency acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source.
- E. Where the origin and/or destination are OCONUS and the scheduled flight time, including stopovers and change of planes, is in excess of 14 hours. Even if a foreign travel routing requires a flight of 14 hours or more, the recommended practice is to authorize a rest stop en route or a rest period upon arrival at the duty site to avoid the increased expense of first- or business-class accommodations.
- F. The use of business-class accommodations results in an overall savings to the Government based on economic considerations. This determination includes avoidance of additional subsistence costs (per diem), overtime, or lost productive time that would be incurred while awaiting availability of tourist-class accommodations.

4. **Economy-Plus Seating.** Also referred to as “coach elite,” “coach plus,” or “preferred coach.”

Under these airline programs, a passenger may obtain, for a fee, a more desirable seat choice within the coach-class cabin. According to DOI policy, Bureaus should approve economy plus accommodations in lieu of first class or business class for the above circumstances (see first- and business-class justifications above), whenever possible. Additionally, Bureaus may authorize an upgrade to economy plus seating when a traveler has physical characteristics that would cause significant discomfort if seated in coach class. The traveler must document this exception in the travel authorization and attach all approvals to the travel authorization and voucher. Economy plus can be approved by first-line supervisors.

## CHAPTER 7. HOSTING FOREIGN VISITORS

A foreign visitor must be sponsored by a USGS employee. The sponsor is responsible for ensuring that the travel expenses for the visitor are covered. The USGS no longer issues advances to cover the expenses. A “declining balance card” is issued to the USGS sponsor for M&IE and lodging. A DI-1020 Travel Authorization form must be completed for the host as well as each traveler being sponsored. A DI-1175 Form must be initiated for the USGS employee if foreign travel is involved, however, the USGS does not complete the DI-1175 form for the sponsored visitor(s). All expenses are documented and submitted via the Public Voucher for Hosting an International Travelers form. Detailed procedures are provided in [FOP Chapter 26.6](#).

## CHAPTER 8. PER DIEM

Reimbursement of per diem to employees traveling on official temporary TDY is determined using one of the following methods for each day (or fraction thereof) in travel status.

1. **Lodging-plus Per Diem Method.** When travel is more than 12 hours and more than 50 miles from both duty station and residence, and overnight lodging is required, you are reimbursed your actual lodging cost, not to exceed the maximum lodging rate for the TDY location or stopover point, and the rate for meals and incidentals.

2. **Per Diem Rates.** GSA has prescribed maximum per diem rates within the contiguous United States (CONUS) by location; locations not listed are covered by the standard CONUS rate. If the key city is not listed, travelers may rely on the county to determine the per diem rate. These rates are published on a yearly basis and can be located on the GSA’s Web site at: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>. To determine what county a city is located in, please visit the National Association of Counties Web site at: <http://www.naco.org/Counties/Pages/CitySearch.aspx>.

A. Per diem rates for non-foreign areas outside CONUS are set by the Secretary of Defense and can be found at: <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/perdiemCalc.cfm>.

B. Per diem rates in foreign areas are set by the Secretary of State. These are published monthly

and can be found at: [https://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=184&menu\\_id=78](https://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=184&menu_id=78).

**3. Actual Expense Method.** Employees are expected to stay in lodging that is at or below the established lodging per diem rate. Travel on an actual expense method may be authorized or approved for travel assignments when the applicable maximum per diem rate is inadequate due to special or unusual circumstances (e.g., expenses could be unusually high due to a national event such as a major disaster). A traveler may only incur expenses that are reasonable and necessary to accomplish the official purpose of a TDY trip, and must obtain preapproval to claim actual expense reimbursement (reimbursement in excess of the prescribed locality per diem rate). The delegated approving official may authorize the traveler to exceed locality rates for lodging, M&IE, or both.

*A. Full Actual Expense.* When necessary expenses are unusually high due to special or unusual circumstances or when you are required to attend a meeting, conference, or training session away from your official duty station where lodging and meals must be procured at a prearranged place, and your lodging costs absorb all or practically all of your allowable per diem allowance, you may submit a written request for reimbursement, on an actual-expense basis.

(1) All written requests must be submitted and approved in accordance with [SM Chapter 205.2](#), Travel Delegations, prior to the commencement of travel and attached to your travel voucher. The authority to approve lodging over per diem rates is delegated to the Science Center Director or equivalent for all categories of travel except conference and mission operational events. Conferences and mission operational events require approval from the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) member in the traveler's chain of command. The justification must include why meals or lodging are not available within the prescribed rates and include the name of the traveler, locations and dates of travel, and the required amount of increase. The traveler must include this approved justification with the travel authorization and voucher.

(2) Travel vouchers for full actual expense must be completely (lodging and meals) itemized. Receipts are required for all lodging expenses and meals when claiming meals that exceed the maximum daily allowable rate.

*B. Lodging Actual Expense.* In addition to the above situations, you may request reimbursement of only the actual lodging expense in localities where your cost of lodging will exceed the maximum allowable lodging rate for the TDY location. You may submit a written request for reimbursement of actual lodging expense, up to **300 percent** of the allowable lodging allowance for the locality, on an actual-expense basis. All written requests must be submitted and approved by the appropriate delegated approver in accordance with [SM Chapter 205.2](#), Travel Delegations, prior to the commencement of travel and attached to your travel voucher. A receipt for the lodging must be attached to the travel voucher, but M&IE expenses do not need to be itemized.

*C.* Travelers electing to stay in lodging over per diem without approval will be required to personally pay the difference between Government per diem and the cost of the lodging/tax. If a traveler is going to stay at a lodging establishment in which they know they are going to go over each night without approval and want to pay for the overage with personal funds, he/she **MUST** have the lodging establishment only charge the allowed amount on the Government-issued charge card and pay the overage on a personal credit card.

D. *M&IE Actual Expense.* In addition to the above situations, travelers may use the actual expenses method to claim **less** M&IE than what the prescribed GSA M&IE rate is for the TDY location. In order to use the actual expense for less M&IE, the traveler **must** provide receipts for every meal to validate what was actually spent. Those actual amounts, if less, can be claimed provided all meal receipts are uploaded to the voucher. See SMC 205-2 for the delegated authority to approve Actuals for less M&IE. This option can only be used when the employee voluntarily agrees to receive actuals versus the full M&IE.

