



Washington, DC 20201

MEMORANDUM

To: OPDIV and STAFFDIV Heads
Executive Officers

From: E.J. Holland, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for Administration (ASA)

Subject: 2012 HHS Travel Manual

[Handwritten signature and date: 1/20/12]

This memorandum announces the official release of the 2012 HHS Travel Manual, which is effective January 20, 2012. All OPDIV and STAFFDIV Heads will ensure their responsibilities under the Travel Manual are satisfied.

In support of the Executive Order on Promoting Efficient Spending ([EO 13589](#)), the Department has developed the attached revised policy on the use of appropriated funds for federal travel costs. This revised policy promotes the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) commitment to act in a fiscally responsible manner by minimizing our administrative costs to perform our mission critical functions in the most efficient and cost effective way.

The 2012 HHS Travel Manual includes the following updates from the previous Travel Manual:

- A new chapter for travel during a Disaster Response
- A new chapter for Relocation entitlements;
- An updated Travel Charge Card policy in chapter 10;
- Clarification on the responsibilities for all roles in the travel process
- Revised policy on acceptance of payments from a non-Federal Source

A workgroup comprised of representatives from each OPDIV did a comprehensive review of the 2008 HHS Travel Manual to revise, clarify, and update all policies in the Travel Manual. The 12 chapters are consistent with all current provisions of the General Services Administration's Federal Travel Regulations, which govern all civilian employees' official business travel.

The 2012 HHS Travel Manual is attached in electronic format and will be posted on the HHS Travel Office website at www.hhs.gov/travel/policies.

If you have any questions regarding implementation, please contact David Flynn, Director of Travel and Transportation Services, at 301-443-9552 or david.flynn@psc.hhs.gov.

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
(HHS)**

Assistant Secretary for Administration

**Program Support Center
Administrative Operations Service
Division of Transportation Services
HHS Travel Office**

HHS Travel Policy Manual

January 2012

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1. Plan of the Manual

1.1 General Information

1.1.1 Purpose

This section describes the scope, organization, development, maintenance, and distribution of the HHS Travel Policy Manual, hereafter referred to as the HHS Travel Manual.

1.1.2 Scope and Organization

The HHS Travel Manual is intended to provide users with a single authoritative reference to Department financial management policies and procedures regarding travel and transportation expenses. This includes, but is not limited to: Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel; Conference Planning; Relocation Allowances; Interagency Personnel Agreements (IPAs); Travel and Transportation Expenses connected with the death of certain employees; and Acceptance of Payments of Travel Expenses from Non-Federal Sources (HHS-348 Sponsored Travel). The Manual is intended for use by HHS Employees, invitational travelers, consultants, and others authorized to travel on behalf of the Department. (See Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) [301-1.2](#) for definition of “employee.” The FTR is located in Volume 41 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR); it can also be accessed on the General Services Administration website at www.gsa.gov.)

1.1.3 Development and Maintenance

1.1.3.1 Authority

The material published in the HHS Travel Manual is developed and maintained under the authority of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration (ASA), Program Support Center (PSC), Administrative Operations Service (AOS), Division of Transportation Services (DTS), HHS Travel Office. The Office of Global Affairs (OGA) and the Office of the Secretary (OS), provide guidance on the policies contained in Chapter 6, International Travel.

1.1.3.2 Supplemental Guidance

When supplemental policy or guidance is issued by the Department, each Operating Division (OPDIV) and Staff Division (STAFFDIV) must ensure that the information is distributed to the appropriate staff. Supplemental guidance will be published as Bulletins on the HHS Travel Office website at www.hhs.gov/travel/policies. These bulletins clarify provisions and the requirements outlined in the HHS Travel Manual and serve as timely updates to the manual. Always check the HHS Travel Office website for the most up-to-date information related to HHS Travel Policy.

Furthermore, every OPDIV/STAFFDIV must adhere to Departmental policy and guidance, but may choose to implement it in a more restrictive manner within its own OPDIV/STAFFDIV. Individual OPDIV/STAFFDIV travel policies can also be found on the HHS Travel Office website.

1.1.3.3 Effective Dates

The date of issue appears at the top of each page of the HHS Travel Manual. The date of issue is the effective date of the material on the page, unless a different effective date is specified in the text. The 2012 HHS Travel Manual is effective January 20, 2012.

1.1.3.4 Distribution

This Travel Manual is intended primarily for the use of HHS employees who travel, and for offices that provide travel services, authorize or approve travel, perform related functions, and/or examine or audit travel expenses. An electronic version of the Travel Manual is posted on the HHS Travel Office website at www.hhs.gov/travel/policies.

1.2 HHS Travel Policies

The purpose of this section is to define the relationship between the Government-wide FTR and the HHS Travel Manual, and to provide a readily accessible copy of the most recent HHS delegations of travel authority.

1.2.1 Federal Travel Regulation (FTR)

HHS travel policies for employees (not including commissioned officers of the Commissioned Corps, U.S. Public Health Service (Corps), unless specified otherwise at the beginning of the section) are governed by the FTR, which is issued by the GSA. The FTR implements statutory requirements and Executive Branch policies for travel performed or conducted by Federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel at Government expense. The FTR is located on GSA's website: <http://www.gsa.gov/ftr>.

The Federal Travel Regulation consists of:

- Chapter 300: General, Introduction and Agency Reporting Requirements
- Chapter 301: Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel Allowances
- Chapter 302: Relocation Allowances
- Chapter 303: Payment of Expenses Connected with the Death of Certain Employees
- Chapter 304: Payment of Travel Expenses from a Non-Federal Source

1.2.2 Commissioned Corps Policies and Per Diem

Travel policies and per diem rates for Commissioned Corps officers of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) are governed by the Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR). The Per Diem, Travel, and Transportation Allowance Committee (PDTATAC) issues the JFTR. The HHS Assistant Secretary for Health is the designated USPHS Principal to serve on the PDTATAC, which is chartered under the Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO). The JFTR is available at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/travelreg.cfm>.

The Office of Assistant Secretary of Health (OASH) or its designee is responsible for developing and issuing travel and relocation policy for Corps officers, to supplement the Department of Defense's JFTR. Corps policies are published in separate documents that are not part of the HHS Travel Manual. Travel guidance for commissioned officers of the Public Health Service is currently found at <http://dcp.psc.gov/Travel/contents.aspx>.

However, certain sections of this Travel Manual, by their terms, govern travel by Commissioned Corps officers as well as by civil service employees. Any operational or travel concerns of the Corps should be directed to the Office of the Surgeon General.

1.2.3 Collective Bargaining Agreements

Employees of HHS that are covered under a Collective Bargaining Agreement may have certain entitlements covered under their Agreement. Employees should check with their Union Representative to determine if they are covered under a particular Collective Bargaining Agreement. If an employee is covered, his/her Union Representative can provide information on what entitlements are included under the agreement.

1.2.4 HHS Travel Manual

The HHS Travel Manual, issued by the Office of the ASA, PSC, AOS, DTS, HHS Travel Office, is the official documentation of Department-wide supplemental policy and guidance to the FTR for HHS civilian employees.

Many provisions of the FTR require agencies to develop specific internal policies, procedures, and systems to administer the regulations. The HHS Travel Manual provides supplemental policy and guidance on key FTR provisions, where a Department-wide, standard supplemental policy is deemed appropriate. OPDIV/STAFFDIVs may then augment the FTR and/or Department level policy with their own supplemental policy guidance, which must be consistent with the FTR and the Department's policy requirements. Note that OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs may choose to implement certain policies in a more restrictive manner.

The HHS Travel Manual focuses on the financial management policies pertaining to travel, as governed by the FTR. The FTR and the HHS Travel Manual do not address travel by contractors or grantees.

In addition, Personnel policies, including when employees are in travel status, are outside the scope of the HHS Travel Manual and the policy purview of the HHS Travel Office. HHS managers and employees should seek the guidance of their servicing personnel office for policies pertaining to pay, compensatory time off for travel (CTT), other compensatory time, personnel benefits, and requirements for overseas assignments (such as cost of living allowances and hardship pay differentials), administering leave, and other personnel actions involving employees in travel status.

1.2.5 HHS Delegations of Authority for Administering Travel

The ASA, with authority from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, has established the Delegations of Authority for Travel, Administration Resolution of Cash Fund Irregularities, and Approval of Doubtful Claims of \$25 or less. The delegation includes the authority to authorize and approve the following for OPDIV/STAFFDIV personnel located at headquarters and in the regions:

- Domestic Travel (D)
- Foreign Travel (F)
- Permanent Change of Station (CS)
- Advance of Funds (AF)
- Actual and Necessary Travel and Subsistence Expense (AN)
- Travel Expenses Relating to Missing Persons (MP)

-
- Travel Expenses Relating to Deceased and Injured Employees and Deceased Dependents (DI)
 - The Use of Non-contract Air Carrier (CA)
 - The Use of Cash to Purchase Domestic Passenger Transportation in Excess of \$100
 - Emergency Domestic Transportation (DT)
 - Non-emergency Domestic Transportation (NDT)
 - Acceptance of Payment in Cash or In-Kind to Cover Travel Expenses (CK)
 - Approval of Doubtful Claims of \$25 or less (DC)
 - Approval of Premium Class Travel (PC)

Authorities designated as D, F, CS, AF, AN, MP, DI, CA, DT, NDT, CK, DC, and PC may be redelegated to the level deemed appropriate. Due to the high visibility of the authorities designated as AN, NDT, CK, and PC, it is anticipated that there will be continued Congressional and public inquiries of these types of authorizations. Therefore, re-delegations should be at a level that will ensure adequate review of the need for these requests.

As a matter of Departmental policy, no official shall authorize or approve his or her own travel. Another designated official from within the organization must be identified for this purpose and ASA must be notified of this designation. In the event that someone other than the designated official approves this travel, ASA must be notified and provided adequate justification as to why the travel documents were not signed by the designated official. Furthermore, the authorities designated as CK and PC, both have external reporting requirements associated with them. ASA retains the Departmental reporting responsibility for these. Additional information regarding these reports may be found in Sections 2.2 and 2.3.

1.2.6 Responsibilities of OPDIV/STAFFDIV Heads

OPDIV/STAFFDIV Heads are responsible for ensuring that employees comply with the FTR, the HHS Travel Manual and OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy. This responsibility may be delegated to the Senior Travel Official (STO). However, this does not relieve them of the ultimate responsibility for enforcing Departmental Travel Policy.

1.2.7 Designation and Responsibilities of the Senior Travel Official

Each OPDIV/STAFFDIV Head shall designate a STO, who is a full-time Federal employee at the Senior Executive Service (SES) level or equivalent and who, for purposes of serving as STO, reports directly to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV Head. The designation of the STO must be reported to the ASA. The STO responsibilities include but are not necessarily limited to:

1. Reporting directly to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV Head on all matters related to travel policy, programs, and practices;
2. Serving as the principal liaison between the HHS Travel Office, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV, and the subordinate components within the OPDIV/STAFFDIV on all matters regarding travel policy, programs, and practices;

3. Communicating travel related policy and operational information to all travelers and approving officials in the OPDIV/STAFFDIV;
4. Reviewing and approving where appropriate all Other than Coach Class (First, Business, and Premium) Accommodations traveler requests;
5. Conducting appropriate oversight within the OPDIV/STAFFDIV of all travel related matters and adherence to travel policy; and
6. Timely filing and certifying the accuracy of reports of travel activity required by law, regulation, or Departmental policy.

In fulfilling this role, the STO will be required to attend information sharing meetings and sessions to discuss travel policy, its application, and matters related to travel programs and practices.

In addition, per the re-delegation of authority by the ASA on September 17, 2009, the responsibilities of the STO include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

1. The responsibility to consider and, only if appropriate, approve travel expenses greater than \$10,000 and up to \$25,000 for one trip¹ per traveler. Travel expenses greater than \$25,000, after being considered appropriate by the STO, must be submitted to the ASA for approval. The approval requests shall be sent to the HHS Travel Office for review 30 days prior to the travel date of departure.

Note: Even though a traveler has an approved Travel Authorization in the E-Gov Travel System (ETS²), the traveler must not depart on his/her trip until he/she receives written approval from the ASA. Traveling without approval from the ASA will prevent the reimbursement of expenses incurred and subject the traveler to disciplinary action.

2. The authority to approve their respective OPDIV/STAFFDIV Head's non-emergency travel.

Note: The authorities designated above may only be re-delegated to an official who directly reports to the STO.

3. The responsibility to consider and, only if appropriate, approve the use of Other than Coach-Class travel only when the use of Other than Coach Class travel is consistent with Departmental policy and the FTR. When a medical condition is used as a justification for the use of Other than Coach Class travel, no such approval shall be given until such time as the traveler files with the STO a certification from an appropriate medical professional that the

¹ This is for Temporary Duty Travel.

² The ETS (or ETS1) in effect at the time the manual was updated in 2011, is GovTrip.com. GovTrip.com will be used until the current contract expires on November 11, 2013 or until HHS and/or an OPDIV/STAFFDIV transitions to the ETS2 system.

traveler's medical condition warrants the use of Other than Coach Class travel. The medical professional must be someone other than the traveler, an employee subordinate to the traveler, or the STO. Please refer to Section 4.1.5 and Section 5.2.5 of this Travel Manual.

4. The responsibility to consider and, only if appropriate, approve up to 20 travelers from the OPDIV/STAFFDIV to attend the same conference or event. Approval for an amount of travelers greater than 50 to attend the same conference or event, after being considered appropriate by the STO, must be submitted to the HHS Travel Office per Section 1.4.2, Attendance at Conferences.

The Director of the HHS Travel Office, or other official to whom such authority is appropriately delegated, must approve all non-emergency travel for senior Departmental officials. The approval requests shall be sent to the HHS Travel Office for review 30 days prior to the travel departure date.

The designation of the STO does not relieve the OPDIV/STAFFDIV Head of the ultimate responsibility to ensure that employees comply with all elements of the Department's travel policy, and that the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's travel program and practices are designed and followed to achieve the requirements of the Department's travel policy.

1.2.7.1 Responsibilities of the Delegated Approving Official

As management officials are empowered with these delegated authorities, there must also be corresponding accountability. The delegated Approving Officials will be required to maintain necessary records to respond to any internal audits or external inquiries from the Congress and control agencies regarding these approvals. These officials should also be required to timely report any incident that could potentially cause criticism or have a negative impact on this Department or the Secretary.

1.2.8 Responsibilities of the Authorizing Official/Approving Official (AO) (Approver)

Per FTR [301-71.107](#), the Authorizing Official/Approving Official (Approver) must consider the following factors when approving travel:

1. The need for travel;
2. The use of travel substitutes such as mail, teleconferencing, etc.;
3. The most cost effective routing and means of accomplishing travel; and
4. The employee's travel plans, including plans to take leave in conjunction with travel.

