



U.S. General Services Administration

Federal Travel and Ethics

GSA SmartPay® Training Forum

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The Big Picture

- The FTR is designed to allow agencies to efficiently accomplish their missions that require Government-paid travel.
- Systems won't get in the agency's way of authorizing travel because we assume agency leadership will exercise good judgement in when to authorize travel, and what is authorized.
- But travel decisions are always reviewed, audited, and reported on.

For all slides: check the speaker's notes for more info



Today's Agenda 1 of 2: Transportation

- Classes of Airline Accommodation
- Use Private and Government Aircraft
- City-Pairs
- Routing Travel
- Types of Rail Transportation
- Rental Cars, Government Cars, and TNCs
- Promotional Benefits
- Denied Boarding Compensation



Today's Agenda 2 of 2: Everything Else

- SmartPay® Travel Card
- Non-Federal Source Travel
- Conferences
- Actual Expenses
- Commercial Lodging
- Peer-to-Peer Lodging
- Travelers with Special Needs



Coach Class Air

- Coach class is the default
- Coach-class seating upgrade allowed subject to agency policy
- First class and business class airline accommodations can only be used in limited circumstances. In most of these circumstances, the FTR gives agencies discretion to not authorize other-than-coach class travel
- Premium Class Travel Reports



First Class Air Exceptions

- No coach class reasonably available within 24 hours
- Accommodate a disability or special needs
- Exceptional security requirements
- Required for agency mission
- Upgrade at personal expense



Business Class Air Exceptions 1 of 2

- Accommodate a disability or special need
- Exceptional security requirements
- Inadequate sanitation or health standards in coach class on a foreign carrier
- Regularly scheduled flights provide only other-than-coach class accommodations
- Non-Federal source pays costs
- 14-hour Rule



Business Class Air Exceptions 2 of 2

- Overall cost savings
- No coach class seats available in time to accomplish the mission
- Required for agency mission
- Upgrade at personal expense



Use of Private and Government Aircraft

- Charter aircraft are treated as Government aircraft
- An agency employee may use his or her privately-owned aircraft for official travel. The employee will be reimbursed on a mileage basis, up to the constructive cost (usually of travel by common carrier)
- Travel on Government aircraft (except on a space-available basis, to meet mission needs, and for required use travelers) must be approved by the White House
- Gifts of air travel may be an FTR 304 non-Federal source offer



City-Pair Program

- Required for Official Travel Unless:
 - Space not available to accomplish the mission
 - Contract schedule not consistent with agency policy
 - A non-contract carrier offers a cheaper fare
 - Rail used instead
 - Smoking flight
- Cannot be used for personal travel
- _CA vs. YCA



Routing Travel

- Employees must travel to their destination by the usually traveled route unless their agency authorizes or approves a different route as officially necessary
- Travel is presumed to start and end at the official station
- Reimbursement for interrupted/indirect travel will be limited to the cost of travel by a direct route or on an uninterrupted basis



Types of Rail Transportation

- Coach is the default again
- Other-than coach class can be authorized if an exception is met
- Extra-fare trains



Rental Cars

- Rental car has to be specifically authorized
- “Should consider” renting through the DTMO Car Rental Agreement
- Default is least expensive compact car, with exceptions
- No reimbursement for pre-paid refueling
- No reimbursement for CDW or theft insurance in CONUS
- OCONUS: CDW/theft insurance can be reimbursed if required by law/agency policy permits
- Personal accident insurance is always a personal expense



Government-Furnished Automobiles

- Only use for official purposes
- One month or more suspension, or termination, for misuse
- On official travel, “official purposes” includes driving to restaurants, drug stores, barber shops, places of worship, cleaning establishments, and similar places necessary for the sustenance, comfort, or health of the employee to foster the continued efficient performance of Government business
- Non-Gov’t passengers: check agency policy



TNCs

- Transportation network companies (TNCs) and innovative mobility technology companies are equivalent to taxis
- If a TNC offers different tiers of accommodation, the prudent traveler rule applies
- Check agency policy



Promotional Benefits

- Promotional benefits earned on official travel may be retained for personal use.
- Does not apply to promotional benefits for planning and/or scheduling an official conference.
- Applies to promotional benefits offered to the general public, and with no additional cost to the Government.



Denied Boarding Compensation

- Gov't traveler voluntarily vacates an overbooked flight: employee can keep the compensation. Employee bears costs of extra travel expenses, and may have to take leave for delay.
- Gov't traveler is involuntarily bumped from an overbooked flight: compensation must be in the form of a check payable to the Treasurer of the United States.



SmartPay[®] Travel Card

- Must use for all expenses directly related to official travel, unless impractical, imposes unreasonable costs, or employee is exempt.
- Exemptions for employees with pending applications, when card would adversely affect mission or safety, or employee not eligible.
- Agencies set specifics of use and penalties for misuse.
- Agency can also make its own exemptions.



Non-Federal Source Travel

- Authorized by 31 U.S.C. sec. 1353 and implemented in FTR Chapter 304
- Acceptance is by the agency, not the employee personally.
- After the fact authorization (FTR 304-3.13) is only for limited circumstances, when neither the agency or employee knew about the offer before travel began.



Conferences

- When lodging expenses are above per diem levels, the agency may authorize actual expense reimbursement
- Agency may provide meals and/or light refreshments at a conference under three-part test



Actual Expense Reimbursement

- Capped at 300% of applicable total per diem rate (lodging and M&IE combined)
- Agencies can cap at a lower level (e.g. of 300% of lodging only)
- Some agencies have unique authority to go above the 300% cap



Commercial Lodging

- FTR: Employees' first consideration should be given to using FedRooms[®], but there is no requirement to use a FedRooms[®] property
- Your agency may have a mandatory preferred lodging program
- Non-optional fees (resort fees, urban destination fees, etc.) are reimbursable as a miscellaneous expense



Peer-to-Peer Lodging

- Considered non-conventional lodging (i.e. can be used when conventional lodging is in short supply)
- Also requires exception from use of ETS/TMC
- But things may change...



Travelers with Special Needs

- Other-than coach class or coach-plus air accommodation
- Specialized transportation
- Travel for a family member or other attendant
- Services of an attendant
- Baggage handling costs
- Wheelchair rental or transportation

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