4. **Non-Conventional Lodging.** Non-Conventional lodging is when lodging must be obtained through unconventional methods. This includes renting a house for the entire summer for employees on TDY travel status where different travelers will be coming and going throughout a period of time and it is impossible for the establishment or lessor to bill each employee individually for their stay. These types of situations are considered a purchase and must go through the Office of Acquisition and Grants (OAG) via a purchase request. If there is ever an unusual situation, it is best to submit a question to the GS\_Travel\_Policy email group for assistance. See [OAG's Acquisition of Non-Conventional Lodging Acquisition Operating Procedures](#) for additional details.

5. **Calculation of Per Diem (determined by TDY location and not lodging site).** Your TDY location determines your maximum per diem reimbursement rate.

A. *Full Days.* For each full day (12:01 a.m. through 12:00 midnight) in travel status, you receive your actual cost of lodging incurred, not to exceed the maximum allowable for lodging for the locality of the temporary duty assignment, plus the M&IE allowance for the locality.

B. *Day of Departure.* On the day you depart from your official duty station or residence to begin a temporary duty assignment, you receive the actual cost of lodging incurred, not to exceed the allowable amount for lodging for the locality of the temporary duty assignment, plus 3/4 of the M&IE rate for that locality regardless of the time of departure.

C. *Day of Return.* On the day you return to your official duty station or residence, you receive 3/4 of the previous day's M&IE rate, regardless of the time you return. You will not receive an allowance for lodging.

D. *Reductions in Per Diem.* There is no reimbursement for lodging unless you actually incur lodging costs. Reductions to per diem for meals furnished directly or indirectly by the Government (e.g., conferences, training courses, Government installations, etc.) are made in accordance with the FTR: Please refer to [Meal Deductions](#) in the FTR Chapter 301-11.18. (See [Chapter 9, Reduced Per Diem](#).)

(1) However in no instance should the amount you receive be reduced to the point where it would be less than the daily incidental expense allowance of \$5 for CONUS travel. The M&IE allowance is not reduced for meals provided on airline carriers (if free) or continental breakfasts included in lodging cost.

**6. Lodging on a Weekly or Monthly Basis.** When lodging is obtained on a weekly or monthly basis, the daily lodging cost will be computed by dividing the total lodging cost by the total number of nights you actually occupy the quarters, provided you acted prudently in renting lodging by the week or month and the daily cost does not exceed the maximum allowable lodging rate for the locality of the temporary duty assignment. Keeping in mind that travel of 30 or more days is only allowed 55 percent of the maximum per diem rate (for both lodging and M&IE). If the daily lodging cost exceeds the maximum allowable lodging rate, your reimbursement is limited to the maximum allowable rate. All lodging that exceeds the allowable rate must be approved by the ELT member in the traveler's chain of command. The following expenses may be considered part of the lodging cost when an employee rents a room, apartment, house, or other lodging incident to a temporary duty assignment.

A. The rental cost.

B. If unfurnished, the rental cost of appropriate and necessary furniture and appliances such as a stove, refrigerator, chairs, and tables, bed, sofa, television, and vacuum cleaner.

C. Cost of connection, use, and disconnection of utilities.

D. Cost of reasonable maid fee and cleaning charges.

E. Monthly telephone use fee (does not include installation and long-distance calls).

F. Cost of special user fees, such as cable TV charges, if ordinarily included in the price of a hotel or motel room in the area concerned.

**Note:** The total expenses must be added to the monthly lodging cost and divided by the number of days in a month. The daily total cannot exceed the allowable amount per day for the trip.

**7. Receipt Requirement.** Receipts for lodging must be attached to your travel voucher. Receipts are required for any miscellaneous expense if the expense exceeds \$75.00. Currency exchange rates must be notated on all foreign receipts with foreign currencies. A currency converter can be found at several Web sites such as <http://www.xe.com/>. When a receipt is required and cannot be obtained or is lost, the traveler must write a statement indicating the amount of the expense, reason(s) for why there is no receipt, and the nature of the expense that is missing a receipt. This documentation must be signed by the traveler and the approver and must also accompany the voucher with the rest of the required receipts.

## **8. Lodging with Friends, Relatives, or at a Second Residence or Family Domicile.**

When lodging with friends or relatives, at a second residence, or at the family domicile, no lodging allowance will be reimbursed unless your host actually incurs additional costs in accommodating you. In such instances, you must substantiate the additional costs incurred by the owner of the private residence (e.g., additional cost of utilities) by a comparison of bills before and after your stay. Neither costs based on room rates for comparable lodging in the area, nor flat 'token' amounts can be considered a reasonable basis for reimbursement of lodging

costs. You will, however, be allowed the full allowance for M&IE for the locality unless a reduced per diem rate is specifically set forth on your travel authorization.

**9. Travel of Less than 24 Hours without Lodging.** If you are in travel status for more than 12 hours, but less than 24 hours, and lodging is not required, you may receive a per diem allowance of 75 percent of the maximum allowable M&IE rate for the locality of the official TDY location.

**10. Per Diem Policy within 50 Miles of the Employee's Duty Station or Residence.** A per diem allowance may not be paid if your temporary duty station is 30 miles or less from your official duty station and residence. Exceptions may be requested as shown in the delegations of authority for travel and the chain of the request must follow a specific routing through the USGS before going to the Department for consideration. Per diem for travel more than 30 miles but less than 50 miles may be approved and paid only under the following situations unless your office or regional/mission area management has issued stricter guidance.

A. If the travel involves unusual or uncontrollable factors, such that requiring an employee to return to their duty station or residence would create an undue hardship. This exception includes extreme conditions such as inclement weather that would endanger a traveler's health or safety and requires post-travel approval.

B. Attendance at a training session or conference where the traveler would receive the full benefit of the event from remaining onsite to attend evening sessions.

C. Exceptions to the 50-mile limitation must be approved by the Deputy Director for trip purposes other than conferences or training. A memorandum fully documenting the unusual circumstances must be prepared, sent through the traveler's Regional Director or Mission Area Associate Director, through the Associate Director for Administration, and approved by the Deputy Director prior to beginning the travel. (See SM Chapter 205.2, Travel Delegations.)