The Civilian Board of Contract Appeals (CBCA) has established that an employee subject to the FTR, including the AO, is responsible for knowledge of those regulations as referenced by the CBCA in Jeffrey L. Troy, GSBCA 16072-RELO, 03-2 BCA & 32,329. An AO's lack

of knowledge of the applicable regulations will not justify reimbursement for expenses that are not authorized by statute, regulation, the HHS Travel Manual, and OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy.

In addition, the AO must review and sign the travel authorization and voucher to confirm the authorized travel and submitted expenses. Per FTR [301-71.201](#), the AO must have full knowledge of the employee's activities related to the travel. The AO must also ensure:

1. The claim is properly prepared in accordance with the pertinent regulations and OPDIV/STAFFDIV procedures;
2. A copy of the authorization for travel is provided;
3. The types of expenses claimed are authorized and allowable expenses per the FTR, the HHS Travel Manual, and OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy;
4. The amounts claimed are accurate; and
5. The required receipts, statements, justifications, etc. are attached to the travel claim, or the travel claim includes scanned electronic images of such documents. Justifications in the ETS (Pre-Audits) should contain detailed information, which allows the AO to substantiate the request.

1.2.9 Responsibilities of the Funds Certifier/Certifier

The Funds Certifier is responsible for ensuring that funds are available for the estimated cost of the Travel Authorization, and that the appropriate obligations are made in the OPDIV/STAFFDIV financial system of record. They may also ensure that the funds are still available when the corresponding voucher is submitted, and that the funds are appropriately de-obligated and liquidated depending on the specific transaction and per OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy.

In addition to verifying that funds are available, the Certifying Officer is also required to verify that commitments and obligations are valid, in accordance with laws and regulations, and have all required documents to support them.

Certifying Officers can be held personally accountable and individually responsible for verifying that the Federal Government payments within their jurisdiction are legal, proper, and correct. If any payment certified is found to be illegal, improper, or incorrect, the Certifying Officer may be held individually responsible for reimbursing the Federal Government for that payment.

Title 31 of the United States Code (U.S.C.) Section 3528 states that Certifying Officers are:

1. Responsible for any errors in certified payments;
2. Responsible for making sure that the facts presented in certified documents for payment are complete and accurate;

3. Responsible for illegal, improper or incorrect payments made by the Federal Government because they have made false, inaccurate or misleading certifications; and
4. Responsible for any payments made that are prohibited by law and that do not represent legal obligations under the appropriations or funds involved.

However, the Code also states that Certifying Officers are not required to make good on payments they certified if:

1. They based their certifications on official records;
2. They exercised due diligence in performing their duties; and/or
3. They had no personal knowledge of any illegal, improper, or incorrect payments and could not be expected to uncover them in the reasonable performance of their legal duties.

1.2.10 Responsibilities of the Traveler

HHS Travelers have a number of responsibilities in connection with official government travel. These responsibilities are no less important than their responsibilities for carrying out their other job assignments. Travelers need to be aware of all the rules and regulations, including those contained in the FTR and the HHS Travel Manual, as well as particular OPDIV/STAFFDIV policies, which govern official travel and how they pertain to the individual traveler.

The CBCA has established that an employee subject to the FTR is responsible for knowledge of those regulations as referenced by the CBCA in Jeffrey L. Troy, GSBICA 16072-RELO, 03-2 BCA & 32.329. A traveler's lack of knowledge of the applicable regulations, therefore, will not justify reimbursement for expenses that are not authorized by statute, regulation, or per the HHS Travel Manual and OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy.

The traveler also needs to do the following:

1. Prepare, or have the travel preparer create, a travel authorization in the ETS prior to departing on travel.
2. Make sure all necessary travel expenses are properly pre-approved on the travel authorization. Justifications in the ETS (Pre-Audits) should contain detailed information, which allows the AO to substantiate the request.
3. Use the designated Travel Management Center (TMC)³ to make ALL travel reservations (air, rail, lodging (hotel), and rental car, etc.). Make sure to review the travel itinerary or invoice for accuracy and receive the ticketed itinerary or invoice

³ The TMC in effect at the time the manual was updated in 2011 is Omega World Travel. Omega World Travel will be used until the current contract expires or until HHS and/or an OPDIV/STAFFDIV transitions to a new TMC.

from the TMC at least 2 days prior to departure. If the traveler does not receive a ticketed itinerary, then he/she does not have a ticket to travel.

4. Use Contract City Pair fares, unless one of the exceptions for using non-contract carriers is met.
5. Use the appropriate per diem rate based on the TDY location (e.g., where the meeting is being held).
6. Use the Government Contractor-Issued Travel Charge Card for all official expenses while on TDY, including obtaining a cash travel advance, unless an exemption from use of the travel charge card has been granted or the traveler is an infrequent traveler.
7. Obtain all proper receipts and submit them with the travel voucher. Receipts are required for all lodging, air, rail transportation, phone calls, laundry, rental vehicle, regardless of amount and any single item that exceeds \$75. Original receipts must be kept by the traveler for two (2) years.
8. Submit a voucher claims promptly within five (5) working days from completion of travel, and be sure to sign the travel voucher.
9. Incur all necessary official travel expenses in a prudent (fiscally responsible) manner.

1.3 Travel Planning

This section emphasizes the need to plan travel assignments. The travel of HHS employees can be effectively applied to program goals if it is planned, coordinated, and managed. This section also references and supplements guidance in the FTR related to planning for conferences involving TDY travel.

1.3.1 Travel Planning General Policy

HHS AOs, in accordance with the FTR and HHS travel policy, will limit the authorization and payment of travel related expenses to only those that are necessary to accomplish the HHS mission in the most economical and effective manner. Official business travel requires proper authorization. The terms “travel authorization” and “travel order” are used interchangeably.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part [301-71](#): Agency Accountability Requirements, Subpart B, Travel Authorization

AOs should take the following actions to both contain travel costs and to accommodate the travel needs of the employee when planning for official travel:

1. Conduct business via telephone, teleconference, telepresence, or videoconference in lieu of the more costly travel alternatives, when possible.
2. Use Government-owned or Government-provided meeting facilities, when available.
3. Identify opportunities to reduce costs in selecting a particular conference location and facility (e.g., through the availability of lower rates during the off-season at a site with seasonal rates).
4. Notify the traveler far enough in advance to allow time for necessary travel arrangements. In turn, the traveler must notify the travel planner in the most expeditious manner of the anticipated itinerary and corresponding requirements.
5. Require that travel in Government-owned, commercially rented and/or privately-owned automobiles be used when advantageous to the Government.
6. Obtain the required prior authorization for a rental car, for TDY and local travel. (See Chapter 4, Passenger Travel and Allowances.)
7. Require the use of shuttle bus and/or mass transit service to the maximum extent possible.
8. Review travel itineraries in order to:
 - a. Combine functions that can be carried out by one employee or by fewer

- employees than originally scheduled;
 - b. Combine multiple assignments in one trip to a certain geographical area; and
 - c. Coordinate the schedules for trips of several employees so that they can use one rental vehicle rather than several.
9. Hold meetings at reasonably central locations to minimize travel costs.
 10. Hold meetings in facilities that will accommodate employees with special needs.
 11. Hold meetings in smoke-free facilities.

1.3.2 Conference Planning Involving Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel

OPDIV/STAFFDIVs that are responsible for planning and arranging conferences involving temporary duty travel of Federal employees will follow FTR requirements to ensure that costs are minimized and the use of Government-owned or Government-provided conference facilities is maximized. Agencies should make all appropriate efforts to conduct business and host or sponsor conferences in space controlled by the Federal Government, wherever practicable and cost-effective. They will identify opportunities to reduce costs in selecting the conference location and facility, and ensure that travel planners do not retain for personal use promotional benefits or materials received from a travel service provider for booking the conference. A minimum of three sites will be considered for conference planning.

In accordance with the FTR [301-74.19](#), for each Government-sponsored conference, funded in whole or in part for 30 or more attendees, OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs will maintain written documentation of the cost of each alternative conference site and the selection rationale. This documentation must be maintained and be made available for inspection by the Office of Inspector General or other interested parties for six (6) years and three (3) months.

Additional information regarding conference attendance can be found in Section 1.4 of the Travel Manual.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part [301-74](#), Conference Planning

1.3.2.1 Internal Controls Over Planning for Conferences Involving Employee Travel

Heads of OPDIV/STAFFDIVs are responsible for establishing appropriate management controls over the conference planning process to ensure compliance with FTR requirements and the supplemental HHS policies contained in this Travel Manual.

1.3.2.2 Conference Cost Consideration

When planning a conference the OPDIV/STAFFDIV should consider all direct and indirect costs that will be paid by the Government, including but not limited to:

1. Authorized travel and per diem expenses;
2. Hire of rooms for official business;
3. Audiovisual and other equipment usage;
4. Connectivity (phone and computer);
5. Light refreshments;
6. Registration fees; and
7. Employee's time at the conference and travel time.

When trying to determine which conference expenditures result in the greatest cost to the Government, a cost comparison should be done and the documentation of the cost comparisons and selection rationale should be maintained. In addition, alternatives to conferences such as video conferencing should be considered. When making the final site selection, strict fiscal responsibility should be exercised to minimize costs to the Government.

1.3.2.3 Conference Lodging Allowance (CLA)

When planning a conference, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV is expected to obtain lodging within the established portion of the per diem rate for the chosen locality. If lodging within that rate is not available, the established portion of the per diem rate for the chosen locality may be exceeded by 25 percent (rounded to the next whole dollar).

The CLA is allowed at the conference hotel/facility only. A CLA does not include an increase to the Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) portion of the per diem allowance. The CLA applies to conferences held in the continental U.S., non-foreign, and foreign areas. The authority to determine and approve the appropriate conference lodging allowance is outlined in the [FTR 301-74](#).

1.3.2.4 Use of FEMA-Approved Accommodations for Conferences

When an OPDIV/STAFFDIV sponsors or funds a conference or event, in its entirety or in part, it must be held at a place in a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-approved facility in accordance with 15 U.S.C. 2225a. FEMA publishes a list of hotels/motels that meet fire and life requirements of the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990. Federally funded meetings and conferences must not be held in properties that do not comply with this law, unless a written waiver is granted for a particular event based upon a public interest need. The following guidance applies to the use of FEMA-approved accommodations:

1. Heads of OPDIV/STAFFDIVs or their delegated officials are responsible for making a determination on an individual-case basis that a waiver of the requirement to use FEMA-approved

accommodations for a particular conference is necessary and in the public interest. Such a waiver must be in writing.

2. Each OPDIV/STAFFDIV that provides Federal funds through contracts or grants to non-Federal entities is responsible for notifying awardees of this requirement.

1.3.2.5 Selection of Conference Sites

Whenever possible, HHS strongly encourages individuals responsible for planning meetings and conferences to make every attempt to schedule these events in communities that have adopted a comprehensive smoke-free policy. This smoke-free policy shall not be used in a manner inconsistent with the Competition in Contracting Act of 1984, Public Law 98-369, or any applicable regulation. A list of smoke-free communities can be found at <http://smokefreemeetings.cancer.gov>. Agencies should make all appropriate efforts to conduct business and host or sponsor conferences in space controlled by the Federal Government, wherever practicable and cost-effective.

When the Majority of Participants are Local

When the majority of the meeting participants are from the same metropolitan area, the meeting location should be held within the metropolitan area in order to minimize the cost of per diem and transportation. Meetings may be held outside the metropolitan area under the following circumstances:

1. When another location provides needed facilities or equipment not readily available (or available only at a high cost) in the immediate area.
2. When it can be established that isolation of the participants from the immediate area is necessary for accomplishment of the meeting's purposes.
3. When the purpose of the meeting is centered on a specific geographical location.

When the Majority of Participants are from Various Locations

When the attendees are from various locations, consideration should be given to a site, which is reasonably central to the majority of participants in order to equalize travel time. Meetings controlled by Regional and other field offices should always be held within that Region's or field office's boundaries. There are two exceptions to these rules:

1. Meetings to be attended by the Secretary or the Deputy Secretary may be held in Washington, even if this is not a central location for the majority of attendees; and

2. Where an exception has been granted by the OPDIV/STAFFDIV Head or their designee.

Additionally, consideration should be given to coordinating the timing of the HHS meeting to coordinate with already-scheduled professional meetings, seminars, or workshops, which the participants will be attending.

1.3.2.6 Meetings of Advisory Councils and Committees

Meetings of advisory councils and committees that involve travel are generally subject to the FTR requirements for conference planning. Meetings must be held at reasonable times and at places that are accessible to members of the public, including accommodations for persons covered by the Rehabilitation Act. Whenever feasible, meetings must be held in Government facilities or in places involving the least expense to the Department.

1.3.2.7 Appropriateness in Terms of Public Perception

It is not Department policy to automatically rule out any particular location as a meeting site. However, it is the responsibility of all who approve meeting sites and attendance at meetings to avoid the impression that Federal funds are being used inappropriately. Accordingly, meeting sponsors shall not hold meetings at resort or vacation destinations unless that area is the location best suited for the meeting in terms of program needs and cost factors.

Accountability and strict oversight requires each OPDIV/STAFFDIV to be able to answer the following questions regarding the approval of any conference or meeting:

1. Does this conference help further the Department's mission?
2. Could the information be shared through teleconference, video conference, telepresence, or Internet?
3. Is the location appropriate and justified?
4. Is the number of employees attending justified?
5. Does participation in the conference validate or endorse ideas or values harmful to American interests and culture?
6. Does the conference give a platform to ideas and panelists who undermine American interest?
7. Is this a wise use of tax dollars when we have a national debt?

1.3.2.8 Light Refreshments at an Official Conference

The provision of light refreshments is not a travel cost. It is a conference administrative cost (similar to reserving a conference room and equipment) and

needs to be authorized through standard procurement processes. As a result, it is HHS policy that an employee must not order or pay for light refreshments for a conference using the travel charge card. Furthermore, an employee may not submit a claim for reimbursement of personal expenses incurred to pay for light refreshments at a conference via a travel voucher.

This section of the HHS Travel Manual does not address when other legal authorities, such as the Government Employees Training Act (5 U.S.C. 4109-4110) and the Government Employees Incentive Awards Act (5 U.S.C. 4501-4506) authorize the provision of food at conferences, meetings, etc., regardless of the travel status of the employee.

HHS offices that are hosting official conferences (whether or not involving employee travel) should consult with their OPDIV/STAFFDIV Acquisition Officers for advice and assistance in procuring conference space, equipment, and/or food, as needed and appropriate, and when and how to charge registration fees for the cost of these items. Guidelines for procuring and paying for these items are outside the scope of the FTR and this Travel Manual.

Similarly, OPDIV/STAFFDIVs may wish to check with the ASA in accordance with HHS policy for guidance on any appropriations law questions they may have regarding the use of appropriated funds for the purchase of food to serve to Federal employees at meetings, conferences, etc.