**11. Food Purchases Related to Field Travel.** At times, offices may find it is more conducive to provide food for travelers while in the field during TDY travel. Food purchases cannot exceed the per diem rate allowed for a traveler. Food purchases charged to a Government-issued charge card for field work must be documented on the purchase log with the following information: number of participants on trip, location, per diem rate, and duration of trip. Food purchases must be made with the Government-issued charge card and not be made with cash and reimbursed via the SF-1164. If cash is used, a request for approval must be submitted to the Office of Accounting and Financial Management (OAFM) and OAG per FOP Chapter 16.7, Attachment C.

## **CHAPTER 9. REDUCED PER DIEM**

This section provides detailed guidance on when per diem below the maximum locality rate may be authorized. Reduced per diem is required for extended travel (trips lasting 30 days or longer) and may also be approved for what is generally referred to as camp rate.

### **1. Definitions.**

A. *Per Diem*. The per diem allowance (also referred to as subsistence allowance) is a daily payment instead of reimbursement for actual expenses for lodging, meals, and related incidental expenses (M&IE).

B. *Camp Rate*. The camp rate is a reduced per diem rate for a specific “camp” site to cover the travel expenses of employees who must eat and lodge at nonconventional facilities. The camp rate is established to replace the lodging and M&IE allowance prescribed for TDY locations.

C. *Camp Site*. Camp site is used to define a specific geographic area that is used for camping in the outdoors or cabin facilities, which could include a dedicated area with various amenities such as picnic tables, utility hookups, fire pits, piped potable water, etc. A camp site may, but does not necessarily, mean a campground. A vessel with sleeping facilities provided may also be designated as a camp site.

**2. Federal Travel Regulations.** FTR 301-11.300-306 describes Actual Expense. FTR 301-11.200 provides governmentwide policy on reduced per diem rates. According to FTR 301-11.200, agencies may prescribe a reduced per diem rate lower than the prescribed maximum under the following circumstances:

A. When your agency can determine in advance that lodging and/or meal costs will be lower than the per diem rate.

B. The lowest authorized per diem rate must be stated in your travel authorization in advance of your travel.

### **3. Department of Interior Guidance.**

A. Bureaus may prescribe a reduced per diem rate for any TDY trip when able to determine that the traveler’s expenses will be lower than the prescribed locality rate. When setting a reduced per diem rate, the lowest approved rate must be clearly stated in the travel authorization. Bureaus may reduce a traveler’s per diem rate in the following circumstances:

(1) The approving official can determine in advance that lodging and/or meal costs will be lower than the maximum allowable per diem rate.

(2) A traveler is on an extended TDY assignment and can obtain a reduced lodging rate or prepare meals in extended-stay lodging. In this case, the per diem rate will be automatically reduced to 55 percent of the locality rate, unless another rate is fully justified.

B. A pre-authorized reduced per diem rate is applicable from the first day of the TDY trip through the last day of the trip, unless a supervisor determines a higher per diem rate is appropriate. Different per diem reimbursement rates must be identified for the dates they are applicable. The traveler should not further reduce the rate on the first or last day of travel (i.e., travelers do not further lower per diem to 75 percent of the reduced rate on travel days). When a TDY assignment, that was expected to last fewer than 30 days, is extended as TDY travel beyond 30 days (i.e., becomes an extended TDY assignment), Bureaus must establish a flat rate

for per diem reimbursement for the remaining days of the assignment.

**4. USGS Policy on Travel of 30 Days or More.** Reduced per diem is required for assignments of 30 days or more, beginning on the first day of assignment. Travelers are expected to find lodging at a location that allows meals to be cooked, therefore, eliminating the need to obtain meals at restaurants. The per diem rate will be reduced to 55 percent of the full per diem rate (lodging plus M&IE) for the location, unless a different rate is fully justified. A traveler must provide a written statement, signed by the first-line supervisor, stating what actions they took to try to obtain reduced per diem and what rate they were actually able to obtain (lodging is typically what needs to be increased and not M&IE). A travel authorization must be completed showing the reduced rate and approved by the designated official. Travelers are allowed one weekend trip home every 30 days. The USGS will only pay transportation for the traveler for this trip home.

A. If a trip originally is scheduled to be less than 30 days, but it is later determined during the trip that it will extend more than 30 days, at that point in time the per diem is adjusted to 55 percent. For example, if on day 20 the traveler determines that he/she must extend the travel to 35 days, day 20 begins the 55 percent per diem calculation.

B. The 55 percent reduction does not apply if the traveler is in two different locations for a total of 30 days unless they are on a detail for more than 30 days and then have a small TDY trip to another location during the detail assignment. In those cases, the reduction applies to the detail site but not the offshoot TDY trips from that detail site.

C. If the traveler cannot find lodging at the 55 percent reduction, a higher rate, not to exceed the maximum allowable rate for the TDY location, can be justified and approved in writing by the Associate Director for Administration. (See SM Chapter 205.2, Travel Delegations, Appendix A, Section E-11 b1.)

**5. USGS Policy on Camp Rates.** Camp rates are reduced per diem rates used to cover travel expenses of employees who must eat and lodge at nonconventional facilities. The camp rate is established to replace the lodging and M&IE allowance prescribed for TDY locations. Camp rates should be based on 55 percent of the locality rate of the TDY location unless a rate above or below the 55 percent is established and approved. Once a camp rate established, the same camp rate is extended to all similarly situated travelers at a given site.

A. To establish a camp rate that is different than the standard 55 percent rate, the Science Center Director, Regional Director, or Mission Area Associate Director must take into consideration all aspects of costs that may be incurred by the traveler (e.g., are food, lodging, or other amenities being provided).

B. Camp rate considerations:

(1) *When Food Is Provided.* When a meal or meals are provided, the traveler must exclude the meal or meals that were provided in the voucher. If the exact amount of the meal is known, the M&IE should be reduced by the exact amount. When the exact amount of meals provided is

unknown, the traveler should check the applicable box on the travel voucher for breakfast, lunch and dinner. This consideration includes situations when one or two people purchase food for a group of employees. The cardholder must show as part of their expense documentation that the total purchase divided by meals and employees does not exceed the M&IE allowance. The travelers exclude the meals provided from their vouchers. Travelers are still required to claim reimbursement for incidental expenses while performing travel at a CONUS TDY location. OCONUS M&IE can only be reduced below the daily incidental rate when approved by OAFM (see paragraph C. below).