Light Refreshment References

- HHS Policy on Purchase of Food with Appropriated Funds, dated June 12, 2007

1.4 Attendance at Conferences, Administrative Meetings, and Other Events

This section describes the procedures for authorizing attendance at conferences, administrative meetings, and other events. This section applies to all civilian employees and individuals representing the Department including the Commissioned Corps. These guidelines apply to trips that are to domestic, domestic non-foreign, and international locations.

A Conference is a prearranged scientific, medical, or professional meeting, convention, seminar, or symposium that:

1. Is usually held for consultation, education, or discussion of scientific, medical, human services, public health issues or other related events;
2. May include attendees who are not all HHS attendees;
3. Is usually not held at a space that is owned, leased, or shared by HHS; and
4. May involve attendee travel costs e.g., per diem entitlements.

The Government Accountability Office has stated that a formal conference “typically involves topical matters of interest to, and the participation of, multiple agencies and/or nongovernmental participants.” National Institutes of Health—Food at Government-Sponsored Conferences, B-300826 at page 2 (March 3, 2005). Indicia of a formal conference are registration, a published substantive agenda, and scheduled speakers or discussion panels. See B-300826 at page 6.

1.4.1 General Policy

In accordance with Department policy, the delegated AO should consider the following criteria in determining whether attendance at meetings is appropriate:

1. Attendance is for official purposes and is consistent with the policies and best interests of the Department.
2. Attendance is concerned with an authorized Department program or with an activity in which the Department has an interest, and it would be advantageous to the Government to have one or more Department representatives in attendance.
3. The number of representatives does not exceed:
 - a. The minimum necessary to serve the Department’s interest, and
 - b. The limits established within this Section.
4. Selection does not arbitrarily favor one sponsoring organization over another.

5. Expenses for attendance are fully justified and fully covered by any established monetary limitations.
6. Attendance meets the seven criteria set forth in Section 1.3.2.7.
7. HHS attendees who use Departmental purchase or travel charge cards inconsistent with any of the provisions of this policy or other Departmental travel policy will be subject to revocation of the purchase or travel charge card, and/or may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including removal from the Federal service. HHS employees should not use their travel charge card to charge conference registration fees. For additional policy related to the Government Travel charge card, see Section 10.2 Mandatory Use of Government Contractor-Issued Travel Charge Card.

1.4.2 Attendance at Conferences

The attendance of Federal employees at conferences will be scrutinized to ensure attendance is necessary and appropriate. The Department has limited the number of attendees to 20 per OPDIV/STAFFDIV, and to 50 for all of HHS for any single conference.

1.4.2.1 Compliance with the E-Gov Travel System Procedures⁴

Attendance Greater than 20 for a single OPDIV/STAFFDIV or Greater than 50 HHS Attendees

It is the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's Head or STO's responsibility to notify the HHS Travel Office when there is a conference that might exceed the default limits:

- 20 attendees for an OPDIV/STAFFDIV; or
- 50 total HHS attendees.

This notification can be included as part of the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's semi-annual conference projections submitted to the HHS Travel Office. The HHS Travel Office conducts a semi-annual conference data call requesting all conferences and projected attendance for a six-month period. These Conferences are then uploaded into the ETS.

For conferences projected to have greater than 20 OPDIV/STAFFDIV attendees or greater than 50 HHS total attendees, the STO or their designee, must provide a justification that can be entered in the "Justification Notes Field" in the ETS. Conference projections with 20 or fewer attendees per OPDIV/STAFFDIV or 50 or fewer HHS attendees do not require justification. OPDIV/STAFFDIV STOs or their designees will be able to enter additional conferences or update existing conferences in the ETS, as needed.

⁴ The ETS in effect at the time the manual was updated in 2011 is GovTrip.com. GovTrip.com will be used until the current contract expires on November 11, 2013 or until HHS and/or an OPDIV/STAFFDIV transitions to the ETS2 system.

Attendance greater than 500

Conference attendance of more than 500 HHS employees requires approval from the ASA.

Compliance

The HHS Travel Office will monitor conference attendance in the ETS and contact the appropriate OPDIV/STAFFDIV STO should subsequent justification be required if the limits exceed 20 for an OPDIV/STAFFDIV or 50 for all of HHS.

Traveler Responsibilities

When creating a Travel Authorization for Conference Attendance, all HHS Travelers and Travel Preparers must use the Trip Purpose of “Conference” and then select a conference from the list of available conferences in the ETS. Travelers and/or Travel Preparers must select the conference that the traveler will be attending and not select a different conference just to complete the travel authorization. If a specific conference is not available, they must contact their Travel Administrator to have the conference loaded into the ETS.

The conference must be loaded into the ETS before the Authorization can be approved. Travelers and Travel Preparers may not circumvent this policy by selecting a different Trip Purpose in the ETS in order to process a Travel Authorization. Failure to follow this policy may result in not being able to attend the conference, not being reimbursed for expenses related to event attendance, and may subject the traveler to additional disciplinary actions.

1.4.2.2 Approval to Exceed Conference Limitations

The ASA or other officials to whom such authority is appropriately delegated may waive the conference attendance limitation only for good cause shown. A timely request must be made by OPDIV/STAFFDIV Head or designee in accordance with Section 1.4.2.1 above. Conferences attendance of more than 500 HHS employees requires approval from the ASA.

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV Head and the STO should be directly involved in developing attendance plans for conferences to maximize the ability of HHS attendees to take advantage of early registration discounts.

The only HHS attendees who may attend an event as defined in this policy are those whose attendance and expenses related to their attendance are approved consistent with the HHS programs and practices that are subordinate to this policy. HHS attendees may not circumvent this policy by using purchase cards or travel charge cards for event attendance or expenses related to event attendance absent an express, written authorization from the OPDIV/STAFFDIV Head or their designee.

1.4.3 Attendance at Administrative Meetings and Other Events

Generally, the purpose of these events is to conduct programmatic or administrative business of the Department. As stated in the definition of “conference” (see Chapter 13, Glossary) an “administrative meeting” or “other event” gathering does not become a conference merely because speakers or presenters at the event are not HHS attendees.

An Administrative Meeting is a meeting held for purposes of consultation, education, or discussion of issues relating to the development, implementation, or management of the Department’s internal programs and operations. An administrative meeting:

1. May include attendees who are not all HHS attendees;
2. Is usually held at an HHS facility but may be held at another government facility, or private facility;
3. May involve costs when the traveler sustains per diem entitlements in association with the travel of any HHS attendee; and
4. Is not scientific in nature.

The GAO describes a meeting as a gathering that discusses “business matters internal to an agency or other topics that have little relevance outside of the agency.” B-300826 at page 6. Examples of these are daylong quarterly supervisors meetings discussing general/business management topics, suggestions, issues, and problems of the agency. Corps of Engineers—Use of Appropriated Funds to Pay for Meals, B-249795 (May 12, 1993). According to GAO, meetings that have these characteristics do not constitute formal conferences. See B-300826 at page 6.

Although the Department does not impose a prior review on the number of HHS attendees for administrative meetings or other events, the STO must insure that the purpose, location, perception, and number of HHS attendees for administrative meetings and other events are appropriate for the mission of the Department and budget considerations.

1.4.3.1 Administrative Meetings

An example of activities that may be considered “administrative meetings” under this policy are internal events dealing with agency-specific operations, such as management program or operational workshops/seminars related to the Department or OPDIV/STAFFDIV that may or may not involve costs associated with TDY travel.

1.4.3.2 Other Events

Examples of activities that may be considered as “other events” under this policy include:

1. Employee training, even if such training is taught or attended by other

than HHS attendees; or

2. Symposia presented by the Department that do not meet the criteria of a conference or administrative meeting as defined in Chapter 13.

1.4.3.3 Restrictions on Administrative Meetings and Other Events

The following restrictions apply to administrative meetings and other events that involve TDY travel, at which attendance by HHS attendees will, or may reasonably be expected to, exceed 50. For administrative meetings and other events that involve local travel, the Competition in Contracting Act of 1984, Public Law 98-369, or any applicable regulation must be taken into consideration. Check with your OPDIV/STAFFDIV procurement office regarding regulations related to procuring the services described below.

Prior Approval of Location and Number of HHS Attendees

No OPDIV/ STAFFDIV, or other component of the Department, may enter into any agreement for the purpose of planning, hosting, scheduling, arranging, or providing services for an administrative meeting or other event without the STO or their designee first determining, after careful consideration of the event's purpose and budget, that the proposed location and/or the number of HHS attendees of the administrative meeting or other event is considered appropriate, proper, and consistent with the highest standards of professionalism.

From a standpoint of both the location and the number of attendees, prior approval by the OPDIV / STAFFDIV STO is required, and considerations should include, but not be limited to:

1. Whether HHS attendees can effectively participate by teleconference or video conference or whether there are alternative means for achieving the objective of the event;
2. Whether HHS attendees could return from the event and train others on the substance that was discussed or taught, thereby reducing the number of HHS attendees;
3. Whether the proposed location satisfies the minimal requirements for the "administrative meeting" or "other event" in terms of access and logistics;
4. Whether the proposed location subjects the Department or its attendees to criticism;
5. Whether a cost comparison with other, potential locations supports having the event at the proposed location; and
6. Whether the proposed number of attendees represents the minimum

number necessary for achieving the objectives of the event.

1.4.4 Attendance at Local Non-Government-Sponsored Meetings

The Department prescribes the procedures for authorizing attendance at local non-governmental meetings sponsored by domestic non-governmental organizations and held in the United States or in areas under U.S. jurisdiction, not involving TDY travel. This section applies to all civilian employees and individuals representing the Department.

1.4.4.1 General Requirements

Form HHS-99, "Authorization to Attend Non-Government Sponsored Meeting," may be used to record authorizations to attend domestic meetings held by non-governmental organizations. Use of Form HHS-99 is based upon OPDIV/STAFFDIV Policy. Form HHS-99 may be used for:

1. Individual meetings when the attendance at one or more meetings is to be involved; and
2. When several different meetings are to be attended during a given period by the same individual or group of individuals, if attendees will not be in temporary duty travel status.

Authorization to attend a meeting should be requested on Form HHS-99 at least 15 days prior to the meeting.

The attendee should retain the approved HHS-99 as proof that they has been authorized to be absent from his/her regular post of duty for attending a meeting. The HHS-99 should be used to support any claim for reimbursement.

The form should contain an estimate of all expenses, including registration or similar fees, to be paid by HHS in connection with such attendance. Care should be taken by the person preparing the form to ensure that it contains sufficient information to permit the AO to make an appropriate determination of compliance with the requirements of Section 1.4.1. The HHS-99 should be prepared and processed in accordance with the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's administrative procedures.

1.4.4.2 U.S.-Based International Organization Local Area Meeting

Any attendance at a meeting held at the headquarters of, or sponsored by, a U.S.-based international organization, (e.g., Pan American Health Organization, World Bank, etc.) taking place in the defined local travel area must be processed via the HHS Notification of Foreign Travel (NFT) on-line system (See Section 6.3).

1.4.4.3 U.S.-Based Organizations Hosting a Conference at an International Site

When a U.S.-based organization that typically hosts its conferences at a domestic site

decides to host a conference at an international site, all policies, and procedures as outlined in Chapter 6, International Travel, of this manual shall be followed. In this scenario, an object class code reflective of travel to an international site is to be used.

1.5 Pre-Employment Interview Travel

The purpose of this section is to define the Department's policy regarding the reimbursement of travel expenses for pre-employment interviews. Generally, such payments are limited to applicants for certain high-level or unique positions when the interview is necessary to determine the applicant's qualifications for the position, based on the designation of the position as hard-to-fill and mission critical. For additional information on eligibility and Office of Human Resources (OHR) guidelines, see HHS Instruction [572-1](#), Payment of Travel and/or Transportation Relocation Expenses.

1.5.1 General Information

Travel expenses for pre-employment interviews, Competitive Service and Excepted Service (Non-competitive), may be reimbursed when the OPDIV/STAFFDIV determines that a position is of such a high level or is so unique that interviews are necessary to enable the hiring agency to determine the applicant's qualifications based on the designation of the position as hard-to-fill and mission critical. However, payments of travel expenses will be limited to applicants for unique or high level positions that are defined as technical, professional, or administrative. These positions are defined as those with unusual combinations of duties, responsibilities, and qualifications. AOs should take into consideration the costs associated with travel of top-ranked applicants. The authority to reimburse travel expenses for a pre-employment interview is not to be used for [entry-level](#) positions, except in rare and unique cases (e.g., research scientists with doctorate degrees).

1.5.2 Travel Reimbursement

Reimbursement of travel expenses for pre-employment interviews must be approved in advance by the appropriate AO. Post approval of pre-employment travel expenses is prohibited.

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV AO must consider all travel expenses to be incurred and the time constraints when authorizing reimbursement for a pre-employment interview. Travel expenses authorized for pre-employment interviews are the same as those authorized for regular travel on official business. An Actual Expense Allowance cannot be authorized for per diem expenses. An advance of funds may never be authorized for pre-employment interviews.

Interviewees are to be reimbursed only for travel and related expenses associated with the time spent interviewing or involved in discussions with OPDIV/STAFFDIV officials, as those activities pertain to the advertised position. Such expenses incurred due to unrelated matters are not to be reimbursed. For example, if the interviewee incurred an extra night's lodging cost due to their giving a speech the next day following completion of the interview process, they should not be reimbursed for that extra night of lodging or any applicable M&IE costs on that day.

Claims for reimbursement of pre-employment travel expenses are processed in the same manner as other claims for reimbursement for travel expenses and allowances.

Reimbursement of travel expenses is limited to the interviewee only.

1.6 Travel To/From HHS OPDIV Hospitals and Medical Facilities

The purpose of this section is to provide information and instructions concerning the travel of HHS patients, research subjects, and when required, escorts and/or attendants for them. This section applies when such an individual is being admitted to, discharged from, or transferred to, from, or between HHS OPDIV hospital(s) or medical facility(ies). As used in this section, “HHS OPDIV hospitals and medical facilities” include Indian Health Service (IHS) facilities operated by Indian Tribes or Tribal Organizations under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. An employee, who becomes incapacitated by illness or injury while in TDY travel status, should refer to Section 5.2.4, Emergency Travel while on TDY.

1.6.1 Definitions

Term

Patient

Definition

An individual who is receiving health care services from one of the OPDIVs of HHS (e.g., an eligible beneficiary of health care services provided by or through IHS).

Research subject

An individual who has been authorized to participate in a clinical study or research protocol conducted by one of the OPDIVs of HHS (e.g., a person selected to participate in a clinical trial at the Clinical Center of the National Institutes of Health [NIH]). A research subject may qualify as an invitational traveler, at the discretion of the OPDIV.

Escort or attendant

An individual, such as a family member, who is authorized to accompany the patient/research subject in order to make the trip possible. For purposes of this section, employees performing official duty on HHS-paid travel when accompanying a patient/research subject are not included within the definition of “escort or attendant.”