(2) *When Food Is Not Provided.* If the travel takes place at a regular TDY location, and the travel is less than 30 days, the traveler is entitled to the applicable M&IE for that location unless a camp rate is established. Typically, camping involves buying groceries and preparing own meals at a site which is less expensive than eating in a restaurant. When establishing a camp rate, consideration should be given to the typical cost of groceries at the location.

(3) *Lodging – Camp Site Charges.* When there are charges for camp sites or camp-site facilities, the traveler should be reimbursed for full costs of the lodging, not to exceed the lodging rate for that TDY location.

(4) *Lodging – No Camp Site Charges.* If travelers are in Government-furnished tents, RVs, vessels, or cabins, the lodging is reduced to zero because the lodging is furnished by the Government. Cost centers are responsible for ensuring that equipment and lodging are provided.

C. *Setting Camp Rates.* When setting camp rates where meals are NOT provided by the USGS or another source, and it is determined that the camp rate should be more or less than the 55 percent allowed, the local current condition for the site location should be taken into consideration. The rate must never exceed the maximum locality nor should it be less than the daily CONUS incidental rate for the area in which the TDY is taking place. A camp rate request for a specific camp site must be submitted through the Science Center Director, Regional Director, or Mission Area Associate Director to OAFM for approval. All requests must include a detailed justification of how the rate was established. All considerations must be documented. All approved camp rates either over or under the 55 percent prescribed rate will be posted on the Travel Management Section Intranet page for all centers to access.

(1) Use of a camp rate requires a single trip authorization (TDT) showing the reduced rate. The approved rate documentation must be uploaded to each voucher. See below for links to per diem rates.

(a) Domestic: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>.

(b) OCONUS (AK, HI, Guam, etc.): <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/perdiemCalc.cfm>.

(c) Foreign: [http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=184&menu\\_id=78](http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=184&menu_id=78).

6. **Actuals.** Travelers may reduce M&IE to actual costs if they can provide receipts for every meal showing they spent less than the allowed M&IE amount each day.

7. **Approval Authority.** USGS travel delegations of authority are outlined in SM Chapter 205.2.

A. The first-line supervisor or other designated official shall approve, via the travel authorization, reduced per diem for temporary duty travel of 30 days or more beginning on the first day of the trip and actuals for less M&IE.

B. Science Center and Regional Directors and Mission Area Associate Directors shall submit to OAFM for approval camp rates that are either over or under the Bureau's 55 percent camp rate.

(1) The first-line supervisors may authorize, via the travel authorization, reduced per diem/camp rate set at 55 percent or when a different rate is approved by OAFM.

## CHAPTER 10. TRANSPORTATION

1. **Common Carrier.** Travel regulations state that common carrier generally is the least costly and most expeditious means of traveling to a TDY location. Travelers are required to use common carrier or be reimbursed on a constructed basis whenever common carrier is reasonably available or unless the TDY location is 250 miles or less from the traveler's duty station or residence. (See Appendix A for cost comparison form.)

2. **Rental Vehicles.** You must consider whether a rental car is a necessary expense. All rental vehicles must be approved on the TA before the trip starts. If a rental vehicle is not approved on the TA, then you must include a detailed justification on the voucher. If approved, you are required to book a rental vehicle on-line within CGE or by calling the TMC. Utilizing CGE and the TMC ensures that you are covered under the Government Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO) contract for liability insurance. Any rental vehicle other than compact car must be fully justified on the voucher explaining which of the below justifications apply:

A. Sharing a rental vehicle with two or more Government employees who are traveling to the same TDY site; three or more total travelers.

B. Accommodate the transportation of a large amount of Government equipment.

C. Provide documented medical condition that requires use of a larger vehicle (documentation must be attached to the voucher).

D. Accommodate a traveler's physical size is such that a compact vehicle would not allow for safe operation of the vehicle.

E. Require use of an SUV with off-road capabilities and possibly studded tires due to the need to access areas of extremely rough terrain or challenging weather conditions.

(1) You are prohibited from purchasing extra insurance for domestic travel. You should not provide your personal auto insurance information if involved in an accident while using a rental car.

(2) For obscure U.S. rental car companies (usually found in Alaska and Hawaii) that do not participate in the DTMO rental car contract, travelers are now allowed to pay for Collision Damage Waiver insurance. If an accident should happen, and you did not get the CDW insurance, the accident would have to be covered under the Federal Tort Claims Act. See SMC 451.1, Tort Claims Against the United States, for USGS tort claims guidance.

(3) If the intended use of the rental car is for off-paved roads, the traveler must inform the rental car company of this intention and obtain written approval from them to use the vehicle in this manner.

**3. Insurance for Foreign Vehicle Rental.** Insurance coverage for vehicles operated outside the U.S. is specifically excluded from coverage under the Federal Tort Claims Act; therefore, you may be reimbursed for the cost of collision damage waiver/insurance when the vehicle is rented or leased for official travel in foreign areas. The cost of trip insurance is allowable by employees for use of Government-furnished or privately owned vehicles during official business in a foreign country. Trip insurance covers potential liability for property damage or personal injury or death to third parties.

**4. Government-Owned Vehicle (GOV).** The GOV is considered more cost effective than a privately owned vehicle or rental car. When using a GOV for official TDY travel, you must choose GOV under the expenses tab and leave the amount at \$0.00. Fleet motor vehicle managers must furnish travelers with the vehicle fleet charge card to be used for operating expenses. Use of the GOV is only allowed for official purposes such as transportation between places of official business and temporary lodging, restaurants, and stores. When traveling abroad with a GOV, including Canada, you do need to purchase extra insurance. You can first determine if your personal insurance will allow the use of a GOV. GOV policies and procedures are set by the Office of Management Services. (See [USGS Property Motor Vehicle Management for further guidance](#).) ***Note:* Under no circumstances may insurance be purchased by a traveler for authorized GOV use**

**5. Privately Owned Conveyances (POV).**

A. The approver must recognize travel by GOV as most cost advantageous to the Government and should be used when a GOV is available.