1.6.2 Patient and Research Subject Travel

1.6.2.1 Travel Reimbursement under the Public Health Service Act

The Public Health Service Act, as amended (e.g., at 42 U.S.C. 248 for IHS and 42 U.S.C. 282 for NIH), provides authority separate from the FTR for patients’ and research subjects’ travel at government expense. Under these provisions, appropriated funds may be authorized to reimburse all or some of the expenses of patient and research subject travel, at the discretion of the AO. Instructions concerning the travel of patients, research subjects, escort, and/or attendants who are

eligible to travel under the Public Health Service Act will be issued as supplements to this manual by the OPDIV concerned.

A patient or research subject traveling under this authority is not deemed an employee for purposes of travel entitlements and usage of special travel rates available to government employees. However, the contracts executed by GSA for City Pair air carrier transportation provide that when the cost of the ticket is charged directly to a centrally billed account, travel performed at government expense does qualify for the City Pair contract rate. Thus, a patient or research subject whose travel is being paid for under the Public Health Service Act may use the City Pair fare if the Government has charged the airline ticket to its centrally billed account and is paying for the ticket.

Importantly, the U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement managed by the DTMO may be used only by government employees to rent cars at government official business rates with accompanying special terms and conditions. The cars may not be used by patients or research subjects whose travel is reimbursed under the Public Health Service Act, unless that individual has been authorized to travel as an invitational traveler (see Section 1.6.2.2 below).

Policy Example: A patient who lives in Flagstaff, Arizona, and needs to rent a car to drive to the IHS facility in Gallup, New Mexico, for specialized treatment, must rent the vehicle in her private capacity. At the discretion of IHS, she may be reimbursed any authorized private rental costs under the authority of the Public Health Service Act. The fact that she may also be an employee of IHS is immaterial if she is traveling as a patient rather than for official duty purposes.

1.6.2.2 Travel Reimbursement as an Invitational Traveler

Individuals serving without compensation 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 may be authorized to travel at government expense if they are issued invitational travel orders, in accordance with the FTR. However, in line with 5 U.S.C. 5703, such invitational travel must provide a direct benefit to the Government in order for the traveler to be on an HHS travel order. In the situation of a patient, as opposed to a research subject, this requirement usually would not be met.

AOs must very carefully examine the facts surrounding patient travel before authorizing invitational travel orders for patients. An invitational traveler is entitled to full travel reimbursement under the FTR and this manual, as if they were an employee. Thus, when authorizing official travel for a research subject or possibly a patient in this capacity, consideration must be given to the direct benefit to the Government as well as the costs of the travel.

1.6.2.3 Documentation

Patients and research subjects traveling at government expense under the authority of

the Public Health Service Act, but not in a capacity as “employees” on official duty or as invitational travelers should not be issued HHS travel orders. OPDIVs that authorize travel under the Public Health Service Act must issue supplemental instructions as to how to document authorization of such travel. At a minimum, this documentation should be readily distinguishable from the HHS travel order form for employees (including invitational travelers). The documentation should clearly state the authority for the travel being authorized.

1.6.3 Authorization of Escort/Attendant Travel

1.6.3.1 Travel Reimbursement under the Public Health Service Act

For patients and research subjects traveling under the authority of, and whose travel expenses are being paid under, the Public Health Service Act, an attendant may be approved when necessary to protect the health and safety of the patient/research subject and other persons likely to be exposed to them. See 42 CFR 35.22.

1.6.3.2 Attendants for Employees with Special Needs

Under FTR [301-13](#) and this Travel Manual, the payment of travel expenses of an escort/attendant to accompany an “employee with special needs” (which includes invitational travelers) that are clearly visible and discernible or substantiated in writing by a competent medical authority, may be authorized when the approving official has determined that:

1. The employee needs to perform official travel or be admitted or transferred to an OPDIV hospital or facility, as described in Section 1.5; and
2. They are incapable of traveling unaccompanied.

The documentation authorizing escort/attendant travel must be maintained in the OPDIV’s official travel files.

1.6.4 Allowances and Benefits

IHS and NIH are authorized under the Public Health Service Act to pay necessary expenses for a research subject or a patient and authorized escorts/attendants, if applicable. Instructions concerning these additional travel expenses will be issued as supplements to this manual by each OPDIV concerned.

Under the FTR, an agency may pay for certain additional travel expenses necessary for a research subject, as provided below:

1. Transportation and per diem expenses of one escort/attendant, if necessary;
2. Specialized transportation to/from the hospital/facility;
3. Specialized services provided by a common carrier;

4. Costs for handling the employee's baggage;
5. Renting and/or transporting a wheelchair; and/or
6. Other than Coach Class accommodation, if properly justified. (See Section 4.1.5, Coach Class and Other than Coach Class Upgrades and Section 6.4, Other than Coach Class International Travel.)

A patient may qualify for such reimbursement if and only if a statute provides that the patient is considered to be an "employee" (i.e., in a capacity as an invitational traveler) while performing such travel. Any such request must be supported by proper written justification from an appropriate medical official. If a research subject or a patient is traveling under invitational travel orders, all requirements of the FTR must be met prior to authorizing reimbursement for such expenses.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-13, Travel of an Employee with Special Needs

1.7 Travel of Consultants, Experts, and Invitational Travelers

This section provides instructions and information concerning the travel of consultants and others serving the Department in an advisory capacity under the authority of law and the provisions of HHS Personnel Instructions and Directives. It applies to consultants serving either in individual capacities or as members of advisory groups, unless the members are legislatively authorized to receive reimbursement of actual travel expenses.

1.7.1 Definitions

HHS Personnel Instructions, Directives and certain statutes are the authoritative source for the definition of various types of “consultants.” For the purposes of this manual, the categories of consultants are defined in Chapter 13, Glossary, and include:

1. Consultant;
2. Intermittent consultant;
3. Temporary consultant;
4. Federal Advisory Committee (Act) consultant;
5. Contractor; and
6. Invitational traveler (5.U.S.C. 5703).

The “service year” mentioned in these definitions begins with the date of appointment.

1.7.2 General Information

Travel allowances are essentially the same for consultants/experts and invitational travelers as for civilian employees of the Department and are paid in accordance with the FTR and the provisions of this manual.

1. **Intermittent consultants** and **invitational travelers** may be allowed travel expenses, including a per diem allowance, while serving the OPDIV/STAFFDIV away from their homes or places of regular non-government employment. When a consultant is required to provide services for a period of more than 30 days, the delegated travel official shall determine whether it is advantageous to the Government to continue authorizing payment of these expenses.
2. **Temporary consultants** and **Federal Advisory Committee consultants** may be allowed travel and per diem expenses only while traveling on official business away from their designated posts of duty.
3. **Contractors** must bear all expenses, as provided by the terms of their contracts. Reimbursement of travel expenses is not allowed unless specifically authorized in the contract, in which case it must be billed against the contract. (Note: This

type of consultant may not be issued travel orders and is not eligible for GSA's contract City Pair fares for common carrier transportation. The only exception for the use of the City Pair program may be if the individual is performing duties that are not related to their contract; such as if, a person is asked to come speak about a topic that is not related to their current contract as an Invitational Traveler.

1.7.3 Travel Documentation

Individuals covered by this section may be authorized to travel at the Department's expense through the issuance of travel orders. The following guidelines apply:

1. The travel order shall describe the purpose, itinerary, and authorized travel allowances.
2. OPDIV/STAFFDIVs will assist the traveler in making the necessary travel arrangements through the TMC.
3. Travelers are responsible for submitting their travel claims within five (5) working days from the completion of the travel in accordance with the FTR. OPDIV/STAFFDIVs will assist the traveler in preparing travel vouchers for reimbursement claims.
4. Travelers will be reimbursed in accordance with the FTR and the policies and procedures contained in this manual and within OPDIV/STAFFDIV specific policies.
5. The documents required for authorizing and/or approving travel of consultants, experts, and invitational travelers are the same as those required for civilian employees in accordance with the FTR and this Travel Manual.

1.7.4 Travel Advances

A travel advance may be authorized in accordance with the policies and procedures contained in Section 3.4. OPDIV/STAFFDIVs have the discretion to issue travel advances to the individuals covered by this section.

1.7.5 Per Diem Allowances

The following guidelines apply to per diem allowances:

1. Travelers on official business will be authorized and reimbursed per diem allowances in accordance with the FTR on a lodgings-plus rate per [FTR 301-11](#), unless higher rates are provided by Congress in specific appropriations or other acts.
2. Travelers may be reimbursed for actual and necessary subsistence expenses for specific trip assignments, subject to the FTR and established HHS policies and

procedures.

3. Travelers may be authorized a reduced per diem allowance when the OPDIV/STAFFDIV can determine in advance that a lower rate can be justified.
4. Travelers may be authorized a CLA, if applicable. See FTR [301-74](#).

1.8 Reimbursement for Travel and Related Expenses Incidental to Training under the Government Employees Training Act (GETA)

This section provides instructions and information concerning transportation and other expenses incident to training, as authorized under GETA.

GETA stipulates that managers may only permit employees to attend continuing-education seminars and other training opportunities (such as technology-training courses) held outside the United States after determining that the same or substantially similar courses or sessions are unavailable within the United States.

1.8.1 Authority

GETA, 5 U.S.C. 4101-4118, provides that an employee undergoing training away from their permanent official station may be authorized payment of all or part of the necessary expenses of training, which includes either:

1. Transportation and per diem to and from the place of training, and per diem during training, for the employee only; or
2. Limited relocation allowances. However, the latter should only be authorized to include:
 - a. Transportation to and from the place of training for the employee and immediate family;
 - b. Per diem en route for the employee; and,
 - c. Round-trip shipment and storage of the employee's household goods and personal effects.

Relocation allowances should only be authorized when such cost is less than the estimated aggregate per diem payments during the period of the training assignment.

1.8.2 Allowances for Training

The rates prescribed below represent the maximum allowances, which may be authorized for training assignments, except in extenuating circumstances. Any amount approved in excess of these maximums must be properly justified, showing the circumstances that led the official to conclude that the higher payment would be in the public interest.

Reimbursement rates below the maximum must be established whenever possible for specific travel provided the AO ensures that the rate set is:

1. Realistic for the geographic area during the time period at issue; and
2. Fair to both the Government and the employee in that it establishes a rate commensurate with the daily costs for lodging, food, and incidental expenses that

the traveler would reasonably incur at the place of training.

Whenever training at one location involves employees from more than one agency, the organization sponsoring the training may recommend to participating agencies a uniform rate of per diem that would be reasonable in view of the circumstances. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV must assess use of the recommended per diem rate under the standards set forth in this section.

1.8.2.1 Transportation and Per Diem Rate

En Route

An employee, whose training has been authorized, may be paid or reimbursed the necessary costs for transportation and per diem to and from the place of training.

At Training Site

While at the place of training, an employee may be authorized per diem not to exceed the authorized maximum rate guidelines below, or be authorized limited relocation allowances in accordance with Chapter 302 of the FTR, but not both.

Criteria for Establishment of Per Diem at the Place of Training

The following criteria will be considered in establishing the authorized per diem rate at the place of training.

1. When the AO approves per diem for the period of training, every effort must be made to establish a rate commensurate with the daily costs for lodging, food, and incidental expenses that the traveler would reasonably incur at the place of training, given the circumstances of the assignment. The AO should consider the availability of college or dormitory facilities, or similar housing assistance, which refers assignees to private quarters at a modest expense, or other types of long-term housing appropriate to the location and duration of the training. The cost of local transportation between the lodging site and the training site should also be considered. (For example, factor in the cost of a rental car or taxi fare, if public transportation is unavailable between the lodging site and the training site; use lodging at the training site if available.) Costs in excess of such a fair assessment of lodging expenses must be at the trainee's expense.
2. Expenses, which might be incurred by an employee's family either at the place of training or at the employee's permanent duty station, are not to be considered in setting the rate of per diem. Neither will the AO consider the cost of maintaining a family abode at the place of training or elsewhere.
3. In most circumstances, employees authorized to attend

training should not leave the training location to conduct official business travel for other purposes. In the unusual situation where such travel is anticipated, consideration should be given to the number of days that the employee is expected to be away from the place of training for conducting official travel when setting the traveler's per diem rate for the training location.

4. The cost of transportation and per diem for the period of training is a factor in determining if training should be authorized.

Within the Continental United States (CONUS) and Non-Foreign (OCONUS)

Assignments of Less than 30 Nights

The maximum per diem amount for the locality concerned may be used when reasonable for the length of the training, but a lower amount may be more appropriate, particularly if the training will last more than a week (creating extended lodging rate alternatives).

Assignments of 30 Nights or Greater

For extended training assignments, unless otherwise justified, the allowable per diem must be reduced and established in advance on the Travel Authorization, as employees are expected to secure long-term lodging at substantially lower rates. Such lodging will normally include cooking facilities, so the M&IE rate shall be reduced. Close attention must be given to setting a daily lodging rate appropriate for the duration of the training and the particular location involved. The goal is to reduce the cost to the Government as much as possible for the entire period of training, while providing safe and adequate lodging for the employee, which includes reasonable transportation option(s) to the training site at a cost not exceeding the lodging savings.

See Section 5.1.3.4, Reduced Per Diem, for additional information on the types of lodging facilities to be used for extended and long-term TDY.

The following guidelines in Table 1 and Table 2 below are provided for setting per diem rates for assignments of 30 nights or more. The guidelines are based upon the length of the entire TDY assignment, and do not represent a sliding scale during the length of the TDY assignment. The reduction begins on day one, unless the traveler's OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy allows for a different rate for the first 29 nights, in which case the reduction begins in accordance with OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy.

Table 1 - Reduced Per Diem Lodging Allowances

Assignment Period	Percent Reduction
30 to 90 Nights	70% of lodging per diem rate for location
91 to 180 Nights	60% of lodging per diem rate for location
Over 180 Nights	50% of lodging per diem rate for location

Table 2 - Reduced Per Diem M&IE Allowances

M&IE Allowance	Percent Reduction
Cooking facilities included in lodging	50% of M&IE rate for location
No cooking facilities or meals provided	75% of M&IE rate for location
Lodging site provides all meals	Only Incidental Expenses allowance for location

For personal convenience, employees may elect to secure lodging that is more expensive but they must pay the excess cost over the authorized rate.

Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS)

Extra care should be taken when assessing whether to authorize training outside CONUS and, if approved, setting the maximum per diem rate for the period of training. Training at foreign locations, in particular, presents additional and often complex considerations in terms of lodging availability, cost, etc. The authorized rate must be specified on the employee's travel order.

Assignments of Less than 30 Nights

The maximum daily amount in the FTR for the locality concerned may be used when reasonable for the length of the training, but a lower amount may be more appropriate. The rate should be realistic and fair for the location involved, given the timing of the training.