B. The reimbursement rate for use of a POV is dependent upon the availability of a Government-owned vehicle (GOV). If the traveler chooses to use their personal vehicle while a GOV is available, they only get reimbursed the reduced rate. If the use of the POV is determined to be advantageous and/or the GOV is unavailable, the higher rate is used. (See GSA's rates for POV at the [GSA Web site](#).) If POV is authorized, the mileage allowance cited covers all POV operating expenses, including fuel, maintenance, insurance, and damages sustained while on official business.

**6. Using a POV as Personal Preference.**

A. *In Lieu of Common Carrier.* The traveler must complete and have the approving official sign a constructive cost comparison prior to departure on official travel when a traveler wants to drive a GOV or POV versus flying. The office must consider all modes of transportation before authorizing POV. The comparison document (Appendix A) must be attached to the travel authorization. The amount authorized should equal the lesser of the cost comparison. If the traveler is authorized to travel by common carrier transportation and elects to use an automobile for personal preference, it is highly recommend that the GOV be used. If the GOV is available and the employee chooses to use their POV for personal preference, the actual expense claim will be calculated and reimbursed at the prescribed lower GSA mileage rate for electing to use the POV. If the GOV is not available, then the actual expense claim will be calculated and reimbursed using the authorized POV mileage rate. The GOV request must be documented by the traveler and attached to his/her travel authorization.

B. *In Lieu of GOV.* When a traveler uses a POV in lieu of an available GOV, reimbursement is based on the GOV mileage rate. This rate is the lower of the two GSA mileage reimbursement rates. When a Bureau assigns a GOV for a specific purpose or trip and the employee elects to use a POV as a matter of personal preference or because of failure to reserve a GOV in a timely manner, the approving official must authorize the lower of the two GSA mileage reimbursement rates.

C. *In Lieu of Taxi or Other Special Conveyance.* When travelers elect to travel to common carrier terminals from their residences or official duty stations by POV instead of taxi or airport shuttle service, reimbursement may only be claimed for mileage, tolls, and parking. However, reimbursement of airport parking is limited to the amount it would cost for round-trip taxi fare plus tip for the same trip. Travelers can use a taxi fare estimating tool, such as (<http://www.taxifarefinder.com>), to estimate the cost of round-trip taxi fares.

## 7. **POV Mileage to Pick Up GOV.**

A. The POV mileage to pick up a GOV is treated the same as going to a commercial terminal to change modes of transportation. Therefore, a traveler on overnight TDY travel authorized to use a GOV is entitled to claim reimbursement for mileage to travel from their residence to the office or GOV pickup location, unless they work at the duty station for more than 15 minutes. See the following for additional information:

- (1) Federal Travel Regulations §301-10.306 and §301-10.420.
- (2) Department of Interior (DOI) guidance [Part 301-10](#) Travel Expenses, Privately Owned Vehicles.
- (3) Financial Operating Procedures (FOP) Chapter 26.3, Attachment H, [Frequently Asked Questions – Mileage and Home to Work](#).

B. DOI regulations state that the Secretary of the Interior is the only official authorized to determine which employees are eligible to use home-to-work transportation, with one exception: absent specific approval by the Secretary of the Interior, the **ONLY** circumstance under which

USGS employees may take Government-owned vehicles home in conjunction with an approved travel authorization that states that the employee is authorized to use a Government-owned vehicle. This authority is only used when an employee is leaving on an extended field trip and generally results in the vehicle being stored at a residence the day before and the day after completion of the extended field trip. The following link provides additional guidance and question and answers: [Motor Vehicle Management Home to Work](#).

## 8. In-and-Around Mileage.

A. In-and-around mileage is allowed to be reimbursed, when using a POV, at an official TDY location effective October 1, 2014. The traveler may claim mileage reimbursement when authorized for the use of a POV, but such use must be limited to the following official purposes:

- (1) Transportation between places of official business and temporary lodging.
- (2) Transportation to restaurants, drug stores, barber shops, places of worship, cleaning establishments, and similar places necessary for the sustenance, comfort, or health of the employee in order to foster the continued efficient performance of Government business.
- (3) In-and-around mileage is **NOT** reimbursed for leisure activities.
- (4) The traveler should follow the prudent traveler rule and find lodging and eating establishments close to the TDY location without going over per diem. Supervisors have discretion in what is allowed and can limit reimbursement to the closest lodging and eating establishment to the TDY location.

9. **Aircraft and Motorcycles.** Privately owned aircraft and motorcycles can also be considered for use, if determined to be advantageous to the Government. Each has their own [rate](#). Use of privately owned aircraft must obtain special clearance from the Office of Aircraft Services before use.

10. **Reduced Group or Charter Fares Offered by Travel Agents.** Reduced fares for group or charter arrangements available only through travel agents (other than the contracted TMC) may be used by individuals or group of employees provided an administrative determination has been made by the traveler's office and approved by the Associate Director for Administration prior to travel commencing. The use of the reduced group charter fares will result in a monetary savings to the Government and will not interfere with the conduct of official business.

## CHAPTER 11. MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

1. **Telephone Calls.** Travelers are expected to use Government telephones or the Federal Calling Card for long-distance calls while on official travel. USGS FTS 2001 Phone Calling Card information can be obtained at the [Government Calling Card](#) Web site.

A. *Personal Calls Home.* When official travel requires overnight lodging, travelers are allowed to make brief daily personal calls at Government expense. Travelers on foreign travel can only

have one call home every 3 days. These calls must be made using the most cost-effective method (e.g., Government-issued prepaid calling card).

(1) In limited circumstances, when a traveler did not obtain a Government-issued prepaid calling card, the traveler may be reimbursed on a case-by-case basis for calls charged to hotel rooms or personal charge cards. Reimbursement will be limited to the constructive cost of using a Government-issued calling card, which is currently \$0.02 per minute.

(2) Personal calls home may not be excessive in duration, and travelers are allowed 15 minutes per day. The traveler must provide an explanation that justifies reimbursement of personal calls home in the travel voucher. Forgetting to obtain a Government-issued calling card is not an acceptable justification for reimbursement.

(3) Travelers must not use Government-issued cell phones for daily personal calls. Personal calls that travelers make during duty hours on Government phone systems must not adversely affect the performance of official duties or the organization's work performance.