Assignments of 30 Nights or Greater

For long-term training assignments outside CONUS (which should be rare), the allowable per diem MUST be reduced if it is reasonable to expect employees to be able to secure long-term lodging at substantially lower rates in the training location. Depending on the timing and length of training, it may be more prudent to adjust the rate during the training, to adjust to local conditions. The goal is always to reduce the cost to the Government as much as possible for the entire period of training, while providing safe and adequate lodging to the employee, which includes reasonable transportation option(s) to the training site at a cost not exceeding the lodging savings.

Because of widely varying considerations as to availability, cost, safety, and features of lodging options OCONUS, no guideline amounts for setting reduced rates for lodging are provided in this section. Supervisors or AOs

should gather sufficient reliable information about the training location to enable them to assess what is a reasonable and fair lodging rate under the circumstances, if training OCONUS is approved. The rate must be specified on the travel order and discussed with the employee. If lodging options that include meals or meal preparation facilities are reasonably available, the M&IE rate must be reduced or, if all meals are provided with the lodging, only the incidental expenses portion of the locality's M&IE rate should be authorized.

1.8.2.2 Limited Relocation Expenses including Transportation of Immediate Family and Household Goods

Transportation of the immediate family, household goods, and personal effects, and temporary storage, may be allowed to the extent that the estimated costs of such transportation and related services would be less than the estimated aggregate per diem payments for the period of training determined independently of the family move. Reimbursement of such expenses may be allowed in accordance with Part 302 of the FTR. For additional information, see Chapter 12, Relocation Allowances.

Note: Reimbursement shall not be allowed for house hunting trips, miscellaneous expense allowance, temporary quarters, residence transactions, or per diem for the immediate family.

1.8.2.3 Authorized Temporary Duty Travel Away from the Place of Training

An employee who is authorized to perform TDY travel away from the place of training will receive transportation and per diem allowances in the same manner, and at the same rates, as if they were performing typical TDY travel. An employee engaged in a full-time course of instruction will not be authorized transportation or mileage to return home on weekends or off-duty hours unless it is determined that official duty is, in fact, to be performed.

An employee, who is receiving per diem at the place of training as described in this section, will be entitled to the entire M&IE for the day of departure from the place of training at the rate authorized for the official duty. On the day of return to the place of training, the M&IE rate will be paid through midnight that day. Because there are two per diem rates, care must be exercised to ensure that duplicative expenses for per diem are not authorized. On the first and last day of travel, the employee will receive the following entitlements: 25 percent of the authorized GETA M&IE rate, and 75 percent of the TDY M&IE rate.

An employee who is receiving per diem at the place of training, and who is required to perform official TDY travel back to the permanent official station, is not entitled to per diem as a travel expense either at the permanent official station or the place of training. If the employee obtained a substantially reduced long-term lodging rate, based on an extended stay at the training location, but must return to the official station for work-related reasons during the training period, payment of the portion of

the lodging cost for the days not spent at the training site due to the short work-related return to the official duty station may be reimbursed as follows:

The number of days of actual occupancy during the billing period (i.e., excluding days of travel to the permanent duty station) should be divided into the periodic rate billed for the lodging, to ascertain the daily rate for lodging during that period. If that daily rate is within the approved lodging rate set on the employee's travel order, reimbursement in full is appropriate. If the re-computed daily rate (excluding days at the permanent official station) exceeds the daily lodging rate approved on the travel order, the employee must pay the difference unless the AO approves a one-time exception to the authorized daily rate.

Policy Example: An employee on TDY for a three-month training program in Chicago goes on a two-day trip home. The employee is staying in an extended-stay apartment in Chicago, at a rate of \$2,750 per month; his lodging allowance for the training was set at \$3,100 per month. (Assume the maximum daily lodging rate is \$149 for Chicago; his rate for an average month is approximately 70 percent of that.)

His 28 days of occupancy in that 30-day month means he is paying \$98.21 per day, still within his maximum lodging allowance (\$103.33 per day for a 30-day month) for the training period, so he will be reimbursed in full for the monthly rent on the apartment despite his short trip home.

However, if in the next month he makes an eight-day trip home, his daily rate on the apartment for that 31-day month would be \$125 per day, over the maximum monthly lodging rate (\$100/day for a 31-day month) set in his travel authorization. He would only be reimbursed \$2,200 towards his rent for that month; the remainder would have to be paid out of his personal funds.

An employee who is authorized limited relocation allowances and subsequently is required to perform official TDY travel to the former permanent official station may be paid per diem while at the former permanent official station. This assumes the Notification of Personnel Action, SF-50, has been changed to reflect the relocation.

1.8.2.4 Leave of Absence While in Training

Annual Leave

For any period that an employee undergoing training is charged annual leave, the provisions of this manual apply. (See Sections 5.2.1 and 6.5 for annual leave policies.)

Sick Leave

The provisions of this manual in Section 5.2.4, Emergency Travel while on TDY, will apply when an employee in training away from the permanent official station is incapacitated because of illness or injury while:

1. At the place of training, if the employee is otherwise entitled to per diem at the place of training on a temporary basis; or
2. Performing official travel away from the place of training. The latter provision applies whether or not the employee is entitled to per diem at the place of training.

1.8.2.5 Other Allowable Expenses: Non - Travel

Examples of other allowable expenses that may be reimbursed through the Authorization, Agreement, and Certification of Training form, [SF 182](#), are:

1. Tuition, registration, and matriculation fees;
2. Library and laboratory services-related fees;
3. Costs for purchase or rental of books, materials, and essential supplies; and
4. Costs of other services and facilities directly related to the training, except membership fees unless they are a necessary cost directly related to the training itself or payment of the fee is a condition precedent to undergoing such training.

Note: The above expenses are not travel-related and are not to be reimbursed as such.

1.8.3 Advance of Funds

An employee may be authorized an advance of funds by the appropriate AO to cover the necessary expenses associated with either TDY travel or limited relocation allowances, in accordance with the authorized entitlement selected. (See Section 3.3 for information regarding approval, calculation, and liquidation of the travel advance.)

1.8.4 Travel Documentation

The documentation required for transportation and travel incident to training is essentially the same as that required for normal TDY travel or an authorized change of official station. In addition, a copy of the applicable training nomination form shall be retained with the travel order in the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's official travel files.

1.8.5 Claims for Reimbursement

Employees will be reimbursed in the same manner as if they were performing normal TDY travel under FTR Chapter 301 or relocation under FTR Chapter 302. All required receipts must support reimbursement claims for allowable transportation and travel expenses. Original receipts must be kept by the traveler for two (2) years. See Section 1.8.2.2 for information on limited relocation allowances and Chapter 12, Relocation Allowances.

1.8.6 Recovery of Training Expenses from Employees

Upon written determination by the AO, an employee may be required to repay the expenses incurred in connection with training if the employee fails to:

1. Complete the training; or
2. Remain in Federal service for the agreed period of time.

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV's Finance Office shall recover such amount from the employee either through the appropriate debt collection mechanisms or by other methods provided by law for recovery of amounts owed to the Government.

1.9 Travel Expenses for Members of National Advisory Councils and Advisory Committees

This section provides policy and procedures for the payment of travel and subsistence expenses on an actual expense basis for members of national advisory councils and advisory committees. It applies only to the members of those councils and committees having legislative authority for payment of actual and necessary travel and subsistence expenses.

1.9.1 Allowances

Members of certain national advisory councils and advisory committees are entitled by law to actual and necessary travel and subsistence expenses while attending conferences or meetings of their respective councils/committees or while otherwise rendering services away from their homes or regular places of business. For these individuals, reimbursement is made only for actual and necessary expenses incurred without regard to whether the traveler's subsistence expenses are more or less than the maximum per diem allowance. Therefore, the policies, procedures, and maximum amounts allowable for reimbursement set forth in the FTR are not applicable.

1.9.2 Authorization

A travel authorization must be submitted in advance of travel to the appropriate delegated approving official for members of advisory councils or advisory committees.

1.9.3 Claims for Reimbursement

Members of national advisory councils and advisory committees will submit reimbursement claims through the ETS. The [SF 1012](#) Travel Voucher should only be used if the ETS is not available. Receipts will be required in accordance with FTR [301-52.4](#) and HHS policy established in this manual. Original receipts must be kept by the traveler for two (2) years.

2. Travel Reports to Oversight Agencies

This section provides supplemental guidance on the key travel reports that must be submitted by HHS and OPDIV/STAFFDIVs on a regularly scheduled basis. Heads of OPDIV/STAFFDIVs or their designees must ensure that there are automated and/or manual systems in place to collect and report required information accurately on a timely basis.

2.1 GSA Survey on Agency Payments for Employee Travel and Relocation

Each OPDIV/STAFFDIV that incurs more than \$5 million for travel and relocation during the fiscal year must submit a separate report to GSA. A consolidated report for all other OPDIV/STAFFDIVs not reaching the \$5 million level (referred to as “HHS-Other”) will also be submitted. OPDIV/STAFFDIVs in the HHS-Other group must provide the HHS Travel Office with any information it requests to complete the HHS-Other report. The HHS Travel Office will serve as the liaison with GSA and provide information regarding due date, requests for extensions, etc.

All participating OPDIV/STAFFDIVs are expected to provide required information accurately and on time. Reports will be reviewed by a senior financial manager and submitted directly to GSA, preferably in electronic format. A hard copy will also be provided to the ASA for informational purposes. This report is due at the end of every Fiscal Year per FTR amendment 2011–01, 76 FR 18335, Apr. 1, 2011.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- Part 300-70, Subpart A Requirement to Report Agency Payments for Employee Travel and Relocation

2.2 Report on the Use of Other than Coach Class Transportation Accommodations

GSA requires agencies to submit an annual “Report on the Use of First Class Transportation Accommodations” on a fiscal-year basis. Separate OPDIV/STAFFDIV reports must be submitted to the HHS Travel Office, in accordance with established deadlines. Reports should be submitted electronically in the spreadsheet format issued by GSA available at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/110494> or through the GSA reporting tool available at <https://gsa.inl.gov/travel/>. No changes should be made to the format, which is prescribed by GSA. Negative reports are also required, if no Other than Coach Class transportation expenses were incurred.

Fiscal Year 2011 marked a change in agency reporting requirements for employees’ premium travel accommodations. Agencies are now required to track and report to GSA all instances where their transportation accommodations are anything Other than Coach Class. As described in Chapter 13, Glossary, “Other than Coach Class” (or “Premium-Class”) is defined as “any class of accommodations above coach-class, e.g., first-class or business-class.” Business-class and first-class accommodations must be separated out when reporting to GSA. Agencies having no Other than Coach Class travel to report must file a negative report.

Required data elements for the report must include:

1. Mode of travel (air, ship, train);
2. Name of traveler;
3. Origin city and state;
4. Destination city, state, or foreign country;
5. Beginning date of travel;
6. Travel Purpose Codes [Employee Emergency, Mission (Operational), Special Agency Mission, Conference – Other than Training, Training, Relocation];
7. Exception Codes (Circumstances justifying use of Other than Coach Class accommodations);
8. Actual First Class accommodation fare;
9. Business Class fare; and
10. Coach Class accommodation fare for actual route used.

The following guidelines outlined in the sections below cover the basic reporting requirements for the FY 2011 Other than Coach Class Travel Report.

2.2.1 Other than Coach Class Accommodations That Must Be Reported

Agencies must report all instances of Other than Coach Class (First Class, Business Class) accommodations paid for by the Government. This includes reporting Other than Coach Class accommodations as part of a multi-leg or multi-segmented trip that was paid for by the Government. For multi-leg or multi-segmented trips, GSA requires agencies to separate and report on each individual leg or segment that was Other than Coach Class. Legs or segments that are not Other than Coach Class accommodations should not be reported.

2.2.2 Other than Coach Class Accommodations That Do Not Need To Be Reported

Premium-Class accommodations that do not need to be reported include:

1. Other than Coach Class accommodations paid by the traveler;
2. Other than Coach Class acquired by the traveler through frequent flier points or benefits;
3. Other than Coach Class considered a free upgrade; or
4. The Federal Government paid coach-class fare for Other than Coach Class accommodations (e.g., Y-Up Fares).

2.2.3 Submitting Negative Reports

Agencies must submit either data or a negative report to GSA annually. Negative reports can be submitted under two circumstances:

1. If an agency has reported first-class travel accommodations previously, but does not have any current Other than Coach Class accommodations to report; or
2. If an agency never authorizes Other than Coach Class accommodations as a matter of agency policy.

2.2.4 Exceptions to Reporting Other than Coach Class Travel

Agencies are not required to report data that is protected from public disclosure, by statute or Executive Order. However, agencies not reporting data are required to submit a cover letter to GSA with the following aggregate information, as per FTR [300-70.103](#):

1. Aggregate number of authorized Other than Coach Class trips that are protected from disclosure;
2. Total cost of actual Other than Coach Class fares paid that exceeded the coach-class fare; and

3. Total cost of coach-class fares that would have been paid for the same travel.

Note: If the aggregate information is also protected from public disclosure then a negative report must be submitted to GSA.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- Part 300-70, Subpart B—Requirement to Report Use of Other than Coach Class Transportation Accommodations

2.3 Semi-Annual Report of Payments Accepted from a Non-Federal Source

31 U.S.C.1353 authorizes the acceptance by Executive Branch agencies of payments for travel, subsistence, and related expenses from non-Federal sources in connection with the attendance of employees at certain meetings or similar functions. The statute provides that the head of each agency shall submit to the Director of the Office of Government Ethics (OGE) semi-annual reports of payments of more than \$250 per event accepted under this authority. Reports are due from HHS to OGE on May 31 and November 30 of each year. Only travel payments accepted under the authority of 31 U.S.C. 1353 must be reported to OGE.

Beginning with reporting period ending March 31, 2011, and for any reporting period thereafter, OGE will accept Section 1353 travel reports only through the electronic, Section 508-compliant SF-326 (in PDF format) or the new, OGE-approved alternative to the SF-326, the OGE Form-1353 (in Excel format). Both forms are available on the OGE website in the Forms Library. The OGE Forms Library site link is

http://www.usoge.gov/forms/form_1353.aspx

Negative responses are also required, if no payments of more than \$250 per event were accepted under this authority. Individual OPDIV/STAFFDIV reports or a negative response must be submitted to the HHS Travel Office in accordance with established deadlines.

See FTR 304-3.17, Reports, for detailed reporting requirements.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- Part 304 Subchapter A, Employee's Acceptance of Payment from a Non-Federal Source for Travel Expenses

2.4 Semi-Annual Senior Federal Travel Report (SFTR)

GSA requires all agencies to submit on a semi-annual basis, information on: (a) non-mission travel on government aircraft by Senior Federal officials, dependents, and non-Federal travelers; and (b) mission and non-mission travel on government aircraft by Senior Executive Branch officials. Each agency is responsible for reporting travel by personnel transported on aircraft scheduled by their own agency. Government aircraft includes fixed and rotary wing aircraft that the agency owns, leases, contracts for, charters, or rents. Travel in aircraft used by or in support of the President/Vice President, and by officials from the Legislative and Judicial Branches and persons accompanying them, are excluded from the reporting requirement.

The reporting periods are October 1 through March 31 and April 1 through September 30 of each fiscal year. A consolidated departmental report is due to GSA no later than 30 days after the close of each reporting period and must contain the following information:

1. The person's name, indicating if they are either a Senior Federal official or non-Federal traveler, whichever is appropriate;
2. The traveler's organization and title or other appropriate descriptive information (e.g., dependent, press, etc.);
3. Name of authorizing Agency;
4. The official purpose of the trip;
5. The destination(s);
6. For personal or political travel, the amount the traveler must reimburse the Government (i.e., the full coach fare or appropriate share of that fare);
7. For official travel, the comparable City Pair fare (if available to the traveler) or the full coach fare if the City Pair fare is not available; and
8. The cost to the Government to carry this person (i.e., the appropriate allocated share of the Federal or Commercial Aviation Services (CAS) aircraft trip costs).

Note: Trips that are designated as classified are not required to be included in this report. However, documentation for such travel must be maintained for two years and made available if requested by GSA.

If there is no reportable Senior Federal travel, the agency is required to submit a Negative Report to the HHS Travel Office. GSA has implemented a web-based tool to assist in this data collection effort. Users may access the SFTR reporting tool at <https://gsa.inl.gov/travel/>.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-70, Subpart J, Policies and Procedures for Agencies that Own or Hire

Government Aircraft for Travel

2.5 OMB Quarterly Report on the Travel Charge Card

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requires agencies listed in the original Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 to submit quarterly reports on specific information identified in OMB Circular No. A-123, Appendix B, Section 5.3, as well as an annual narrative report. Separate OPDIV/STAFFDIV reports must be submitted to the HHS Travel Office, in accordance with the established deadlines for each report.

2.5.1 Quarterly Reports

Quarterly Reports should be submitted electronically in the spreadsheet format issued by OMB for reporting purposes. No changes should be made to the format. The required data elements include:

1. Number of travel charge cards;
2. Number of active accounts;
3. Percentage of employees that are cardholders;
4. Net number of new accounts (new less cancelled);
5. Charge card dollars spent, total refunds earned, and percentage of potential refunds earned;
6. Number of cases reported by the agency Office of the Inspector General (OIG);
7. Number of administrative and/ disciplinary actions taken for care misuse (including delinquency);
8. Number and percentage of travel charge cards with monthly and/or transaction limits (\$0 - \$2,500; \$2,500 - \$5,000; \$5,000 - \$7,500; \$7,500 – above);
9. Number and percentage of travel charge cards with Automated Teller Machine (ATM) withdrawal limits (\$0 - \$2,500; \$2,500 - \$5,000; \$5,000 - \$7,500; \$7,500 – above); and
10. Percentage of travel charge cardholders that travel less than five times annually.

2.5.2 Annual Narratives

Annual Narrative Reports should be submitted to the HHS Travel Office with the required information. Annual Narrative Report required data elements include but are not limited to the following:

1. The date(s) of the most recent and the next scheduled independent review (e.g., OIG) for all agencies charge card programs;
2. A description of the current process for monitoring delinquency, including what reports the agency reviews and what actions are taken when a problem is discovered;
3. A description of the steps the agency takes to address protracted turnaround time (> than 15 working days) following voucher submission for travel voucher reimbursement, if applicable;
4. A description of the method the agency utilizes to identify and detect possible card misuse, including the use of any specialized information technology solutions as well as any requests to charge card vendors for data reports;
5. Agency future plans (within the next 12 months) to enhance charge card systems by automating review to detect instances of abuse, misuse, and fraud;
6. A description of any best practices the agency employs in charge card management; and
7. Any additional useful information regarding charge card programs.

2.6 Executive Order 13514 Sustainability and Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Report

On October 5, 2009, President Obama signed Executive Order 13514, Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance, to establish an integrated strategy towards sustainability in the Federal Government and to make reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions a priority for federal agencies. Executive Order (EO) 13514 requires federal agencies to set GHG emissions reduction targets, increase energy efficiency, reduce fleet petroleum consumption 30 percent by 2020, conserve water, reduce waste, support sustainable communities, and leverage federal purchasing power to promote environmentally-responsible products and technologies.

The section below describes the reporting requirements for EO 13514 as it relates GHG emissions for air travel, which are considered Scope 3 emissions, as defined below.

2.6.1 Greenhouse Gas Report Requirements

EO 13514 (Section 2) requires each Federal agency to manage greenhouse gases. Specifically, each agency must establish and report to the Council on Environmental Quality Chair and OMB Director a Fiscal Year 2020 percentage reduction target for agency-wide Scope 3 GHG emissions in absolute terms relative to a Fiscal Year 2008 baseline. Scope 3 is one of the three potential "scopes" for a corporate GHG inventory:

- Scope 1 encompasses a company's direct GHG emissions, whether from on-site energy production or other industrial activities.
- Scope 2 accounts for energy that is purchased from off-site (primarily electricity, but can also include energy like steam).
- Scope 3 is much broader and can include anything from employee travel, to "upstream" emissions embedded in products purchased or processed by the firm, to "downstream" emissions associated with transporting and disposing of products sold by the firm.

In establishing the target, agencies shall consider reductions associated with:

- Pursuing opportunities with vendors and contractors to address and incentivize GHG emission reductions;
- Implementing strategies and accommodations for transit, travel, training, and conferences that reduce carbon emissions associated with commuting and travel by agency staff;
- Pursuing greenhouse gas emissions reductions associated with other Federal Government sustainability goals; and
- Implementing innovative policies and practices that address agency-specific Scope 3

GHG emissions including those related to air travel.

2.6.2 Reporting Airline and Rental Car Travel Emissions

GSA's Travel Management Information Service (MIS) is available to assist agencies with meeting the requirements established by Executive Order 13514 for Scope 3 GHG reporting. The Travel MIS GHG methodology computes the baseline year's (FY 2008) and the past fiscal year's emissions in metric tons. This information can then be used to populate these emissions categories in the GHG reporting portal.

The GSA Travel MIS presently has travel data for over 80 Federal agencies and independent commissions including HHS. It can generate totals for air and rental car GHG emissions via a standard report, which includes a dashboard to model reductions to future GHG emissions. Two reports provide the data needed to meet the Scope 3 reporting requirements:

1. CO2 Emissions – Business Air Travel by Agency; and
2. CO2 Emissions – Car Rental by Agency.

3. Travel Authorizations, Voucher Claims, and Advances

This chapter provides supplemental guidance on the issuance and use of travel authorizations, including requests, preparation, amendments, and cancellations. It also sets forth general requirements for preparation and approval of vouchers for reimbursement of expenses incurred when traveling on official business. In addition, it also provides guidance on Travel Reservations, Frequent Traveler Programs, and OPDIV/STAFFDIV Travel Programs.

3.1 Initiation of Travel Authorizations

3.1.1 Travel Authorizations - General

A travel authorization is the official authorization to perform TDY duty travel and, if applicable, to incur change of station expenses. It should specify, to the greatest extent possible, the travel to be performed and the expenses to be incurred. Travel Authorizations should only be for dates and locations of official duty. Travel must be most advantageous to the Government, when cost and other factors are considered; travel must be by the most expeditious means of transportation practicable and commensurate with the nature and purpose of the duties involved. Travel should be from the Official Station to the TDY location or from one TDY location to another. Travel expenses may not be incurred until the AO has approved the travel authorization. To protect the rights of the traveler, travel and transportation should be authorized in advance through the ETS or, in rare circumstances, a hard copy Form [HHS-1⁵](#) Travel Order. All authorizations must have a signature (electronic or written) by an official delegated to authorize travel.

In emergencies, when prior authorization cannot be obtained, a travel authorization may be issued after travel has begun in accordance with the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's established procedures for this exception. Lack of advance written authorization for travel will not void the traveler's rights under the Federal Employee's Compensation Act in the event of accident or injury. A subsequently approved travel authorization or a written statement from the supervisor that the traveler was performing official duties when the accident occurred will be adequate evidence to afford coverage. The traveler, however, should exercise careful judgment in the performance of travel without an authorized travel order, at a minimum by obtaining verbal or informal written authorization (i.e., email) from an appropriate delegated AO before departing on the trip.

3.1.1.1 Payment for Official Travel Expenses

When preparing a Travel Authorization, the AO must ensure that all official travel expenses are being paid for through use of the Government contractor bank-issued travel charge card. This is to include either use of a Centrally Billed Account (CBA) or if applicable, an Individual Billed Account (IBA).

⁵ The form HHS1 is only available on the HHS Intranet and not accessible via the public internet.

The use of a contract vehicle to pay for travel expenses represents non-compliance with FTR [301-51.1](#). In addition, doing so could result in an accounting misclassification of travel expenses, in the event of a Congressional or Department imposed travel ceiling.

Exemptions to the use of the Government contractor-issued travel charge card, both Government-wide and HHS-wide, can be referenced in Chapter 10 of this manual.

Note: An employee who performs TDY travel or departs earlier than necessary to carry out the purpose of travel, without proper authorization, does so at the risk of not being reimbursed for expenses that are incurred.

3.1.1.2 Advance Authorizations of Allowances - FTR Requirements

FTR [301-2.5](#) requires specific electronic or written advance authorization for the following TDY travel allowances on the Travel Authorization:

1. Use of reduced fares for group or charter arrangements;
2. Reduced rate per diem;
3. Acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source for travel expenses; and
4. Travel expenses related to attendance at a conference.

3.1.1.3 Advance Authorization of Allowances – FTR Requirements

FTR [301-2.5](#) requires specific authorization or prior approval for:

1. Use of Other than Coach Class service on common carrier transportation;
2. Use of foreign air carrier;
3. Use of cash (including personal charge card or check) to pay for common carrier transportation in excess of \$100;
4. Use of extra-fare train service;
5. Travel by ship;
6. Use of rental car;
7. Use of government aircraft;
8. Payment of actual expenses or conference lodging allowance;
9. Travel expenses related to emergency travel;

10. Transportation expenses related to threatened law enforcement/investigative employees and members of their families;
11. Travel expenses related to travel to a foreign area, except as provided by agency mission; and
12. Due to an employee's medical requirements or religious beliefs, payment of the full M&IE allowance even though meals are furnished by the Government either directly or through a registration fee or other payment for a conference or other event.

Every effort should be made to obtain authorization in advance of travel for these allowances in Section 3.1.1.3. When prior authorization is not possible or practical, post-trip approval may be issued through an amended travel order, in accordance with the pertinent OPDIV/STAFFDIV's policy and procedures. However, without proper authorization travelers risk not being reimbursed for expenses that are incurred.

3.1.1.4 Advance Authorization of Allowances – Departmental Policy

Departmental policy requires specific electronic or written authorization in advance of the following allowances:

1. Excess baggage or weight;
2. Checked baggage fees; and
3. Use of internet services when required for official duties.

Every effort should be made to obtain authorization in advance of travel for these allowances in Section 3.1.1.4. When prior authorization is not possible or practical, post-trip approval may be issued through an amended travel order, in accordance with the pertinent OPDIV/STAFFDIV's policy and procedures. However, without proper authorization travelers risk not being reimbursed for expenses that are incurred.

3.1.1.5 Travel Authorization Timeframe

It is HHS policy that travel orders will be initiated by the traveler or the travel preparer within the following periods, unless an unusual or emergency situation requires a shorter authorization period:

Domestic/Non-Foreign Travel

Forms initiated for domestic/non-foreign travel should reach the AO at least five working days before the scheduled date of departure.

Foreign Travel

Forms initiated for foreign travel should reach the AO at least 30 days prior to the scheduled date of departure. Before initiating travel orders involving foreign travel, see Chapter 6, International Travel, of this manual.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-71, Subpart B, Travel Authorization

3.1.2 HHS-1 - Travel Order Form

The Form [HHS-1](#), Travel Order, must only be used when the ETS cannot be used to generate an electronic travel order. The form must not be used to bypass the ETS and should only be used when necessary.

3.1.3 Additional Documentation Requirements

Frequently, travel orders require additional supporting documentation such as Form [HHS-348](#)⁶, Request and Approval for Acceptance of Payment of Travel Expenses. For specific requirements, refer to the appropriate HHS Travel Manual Chapter covering special travel topics (e.g., International Travel – Chapter 6, and Sponsored Travel – Chapter 7).

3.1.4 Travel Authorizations

The FTR permits three basic types of travel authorizations: Trip-by-trip, Limited Open, and Unlimited Open.

These travel orders must include:

1. The name of the traveler(s);
2. Proper authorization from the delegated AO;
3. Purpose of travel;
4. Any conditions or limitations on the authorization;
5. An estimate of the travel costs (for open authorizations, it should include an estimate of the travel costs over the period covered);
6. A statement that the traveler is authorized to travel; and
7. An indication as to why the travel is important and in the best interest of the Department.

The Travel Authorization needs to include enough information so that the AO can make a determination that the travel is:

1. In the best interest of the Department;

⁶ The form HHS348 is only available on the HHS Intranet and not accessible via the public internet.

2. Is being carried out by the most expeditious and/or cost effective means of transportation practicable; and
3. Is commensurate with the nature and purpose of the duties of the employee requiring such travel.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR 301-71.103

3.1.4.1 Trip-by-Trip Authorization

A trip-by-trip authorization is the preferred and usual means for authorizing travel related to TDY or a permanent or temporary change of station. The ETS is set up to require the issuance of a trip-by-trip order before a TDY travel voucher can be submitted and travel expenses can be approved for payment.

3.1.4.2 Limited Open and Unlimited Open Authorizations

If an OPDIV/STAFFDIV's management determines that these types of authorizations are appropriate and necessary due to unusual or exceptional circumstances, the following Departmental guidelines should be followed:

Limited Open Authorization

A limited open authorization permits an individual to travel without further authorization under certain specified conditions. Its use is expressly discouraged and should be restricted to only travelers who are expected, as part of their work assignment, to conduct frequent, specific, and repetitive travel within a designated area, and must frequently embark on trips without enough advance notice to obtain orders more specific as to the travel to be performed and its expected duration.

The travel order must state realistic limitations covering the specific purpose of such travel (use of general terms such as "to conduct official business" are not acceptable), geographic area, travel duration, and cost.

A limited open travel order is valid only for trips taken within the authorized specific geographical area for the stated purpose. Employees who hold this type order must be issued trip-by-trip orders for any assignments not covered by the limited open authorization.

Under no circumstances may a limited open authorization be issued to cover a wide geographic area, such as the east coast, thereby permitting the employee to travel at will and without reasonable opportunities for supervision of the travel. Limited open authorizations may not be issued to cover more than one fiscal year and must be re-validated each quarter by the delegated AO. If travel is no longer required for an employee, the order will be terminated.