**2. Reimbursement for Premium Services or Assistive Technologies.** Rental car companies frequently offer premium services or assistive technologies. The most common premium service is the prepaid fuel option, while the most common assistive technologies are the Global Positioning Satellite and automated EZ Pass toll payment systems. These items are rarely needed to accomplish official travel. Therefore, the costs associated with these services are not reimbursable, see below for limited exceptions.

(1) *Road Side Assistance.* A roadside assistance program is included under the U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement. Travelers must not authorize rental car companies to include this option in their rental agreements. The rental car company will provide to Government renters a toll-free telephone number to call for service covered under the U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement in case of an accident or need for repair, 24 hours per day/7 days per week.

(2) *Prepaid Fuel Option.* Travelers must not authorize rental car companies to include the prepaid fuel option in their rental agreements. Travelers are expected to refuel rental cars prior to returning them. Travelers should be prepared to provide fuel receipts upon request at the rental car return.

(3) *Global Positioning Satellite (GPS).* GPS is not a necessary expense for official travel. Bureaus must determine the level of authority necessary for approval of GPS rental. The approving official must review each request and only authorize the expense on a case-by-case basis when specifically required to accomplish official travel. Approving officials may only authorize the rental of GPS technology in the following situations:

- (a) To assist in accomplishing an active law enforcement mission.
- (b) When required for a firefighting mission.
- (c) When renting a vehicle in a foreign country.

(d) When required to access extremely remote locations without clearly marked road signs (e.g., tribal lands).

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

**Note: If a premium rental car service or assistive technology is used without proper authorization, the traveler will be responsible for reimbursing the USGS the associated cost and may be subject to adverse personnel action.**

3. **Cancellation Fees.** If a cancellation fee is incurred because a traveler failed to know the cancellation policy and did not cancel reservations prior to the deadline, the traveler is responsible for reimbursing the USGS for the cancellation fee. For cancellations that involve unforeseen circumstances, the USGS can pay the cancellation fee. For example, if the traveler's flight is cancelled due to weather conditions, and the timeframe of the cancellation does not allow the traveler to call the hotel to cancel the reservation without penalty, then the office can pay the cost of the cancellation fee because it was beyond the traveler's control. If the traveler changes his/her plans due to personal reasons, or if his/her plans change due to business conflicts but fail to call and cancel the reservation in time, the traveler must reimburse the USGS for that cancellation fee.

4. **Tax Exemption.** The Comptroller General of the United States has consistently ruled that the Federal Government is immune from paying State and local lodging taxes when payment is made by the Government directly to the vendor by Government purchase order or Government check. Use of the Government-issued charge card causes these transactions to be paid directly by the Government since the USGS centrally bills lodging. OAFM will continue to work to convince State authorities and hoteliers that the USGS is truly tax exempt. The issue is many Federal Government entities do not centrally bill lodging, so many hoteliers will not honor our true tax-exempt status. Per diem rates are set at levels intended to compensate employees for these taxes. If the hotel refuses to remove any type of lodging tax for domestic travel, the employee must include the expense on the travel voucher. Many jurisdictions require their own tax-exempt form or method to claim tax exemption. GSA's current listing is located at the [GSA Smart Pay Web site](#).

## CHAPTER 12. VOUCHERING

1. Travelers are expected to submit vouchers within 5 working days of the conclusion of the official travel. Travelers on detail or on a trip that exceeds 30 days should prepare monthly vouchers and submit them by the 5th working day of each month. Through a statistical sampling program, OAFM conducts an audit of a random sampling of vouchers. A random selection of

travel vouchers are audited for conformity with applicable laws, regulations, and procedures. Vouchers where errors are found will be returned for correction.

2. Travel vouchers are prepared and transmitted via the CGE interface and processed in FBMS via this interface. Interfaced vouchers must pass edits that are built into the database which will help eliminate many of the vouchers that contain inconsistencies.

3. Only travel-related items are required on the travel voucher. All items charged on the Government-issued charge card travel business line side of the card must be reported whether or not they are reimbursable or non-reimbursable. Items such as registration fees charged using the Government-issued charge card are on the purchase business line and are not to be reported on the travel voucher, but should be reported with all other purchase business line transactions.

4. The reviewing/approving official must have full knowledge of the employee's activities. He/she must ensure that:

A. The claim is properly prepared in accordance with the pertinent regulations and agency procedures.

B. The types of expenses claimed are authorized and allowable expenses.

C. The amounts claimed are accurate.

D. The required receipts, statements, justifications, etc. are attached to the travel claim.

(See the tip sheet [“How to Approve a Travel Document”](#) on the CGE Web site for tips on how to review vouchers.)

## CHAPTER 13. CONFERENCE GUIDANCE

1. **Conference Definition.** A conference is defined as a meeting, symposium, seminar, retreat, or similar event that meets the criteria shown below. When travel meets one of the situations below, the trip purpose code on the travel authorization and voucher must be “conference.”

A. USGS hosted conference and there are 30 attendees or more and 15 or more are in travel status.

B. Non-USGS hosted conference and there are 15 or more USGS attendees.

C. Other indicators of a conference, regardless of the number of attendees, include registration fee, a published agenda, discussion and breakout sessions, and scheduled speakers or discussion panels.

(1) For example, if you have a person on travel status attending a meeting with none of the “other” indicators of a conference, then that person would select the mission operational purpose

code. If the person is attending a meeting with 15 or more attendees in travel status, they must select the conference purpose code.

(2) All conference-related guidance is provided at the following SharePoint site:

<https://collaboration.usgs.gov/aei/cctw/default.aspx>.

**2. Rental of a Conference or Meeting Room.** This type of expense is considered a purchase and not a travel expense and should not be included on a travel voucher. Please contact your servicing procurement office for assistance.

## CHAPTER 14. MIXING OFFICIAL AND PERSONAL TRAVEL

1. First, a reminder that the charge card program guidelines state that the Government-issued charge card is to be used for official travel-related charges only, and these charges are to be for expenses incurred only by the cardholder. A cardholder cannot charge any travel-related expenses for another employee/person.

2. A traveler who wishes to perform personal travel in conjunction with official travel where a personal location will be added to the official location(s), the traveler/arranger must contact the TMC to complete the travel reservations. The travel authorization will only show the official locations traveled. Instructions on how to book these can be found on the USGS CGE travel Intranet page under training materials: <http://internal.usgs.gov/ops/finance/travel/cge/cge.html>. If the traveler is going to an official location and just staying at that location for personal time, the travel can be booked as official travel without having to call the TMC directly to book as they are not deviating or adding additional personal flights.