Unlimited Open Authorizations

An unlimited open authorization permits an individual to travel for any purpose

without further authorization. Unlimited open authorizations for travel are reserved for use only by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Chief of Staff, the Heads of OPDIV/STAFFDIVs, and Regional Directors. This type of authorization should only be used on an exception basis, and then only when essential. Should there be a need for this type of authorization, each trip must be justified separately, and documentation must be maintained on file as to the purpose of the individual trips taken.

Note: Open authorizations (limited or unlimited) may not be issued for travel OCONUS, conference attendance, training, entitlement (such as overseas tour renewal), and relocation travel. They may not be issued to individuals who are not employees of the OPDIV or STAFFDIV. A trip-by-trip authorization must be issued under these circumstances.

3.1.4.3 Amended Orders

An amended order may be issued when a change is made to a previously approved travel document (Authorization or Voucher). It should be requested and issued when authority contained in the original order is insufficient for performance of official business. An amended document should also be issued to permit the traveler to incur, and be reimbursed for, additional allowable expenses. Travel orders should be amended when:

1. The actual day of departure or return exceeds the date of departure or return on the original authorized travel order by more than five (5) days;
2. The total actual expenses for the trip exceed the approved amount on the original travel order by the maximum threshold established by the pertinent OPDIV/STAFFDIV;
3. The itinerary needs to be changed to add an alternate TDY site; or
4. An item requiring special authorization was erroneously omitted.

3.1.5 Travel of an HHS Employee for Another Federal Agency

Travel by an HHS employee for another federal agency is to be performed in accordance with a written agreement between the HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIV and the other Federal agency. This agreement will specify the reimbursement terms of travel, per diem, and other expenses.

Two basic situations can occur when travel is performed for another Federal agency:

1. The other Federal agency will agree to reimburse the HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIV for the employee's travel costs. Under this arrangement, the HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIV will pay for the travel from its appropriated funds and subsequently obtain reimbursement from the other Federal agency. The other

Federal agency shall provide all the appropriate accounting information and their Agency Location Code (ALC) in order to expedite the interagency billing at the conclusion of the travel. Travel expenses that are paid with HHS appropriated funds are subject to all Federal and Departmental policies. Or,

2. The other Federal agency will provide all travel expense reimbursement directly to the employee, including transportation tickets, per diem, etc. The other agency is responsible for issuing the “travel order,” making all travel arrangements, and processing the travel voucher. In this case, the traveler should follow the rules and regulations of the sponsoring Federal agency.

Note: All travel orders for reimbursable travel will be supported by a copy of the agreement between the HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIV and the other Federal agency.

3.1.6 Travel for a Non-Federal Organization

See Chapter 7, Acceptance of Payment of Travel Expenses from a Non-Federal Source, for additional information regarding reimbursable travel from non-Federal sources.

3.1.7 Orders for No-Expense-to-the-Government (NETG) Travel

Official TDY travel, which is performed at no expense to the Government, should be covered by a travel authorization that shows that the traveler is on official business while absent from his/her official duty station.

For attendance at a conference, meeting, symposium, or similar event, where the employee’s time and participation are warranted, appropriated funds must be used to pay for transportation and per diem expenses. If however, the travel is in conjunction with a bona fide training activity that falls under the guidelines of the GETA, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV has the discretion to pay for all, a portion, or none of the transportation and per diem expenses. (See 5 U.S.C. 4109.)

In the event that none of the expenses is being paid, a NETG Travel Authorization should be prepared. Under such circumstances, the employee is conducting official business away from their official duty station and the travel authorization will provide the usual government coverage and protections (e.g., in case of an accident). In this scenario, there is no requirement for the employee to be placed on annual leave. “No-cost” or NETG travel authorizations should be the rare exception. Once a no-expense travel order is approved, it cannot be amended to authorize appropriated funds. (See Comptroller General decision B-192636, December 15, 1978.)

GSA contract City Pair fares can only be used for official travel when appropriated funds are used to purchase the tickets. Therefore, travelers cannot use the City Pair fares for travel conducted on a no-expense travel order.

3.1.7.1 Capping of Per Diem and Transportation Expenses

An employee who is authorized to conduct official business travel for the

OPDIV/STAFFDIV cannot be requested to pay out-of-pocket for any common carrier (i.e., airline) transportation or per diem expenses due to budget restrictions or for any other reason. Common carrier transportation and per diem reimbursements are considered entitlements, and to request an employee to pay out-of-pocket for these services could be construed as an augmentation to the appropriation. This includes a scenario, for example, where an employee or an invitational traveler says that they will waive reimbursement for meals in order to reduce the cost of trip, in an attempt to get the trip approved.

Note: An exception to this capping policy may occur when the travel is being conducted in conjunction with training activities under the GETA. In this case, an OPDIV/STAFFDIV has the discretion to pay for all, a portion, or none of the transportation and per diem expenses, and may authorize payment only for those expenses it deems necessary to achieve the objectives of the training program.

3.1.8 Prompt Cancellation of Travel Orders

Travel orders will be canceled as soon as it is determined that the employee will not travel or incur expenses under the authority of the order. This is particularly important near the end of a fiscal year when unnecessarily encumbered funds may preclude the performance of other necessary travel.

3.1.9 Travel Orders Covering Two Fiscal Years

Travel and transportation expenses of TDY travel spanning more than one fiscal year should be charged against the appropriations for the fiscal year in which the expenses are incurred, rather than solely in the fiscal year in which the travel is ordered (see Comptroller General Decision Letter B-238110, May 7, 1991).

When travel is to be taken beyond the end of the fiscal year, cost estimates for TDY travel will be provided separately for the two fiscal years involved, as follows:

1. Tickets for round trip transportation will be charged against the appropriation current at the time the employee embarks on TDY travel, regardless of return date.
2. Per diem and miscellaneous travel costs, including Rental Cars and mileage reimbursement for Privately Owned Vehicles (POVs), will be assigned to the applicable fiscal year appropriation in which they are incurred:
 - a. Costs incurred from the date travel is to begin, through the end of the fiscal year; and
 - b. Costs incurred from the beginning of the next fiscal year, through the date travel is to end.

3.2 Travel Vouchers

3.2.1 General

Employees traveling on official business are expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that they would exercise if traveling on personal business; in other words, follow the “prudent person” rule.

Employees are responsible for performing travel in accordance with the provisions of the FTR, the HHS Travel Manual, and supplemental policy/procedural guidance issued by their OPDIV/STAFFDIV. Travelers are also responsible for keeping adequate records of their expenditures, and providing the necessary facts, details, and supporting evidence for the proper preparation of their vouchers.

In addition, in accordance with the Debt Collection Act of 1996, employees are required to receive their reimbursements for travel vouchers via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), unless the traveler can demonstrate that a hardship would occur if the employee does not have an account with a financial institution or an authorized payment agent.

3.2.2 Vouchers Submitted in a Timely Manner

In accordance with FTR [301-52.7](#), an employee must file their voucher claim within five (5) working days following completion of the official business trip. (Note: If on long-term TDY travel greater than 30 nights or more, a voucher must be filed at a minimum of every 30 days, or in accordance with the appropriate OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy.) Failure to adhere to this regulatory provision is considered as a fiscal irregularity and is grounds for disciplinary action in line with the employee’s OPDIV/STAFFDIV’S policies and procedures (see Table 3 - Timely Voucher Submittal Recommended Table of Actions, below for the HHS Travel Office recommended steps) or similarly established document.

To meet the above requirement, a traveler must have:

1. Prepared their own voucher claim inclusive of an electronic certification or hard copy signature, or;
2. Submitted their receipts to a designated Travel (Voucher) Preparer and certified or signed the voucher claim.

Recommended Steps

If neither of these actions has occurred within the five (5) working day period [seven (7) calendar days], the HHS Travel Office recommends the following course of disciplinary action:

1. Step 1: Email notification is to be sent to the traveler and the delegated AO(s) as listed in the ETS, by the HHS Travel Office. If the AO is not the employee’s direct supervisor, the AO must notify the employee’s direct supervisor. The email will advise the traveler that the voucher is overdue and that he/she has 10 calendar days

from the date of the email to meet the above requirement.

2. Step 2: If the voucher claim is not prepared within the above 10 calendar-day period a follow up email notification is to be sent to the traveler and the delegated AO(s) as listed in the ETS, by the HHS Travel Office. If the AO is not the employee’s direct supervisor, the AO must notify the employee’s direct supervisor. The email will advise the traveler that the voucher is overdue and that he/she has 20 calendar days from the date of the email to meet the above requirement.
3. Step 3: If the voucher claim is not prepared within the above 20 calendar-day period, a letter will be sent to the traveler and the delegated AO(s) as listed in the ETS, by the HHS Travel Office. The letter will advise the traveler that if a voucher claim is not filed within 45 calendar days from the date of this letter that the supervisor is to prepare a letter of formal disciplinary action. If the AO is not the employee’s direct supervisor, the AO must notify the employee’s direct supervisor.
4. Step 4: If the voucher claim is not prepared within the 45 calendar-day period, the delegated AO(s) as listed in the ETS, must notify the employee’s direct supervisor that they need to advise the traveler that a formal letter of disciplinary action, including a negative statement on the employee’s performance rating, is to be issued. The formal letter is to remain in the traveler’s official personnel file for a one-year period.

Table 3 - Timely Voucher Submittal Recommended Table of Actions

Time Frame	Action
After 5 working days	Email to traveler and delegated AO
After 10 calendar days	Follow up email to traveler and delegated AO
After 20 calendar days	Result in formal disciplinary action
After 45 calendar days	Employee supervisor notified and required to prepare a letter similar to an adverse impact (personnel action) and will remain in the employee’s file for one year.

Please consult with the appropriate OPDIV/STAFFDIV’s OHR for specific disciplinary processes and procedures.

In order to lend support to the above initiative, the PSC is to distribute a report of outstanding voucher claims to each OPDIV/STAFFDIV STO on a quarterly basis. The PSC believes that better enforcement of the above regulation will enhance HHS’ ability to comply with the Zero Tolerance requirement as it pertains to the travel charge card reporting requirements under OMB Circular No.A-123.

Every voucher must be complete as to form, facts, details, and supporting documentation in accordance with the provisions of the FTR, the HHS Travel Manual, and any supplemental policy and procedural requirements issued by the relevant OPDIV/STAFFDIV. Otherwise,

there may be suspensions of voucher payment and disallowances. The traveler is responsible for the correctness of all statements set forth in the voucher. Unusual items should be fully explained. Falsification of an item on an expense voucher may result in forfeiture of the claim. The penalty prescribed by law for presenting a false claim is a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment for not more than five years, or both.

3.2.3 OPDIV/STAFFDIV Management Controls

Each OPDIV or STAFFDIV must establish a system of management controls to ensure that:

1. Travel vouchers are reviewed appropriately and timely by knowledgeable AOs;
2. Approved travel vouchers are forwarded to finance offices on a timely basis electronically through the ETS;
3. Employees are notified promptly of any disallowed claims, with a detailed explanation as to why the claim was disallowed;
4. An official process is established and communicated to employees about appealing a disallowed claim. If an employee disagrees with the appeals decision, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV will advise the employee of his/her right to request review of the claim by the CBCA in accordance with the CBCA's instructions available at www.cbca.gsa.gov. CBCA will not hear appeals from bargaining unit members unless the applicable collective bargaining agreement explicitly and clearly excludes a travel/relocation matter from the negotiated grievance process; see Matter of Julio Gagot-Mangual, GSBCA No. 16117-TRAV; and
5. Procedures are established by approving offices to meet documentation retention requirements for travel vouchers and supporting documentation in accordance with General Records Schedule 9, Travel and Transportation Records, issued by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For example, travel orders, original vouchers, and supporting documents covering passenger transportation and per diem charges must be maintained for six (6) years and three (3) months after the voucher has been paid. Use of scanned electronic images for receipts meets the six (6) years and three (3) months requirements for Schedule 6 Accountable Officers' Accounts Records. The original receipts must be kept, by the traveler, for two (2) years, in accordance with the HHS Records Management Schedule as approved by NARA in schedule DAA-0468-2011-0001 in July 2011.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-52, Claiming Reimbursement
- FTR Part 301-71, Subpart C, Travel - Claims for Reimbursement

3.2.4 SF-1012 - Travel Voucher

Standard [Form 1012](#), Travel Voucher, is the standard hard copy travel voucher used within the Government. The SF 1012 must only be used when the ETS cannot be used to generate an electronic voucher.

3.3 Travel Advances

This section provides supplemental guidance for the authorization, issuance, and liquidation of travel advances. The provisions of this section apply to both domestic and foreign travel of individuals whose travel expenses are paid for by an HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIV. Advance of funds for change of official station are covered in the FTR Chapter 302 and are limited to the specific relocation situation for which an employee may receive an advance of funds. (See Chapter 12, Relocation Allowances.)

3.3.1 Employees Eligible for Advance of Funds

In general, employees, intermittent experts or consultants, and invitational travelers, who are authorized to travel on official business, may be eligible for an advance of funds. Travel advances may not be authorized or issued to contractors. According to the FTR, the use of cash or direct deposit travel advances should be minimized.

3.3.1.1 Exceptions

It is HHS policy that:

1. An employee who refuses to apply for and/or use the travel charge card for official travel and is not covered by an exemption, will not be authorized a cash travel advance from the finance office (refer to Section 10.2.5, Refusal to Apply for and/or Use the Government Travel Charge Card); and
2. An employee whose travel charge card is cancelled due to misuse, as defined in Section 10.2, Mandatory Use of Government Contractor-Issued Travel Charge Card, is considered to have elected by his/her misconduct not to use the card as required for payment of travel expenses, which disqualifies him/her from receiving an advance (refer to FTR [301-71.300](#) and Section 3.3.2.1 below).

Note: Check with the appropriate OPDIV/STAFFDIV finance office to verify if additional exceptions are provided.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR 301-51, Subpart C, Receiving Travel Advances
- FTR 301-71, Subpart D, Accounting for Travel Advances

3.3.2 Method of Travel Advance Payment

Heads of OPDIV/STAFFDIVs or their designees will establish travel advance policies within the requirements of the FTR and this manual.

In accordance with FTR [301-71.303](#), the following data must be captured for each request for an advance:

1. The name and social security number of the employee who has an advance;
2. The amount of each advance;

3. The date of its issuance; and
4. The date of reconciliation for unused portions of all travel advances.

HHS automated systems must authorize, control, and liquidate travel advances in accordance with the requirements of the FTR and this manual. They should provide data for automatic aging of outstanding travel advances based on the end-of-trip date and generate follow-up notices to the traveler and administrative staff concerning delinquent advances. If a travel advance must be authorized outside of an automated system, the [SF 1038](#), Application and Account for Advance of Funds, should be used, and the necessary management controls should be established through manual and/or electronic means.