3. If an employee is mixing official and unofficial travel, he/she should make arrangements in advance to have the official charges put on the Government-issued charge card and the unofficial charges paid for with cash or a personal credit card.

A. If both official and unofficial charges are billed on the Government-issued charge card and involve centrally billed items (e.g., rental car), the Government will be paying the charge card company for those unofficial charges even though the employee intends to reimburse the Government for the unofficial charges. For this reason, the charges need to be kept separate. Only official charges can be applied to the Government-issued charge card.

B. If there is an oversight, and the unofficial charges get billed to the Government-issued charge card, the employee must immediately send a check payable to the USGS for the unofficial charges. The check should be accompanied with a [9-3110 Collection Transmittal Form \(MS Word\)](#) and be uploaded to the voucher. The traveler will fill out the section marked "other" and include information explaining what the check is for, the accounting information where the check is to be credited, and include a copy of the travel voucher. The check and accompanying documentation are to be sent to: U.S. Geological Survey, MS-271, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, VA, 20192, Attn: Receivables Management Section.

C. In cases where a Federal traveler is accompanied by a companion, who is not on official business and one lodging room is acquired, the traveler is only allowed to claim the

reimbursement rate for a room at the single occupancy rate. For more information on choosing to drive a POV vs. flying for personal reasons, see Chapter 10, Transportation.

## **CHAPTER 15. TRAVEL FUNDS FROM A NON-FEDERAL SOURCE**

1. The USGS may accept funds or in-kind payments from non-Federal sources to pay travel costs for an employee's official travel.
2. It is not permissible for an employee to personally accept reimbursement from an outside source. Employees may never accept cash, checks made payable to the employee, or a bank wire from a non-Federal source to pay for travel expenses. Employees may, however, accept "in-kind" items such as airline tickets, meals, or hotel accommodations purchased or paid for by the non-Federal entity, subject to Ethics Office approval.
3. Approval for accepting travel expenses is subject to conflict of interest considerations, so employees must obtain approval from the Ethics Office prior to accepting travel expenses from non-Federal entities. Acceptance of travel expenses from non-Federal sources will not be approved if it would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of all the relevant facts to question the integrity of the programs or operations of the Department or its offices or bureaus.
4. If the reason for the travel is to attend a meeting, workshop, conference, or similar event, the authority of 31 U.S. Code § 1353 <<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/31/1353> > may be used to accept the travel expenses. When using this authority, a DI-2000 is required. A DI-2000 for any amount of reimbursement must be submitted to the Ethics Office for review before accepting an offer of travel expenses. The regulations that implement 31 U.S. Code § 1353 are at 41 C.F.R. Chapter 304 <<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2004-title41-vol4/xml/CFR-2004-title41-vol4-subtitleF-chap304.xml>>.
5. If the reason for the travel is to conduct research or field work, contact your Administrative Officer for guidance on whether a Form 9-3089 (Contribution Information and Approval) should be filed or if a formal written agreement is required. Agreements must be vetted through the Office of Policy and Analysis before finalizing.
6. The Cooperative Research Units have unique authority that allows travel costs to be funded by a cooperating State university (as authorized by Cooperative Units Act of 1960, Public Law 86-686 as amended by the Fish and Wildlife Improvement Act of 1978, Public Law 95-616) and may be paid directly to travel vendors and/or reimbursed via university voucher directly to scientific staff assigned to a Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit. Reimbursement must follow State university cooperator policies but cannot exceed Federal CONUS or OCONUS rates.

## **CHAPTER 16. INTER/INTRA-GOVERNMENTAL TRAVEL**

1. An Inter/Intra-Agency Travel Agreement must be completed prior to initiating any travel that will be reimbursed by another Departmental bureau or Federal agency. FOP Chapter 4.11 provides instructions on how to complete the form. A Government employee must never be

treated as an invitational traveler unless they are traveling for an interview with the other bureau/agency.

2. If another Federal agency is paying for the travel of a USGS employee or if the USGS is paying for the travel of an employee from another Federal agency, the voucher shall be prepared by the employee's home agency, and the funds shall be transferred to/from the USGS via the Intra-governmental Payment and Collection system so that the Government-issued charge card may still be used. (See [FOP Chapter 4.11](#) for more information on this process.)

3. If the travel expenses are provided in-kind (e.g., the other agency purchases the airline ticket directly up front), the traveler adjusts his/her voucher accordingly. Anything purchased as "in-kind" will not be included on the voucher but must be annotated in the comments field on the voucher or by attaching an explanation that the amount was paid in-kind by the other Federal agency.

4. Employees may not accept cash for reimbursement of travel expenses from another Federal source. If an employee is requesting to travel for another Federal agency in his/her personal, unofficial, non-duty capacity, he/she must obtain Ethics Office approval via a form 9-1510 before travel takes place.

5. Below are instructions for USGS offices to follow when a USGS employee is traveling for another Federal agency:

A. The USGS enters into a travel agreement with the other Federal agency to document the estimated travel expense and the accounting information to be used for billing purposes. (See FOP Chapter 4.11 for instructions at: <http://internal.usgs.gov/ops/ofs/fop-handbook/FOPindex.html>).

B. The USGS office creates a travel authorization in CGE and books the trip for the USGS employee. The airfare can be provided "in kind" by the other Federal agency (they pay for it directly up front) or the traveler can book it in CGE through the USGS.

C. Once the trip is over, the traveler will file their voucher through CGE (through the USGS) against the previously created travel authorization.

D. Once the charges from the voucher appear in the work breakdown structure account, the USGS office will issue a bill to the other Federal agency for reimbursement of the agreed-upon costs.

(1) See the following for instructions on how to issue a bill: OP Chapter 17.2: <http://internal.usgs.gov/ops/ofs/fophandbook/17.2%20Refunds%20to%20Customers%20113011.docx>.

(2) FOP Chapter 17.2, Attachment B, at: <http://internal.usgs.gov/ops/ofs/fop-handbook/FOPindex.html>.

## **CHAPTER 17. TRAVEL FOR SPOUSE**

1. The USGS may pay travel and miscellaneous expenses for recipients and spouses to participate in awards ceremonies. Travel and miscellaneous expenses may also be paid to a surviving spouse to receive an award on behalf of a deceased recipient. (See <http://www.gao.gov/assets/210/202437.pdf>.)

## **CHAPTER 18. EXTENDED TDY (ASSIGNMENTS LASTING MORE THAN ONE YEAR)**

1. If a traveler is on an extended assignment in one TDY location for 1 year or longer, any reimbursement provided to the traveler is considered income and is taxable to the traveler regardless of the duties that the employee performs. The USGS highly discourages TDY travel assignments that will last a year or more. The office should consider a temporary or permanent change of station in these instances. Please contact OAFM, Travel Management Section policy group ([gs\\_travel\\_policy@usgs.gov](mailto:gs_travel_policy@usgs.gov)) if there is a need for this type of travel.

## **CHAPTER 19. EMERGENCY TRAVEL**

1. There are two types of emergency travel, and both should be coded as Special Agency Mission when entering authorizations and vouchers in CGE.

A. *Emergency Travel.* Emergency travel occurs when a traveler is in TDY status and becomes incapacitated by a serious or life-threatening illness or injury, death of the traveler, or a member of the traveler's immediate family dies or contracts a serious illness, or a disaster that directly impacts the traveler's home occurs or is reasonably expected to occur. (See GSA's [Chapter 303 – Payment of Expenses Connected with the Death of Certain Employees](#), and Chapter 3.2 in the [DOI TDY Regulations](#) for rules on this type of emergency travel.)

(1) Allowable expenses when illness or injury occurs to a traveler on official TDY travel:

(a) Per diem expenses (e.g., lodging and M&IE) at the TDY location where the illness or injury occurred. If an employee opts to stay at this location and suspend the official portion of the trip, the approving official may authorize per diem reimbursement up to 14 calendar days while the employee is on sick leave. Reimbursement for additional days may be authorized on a case-by-case basis when fully justified and documented. The official should complete a cost comparison of the per diem reimbursement versus return travel to the employee's residence, taking into consideration the employee's ability to travel.

(b) Transportation costs, change fees, and en route per diem of an employee traveling to an alternate location to receive medical treatment.

(c) Transportation costs, change fees, and en route per diem of an employee returning to the official duty station.

(d) Transportation costs of a family member or medical attendant traveling to or accompanying the employee from the TDY location. A competent medical authority must confirm that this course of

action is warranted. Pretravel approval is preferred, whenever possible; approving officials may grant posttravel approval on a case-by-case basis.

(e) Transportation costs of the employee traveling to or from medical facilities around the TDY location (e.g., taxi fare or fuel for a rental car). Emergency transportation is excluded.

(f) Dual lodging expenses if an employee travels to an alternate location for medical treatment. Approving officials may authorize dual lodging on a case-by-case basis for deviations in travel when travelers document that they were unable to adjust existing lodging reservations.

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

(a) Emergency transportation or medical care costs.

(b) Any transportation or per diem expenses that the employee incurs while receiving treatment at a medical facility.

(c) Other than en route per diem expenses when an employee opts to return to the official duty station.

(d) Per diem expenses for a family member or medical attendant to travel to or accompany the employee from the TDY location.

**B. Emergency Event.** Travel that takes place with less than 24 hours' notice for emergency response to: earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, hurricanes and other extreme storms, volcano, flood, debris flow, wildfire, and disease as well as manmade hazards such as the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. In case of an emergency event, USGS employees can utilize emergency procedures for contacting the TMC to make reservations. This process is for situations where travel is needed outside the regular business hours or when they have to leave that same business day and cannot wait for the approval process within CGE:

(1) Contact the TMC at 1-855-847-6398 and select option 5.

(2) Traveler provides TMC with the purpose of travel, supervisor or emergency coordinator name, email address, and phone number.

(3) The TMC will issue the ticket and instruct the traveler that their supervisor must reply back with approval by COB the next business day via email or fax.

(4) The travel arranger will complete the travel authorization in CGE as soon as possible but no later than the next business day.

**C.** In the event a group of employees are leaving the same location to an emergency event, the hazard program coordinator can complete the DOI Incident Travel Fax, Figure 19-1, and submit to the TMC to ensure that all travelers are included on the same flight. This form is a process

utilized by the Bureau of Land Management's fire program and is being piloted by other DOI bureaus.

D. When travel is performed in an emergency, without prior authorization, the authorization and voucher completed after such travel must contain a statement signed by the traveler, showing why advance authorization was not obtained and requesting retroactive approval. The request must be approved by the individual who normally authorizes travel for the employee.

## **CHAPTER 20. PAY AND OFFICIAL TIME WHILE ON TDY TRAVEL**

1. Whenever possible, supervisors should schedule officially approved travel within regularly scheduled work hours. If travel during regularly scheduled work hours is not possible, supervisors may authorize compensatory time off in accordance with the guidance issued by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Pay regulations fall under OPM, and information on pay and leave, including a factsheet on compensatory time off for travel, can be found on their Web site at:

<http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/pay-administration/factsheets/compensatory-time-off-for-travel/>

(SM Chapter 370.550.1 provides guidance on overtime pay.)

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION – USEFUL WEB SITES**

1. Travel Management Section Homepage - <http://internal.usgs.gov/ops/finance/travel.html>
2. USGS Charge Card SharePoint Site - <https://insight.usgs.gov/aei/offices/oa/oag/AOP/chargecardprogram.pdf>
3. Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Guide - <http://internal.usgs.gov/ops/finance/pcs.html>
4. International Business Unit on Foreign Travel - <http://international.usgs.gov/usgs/>
5. Sponsoring a Foreign Visitor; (See Chapter 26 #6) - <http://internal.usgs.gov/ops/ofs/fop-handbook/FOPindex.html>
6. DOI TDY Travel Policy - <http://internal.usgs.gov/ops/ofs/fop-handbook/26-2-doi-tdy-03-2014.pdf> -
7. DOI Finance - Travel General Information - <http://www.doi.gov/pfm/travel/index.cfm>
8. GSA – Board of Contract Appeals – Travel Related Decisions - <http://www.gsbca.gsa.gov/> -
9. Daily E-mail Release on Happenings in the Federal Government - <http://www.govexec.com/travel/>