A traveler should allow seven (7) business days prior to the travel date to ensure the advance is calculated and properly processed by the ETS and the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's financial system. If this requirement is not met, the electronic transfer of funds may not be processed and deposited in time for the scheduled travel.

3.3.2.1 Calculating Allowable Advance

The maximum allowable travel advance shall be calculated as follows:

Employees with Government-issued IBA Travel Charge Cards (ATM Advances)

Employees who have an open IBA may be authorized a travel advance and are expected to obtain the authorized advance using an ATM. An ATM cash advance may be authorized to cover anticipated out-of-pocket incidental travel expenses, such as ground transportation or occasional meals, which generally cannot be purchased with the charge card. See Section 10.3.5.3, Exceptions to the Use of the Travel Charge Card, for a list of items exempt from the mandatory use of the travel charge card. Travel Advances should be withdrawn not more than two (2) business days prior to the trip.

In unusual circumstances (such as travel to remote locations), the AO may determine that an employee will not be able to use the ATM feature to cover all of his/her anticipated cash out-of-pocket travel expenses and may authorize the issuance of a non-ATM cash travel advance from the servicing finance office. Advances may be in the form of check, EFT, Declining Balance Cards, or Pre-Paid Cards. The method of payment is up to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV.

Note: The employee may not be able to use the IBA at all in some remote locations (e.g., certain foreign countries). In such instances, the travel advance may include funds to cover expected travel expenses such as lodging and meals. However, in the case of travel to a remote location, the traveler must be able to explain how they will receive an advance direct deposited, via EFT, if banks and ATM machines are not available.

Individuals Exempt from the Use of the Government-issued IBA Travel Charge Card (Non-ATM Advances/Cash Advances)

Those individuals who are exempt from the mandatory use of the Government-issued travel charge card (as defined in Section 10.2), such as infrequent travelers and those who are not by policy prohibited from receiving an advance, may request a non-ATM travel advance from their servicing finance office. Advances may be in the form of check, EFT, Declining Balance Cards, or Pre-Paid Cards. The method of payment is up to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV. A travel advance shall not exceed 60 percent of the total estimated M&IE, lodging, and other miscellaneous expenses authorized on the travel order. All common carrier (e.g., airfare) expenses should be obtained through the TMC and charged to a CBA; therefore, those expenses should not be included when calculating the advance.

However, that if the employee's supervisor determines that the 60 percent limitation will result in a justifiable and significant financial hardship on the employee, the supervisor with the concurrence of the AO may in their discretion advance up to 100 percent of the estimated reimbursable expenses for an individual trip. The justification must be documented on the travel authorization and uploaded to the ETS for audit purposes. The supervisor and AO should notify the Agency/Organization Program Coordinator (A/OPC) of the increased advance amount. Heads of OPDIV/STAFFDIVs, or their designees, may issue policies, which are more restrictive regarding the issuance of travel advances to their employees

An exception to this is that under extremely limited circumstances, a traveler performing TDY travel in a foreign country may be required to procure passenger transportation that cannot be purchased using a Government-issued travel charge card or through the TMC on a CBA. In such cases, where the traveler would have to pay these expenses out-of-pocket, they may be included in the calculation of the travel advance.

For all travel within the CONUS, the amount advanced must not exceed estimated expenses for a period of 45 days. For foreign travel, consideration may be given to time in travel status and time required for submission and payment of the employee's travel voucher.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-51, Subpart C, Receiving Travel Advances

3.3.3 Liquidation of Travel Advances

The employee shall repay any portion of his/her travel advance not used for reimbursable expenses. The amount of the advance must be stated on the travel voucher in accordance with the provisions listed below. If the voucher is for an amount less than what was advanced, the employee must pay the difference in cash, by check, or by money order made payable to HHS or the specific OPDIV/STAFFDIV by name, in accordance with the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's travel management procedures. Payment must be made by the employee as soon as the amount of the unused advance is established with certainty.

3.3.3.1 Specific Trip

When the advance is for a specific trip, a travel voucher must be submitted within five (5) working days after completion of the trip for which the advance was issued. The voucher must reflect the amount of the advance and any amount not used during travel that the employee should repay, based upon the expenses claimed.

A notice of any payment due for unused advance funds will be sent to the employee by the finance office. The notice will include a description of how to dispute the amount due, penalties for late payment, and other applicable requirements and procedures.

Payment of the amount of the unused advance must be received from the employee within 15 days from the date of the notice or the date any timely dispute over calculation of the amount is resolved, whichever is later. If payment is not received by the due date, interest will accrue on the amount due to the Government (unliquidated amount) and the entire amount (including interest) may be recovered by offset against any monies otherwise payable to the employee.

3.3.3.2 Long-term Travel and Multiple Vouchers

For extended and long-term TDY, the traveler should be informed that travel advances are issued in 45-day increments, and of the necessity to submit his/her travel vouchers through proper channels to the paying finance office at a minimum of every 30 days and immediately upon completion of the travel. The amount of any unused advance will be calculated for each voucher separately, and must be refunded as provided above.

At any time the finance office deems it necessary, an employee may be required to liquidate the outstanding balance, reduce the amount, or justify continuation of a travel advance.

3.3.3.3 Trip Cancellation

In the event of cancellation or indefinite postponement of travel for which an advance has been issued, the employee shall immediately refund the full amount of the advance.

3.3.4 Control of Travel Advances

Each OPDIV/STAFFDIV must maintain travel advance records with appropriate safeguards and review procedures. Outstanding travel advances should be reviewed monthly. Normally, the review can be made at the same time that travel advance records are reconciled with the general ledger control account. The primary purpose of the review is to identify travel advance balances that have not been reduced during the periods specified below. Unless the finance office is already aware of, and is satisfied with, the reason why a balance has not been reduced, appropriate recovery action should be taken.

Note: Each OPDIV/STAFFDIV's finance office is responsible for the control of travel advances under these policies. However, each office may establish a system of controls where the authorizing program office shares responsibility for monitoring and controlling travel advances within their offices. In this case, it is the finance office's responsibility to issue clear procedures for program offices to follow in terms of monitoring and controlling travel advances, including how to handle delinquent, outstanding balances.

Employees must liquidate advances upon separation or transfer from the Department. Each OPDIV/STAFFDIV will take action to insure that employees leaving the Department have cleared all outstanding advances prior to their departure.

3.4 Travel Reservations, Frequent Traveler Programs, and OPDIV/STAFFDIV Travel Programs

This section provides supplemental guidance to HHS civilian employees, invitational travelers, and OPDIV/STAFFDIV management on making official travel reservations, participating in frequent traveler programs, and implementing OPDIV/STAFFDIV travel programs.

3.4.1 Mandatory Use of Government Travel Management Services for Reservations

HHS provides travel management services using the ETS and a commercial travel agent through the contracted TMC. In accordance with FTR [301-50.3](#), employees must use those services to arrange for common carrier transportation, lodging, and rental car. Unless specifically authorized in the FTR or JFTR, no other travel agencies may be used to purchase travel services for official Government travel. Additionally, the FTR and JFTR require that all official travel reservations be made through a contracted TMC.

If an employee uses an unauthorized travel agent, unauthorized TMC, or unauthorized travel service such as Orbitz, Travelocity, etc., the employee will be responsible for all additional costs that result from the unauthorized use including service fees, cancellation penalties, or other additional costs (e.g. higher airfares, rental car charges, or hotel rates.) In addition, HHS Employees may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy.

3.4.1.1 TMC Exemptions

HHS policy allows five exceptions from mandatory use of a government-contracted TMC for reservations:

1. If a government agency or a non-Federal organization sponsors a conference and arranges for a block of rooms to be available for Federal attendees at a specified rate (not to exceed 25 percent over the lodging rate for the area) in one or more specific hotels, the traveler or their office may make the reservation directly with the contracted hotel for the conference or the conference organizer.
2. If there is an emergency where it is not possible to use the government-contracted travel management services for arranging for common carrier transportation, lodging, and/or car rental, the STO or their designee may grant an exception for the specific travel arrangement, if appropriate justification is provided. For information related to disaster response, please see Chapter 11, Travel – Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Services including National Special Security Events (NSSE) and similar situations.
3. For travel in remote areas, OCONUS, where it is not possible to use the government-contracted travel management services for arranging for

common carrier transportation, lodging, and/or car rental (e.g., in developing nations where the TMC cannot be used to reserve flights on certain airlines). Also, see Section 4.1.3, Procuring Common Carrier Transportation.

4. When the GSA FedRooms Program is used to secure lodging accommodations and it is not possible to use the government-contracted travel management services for such arrangements since reservations must be made through the GSA program directly.
5. When Extended Stay and Long-Term Lodging is obtained under GSA's Transportation, Delivery, and Relocation Solutions (TDRS) Schedule 48, the Emergency Lodging Services (ELS) Blanket Purchase Agreement, or through a Lodging Negotiations and Management Services provider under the Travel Services Solutions Schedule 599.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-50, Arranging for Travel Services
- FTR Part 301-73, Travel Programs

3.4.2 Frequent Traveler Programs and Promotional Materials

3.4.2.1 General Policy

A traveler who receives a promotional item, such as frequent flyer miles, upgrades, or access to carrier clubs, as a result of using travel or transportation services obtained at Federal government expense, or accepted under 31 U.S.C.1353, may retain the promotional item for personal use, if such item is obtained under the same conditions as those offered to the general public and at no additional cost to the Government.

3.4.2.2 Redeeming Frequent Traveler Benefits and Promotional Materials

Employees may use frequent traveler benefits or promotional materials earned on official travel to obtain travel services for a subsequent official travel assignment(s) or retain such benefits for personal use, including upgrading to a higher class of service. Employees may not select or choose a travel service provider (e.g. airline, hotel, etc.) based upon whether or not it provides frequent traveler benefits nor to gain frequent traveler benefits for personal use. OPDIV/STAFFDIVs may not authorize purchase of a higher cost ticket from the TMC with the express purpose of enabling an employee to apply their frequent flyer miles for upgraded seating. When redeeming frequent traveler benefits or promotional materials for subsequent official travel, the employee must comply with governing Federal travel regulations, such as the mandatory use of the travel management services and contract City Pair fares. Exceptions to these regulations may be found in FTR [301-73.102](#), Mandatory Use of Travel Management Service, and FTR [301-10.107](#) and [301-10.108](#), Mandatory Use of Contract City-Pair Fares. (Note that if an employee is redeeming a free round-trip frequent-flyer ticket for use on official business travel, at no cost to the Government,

an exemption permits use of a non-contract City Pair carrier.)

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-10, Subpart B - Use of Contract City-Pair Fares
- FTR 301-71.300 (policy governing use of travel advances)

3.4.3 OPDIV/STAFFDIV Travel Management Programs

HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIVs are responsible for providing a travel management program for their employees that will include travel management services, commercial passenger transportation services, and travel payment system services. OPDIV/STAFFDIVs are responsible for establishing and communicating supplemental policies and procedures to govern the use of these travel management, transportation, and payment services, as appropriate.

OPDIV/STAFFDIV travel management and payment systems should provide for the procurement of travel services through the Government-issued IBA travel charge card or CBA.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-10.107, Use of Contract City-Pair Fares
- FTR Part 301-50, Arranging for Travel Services
- FTR Part 301-73, Travel Programs

4. Passenger Travel and Allowances

4.1 Transportation Expenses

This section provides supplemental guidance for HHS employees, invitational travelers, and OPDIV/STAFFDIVs regarding allowable transportation expenses for TDY travel.

4.1.1 Transportation Expenses - General

HHS AOs, as well as HHS travelers, will follow the provisions of the FTR and these supplemental HHS policy guidelines in authorizing, incurring, and approving transportation expenses.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-10, Transportation Expenses
- FTR Part 301-70, Subpart B, Agency Responsibilities for Policies and Procedures Relating to Transportation
- FTR Part 301-72, Agency Responsibilities Related to Common Carrier Transportation

These sections of the FTR provide detailed guidance to the employee and to the agency's management regarding transportation expense policies. Topics in FTR [Part 301-10](#) include:

- Subpart A: General (transportation method and routing)
- Subpart B: Common Carrier Transportation
 - Air: Mandatory use of contract City Pair fares
 - Air: Fly America requirements
 - Air: Compensation for denial of boarding and voluntary vacating of seat
 - Air: When Other than Coach Class is allowed
 - Train: When Other than Coach Class is allowed
 - Ship: U.S. flag ship requirement and class of accommodation
 - Local transit system use (bus, subway, etc.)
- Subpart C: Government Automobile and Aircraft use
- Subpart D: Privately Owned Vehicle use
- Subpart E: Special Conveyance use (taxis, shuttles, and rental cars)

4.1.2 Transportation Method and Routing, and Gratuities

4.1.2.1 Transportation Method and Routing

The HHS AO is responsible for determining the method(s) of transportation most advantageous to the Government when cost, timing, and other factors are considered. If actual travel time requires only part of a day, employees are expected to work or take approved leave for their remaining duty hours in that day. (See Section 4.1.10.3, Scheduling Travel to Avoid Lost or Unproductive Duty Time, for further explanation.) If an employee travels by a non-authorized method of transportation,

any additional expenses will be borne by the employee. For example, if an employee is authorized to travel via common carrier and chooses to travel via POV, the total constructive cost of the trip via the authorized method (common carrier) must be calculated (including transportation, per diem, etc.) and then compared to the total actual cost of the trip via POV. The employee's reimbursement is limited to actual expense, not to exceed the total constructive cost.

The HHS AO must only authorize travel to and from official duty destination points, unless the traveler is authorized to use a POV from their residence directly to a common carrier terminal. In addition, travel-approving officials may require a cost comparison between different arrival and departure airports (see <http://apps.fas.gsa.gov/citypairs/search/index.cfm?ft>.) If an employee travels by an indirect route or interrupts travel by a direct route for personal convenience, reimbursement will be limited to the cost of travel by a direct route or on an uninterrupted basis, and the employee will be responsible for any additional costs. Refer to Section 4.1.3, Procuring Common Carrier Transportation, and Section 4.1.4, Mandatory Use of Contract Fares and When Contract Fares May Not Be Used, for additional information about indirect or interrupted travel for personal convenience. For information about leave, in conjunction with TDY travel, see Section 5.2.2, Reimbursement for TDY Travel in Conjunction with Approved Leave - TDY Domestic/Non-Foreign.

Constructed Cost Example: A traveler whose official station is Washington, DC, is attending a conference in Ft. Worth, TX February 6 through February 9. The traveler would like to arrive in Ft. Worth on February 5 in the evening. The traveler has family in Waco, TX who will be driving into Ft. Worth on February 9 in the evening to take the traveler back to Waco for the weekend to visit. The traveler will be taking leave on February 10 and February 13. The traveler wants to return to DC on February 13 in the afternoon from Waco.

The City Pair price from BWI (DC) to DFW (Ft. Worth, TX) is \$307 one way. The total flight reservation for trip would be \$614 if the traveler were flying back and forth from the official station.

The traveler was able to find a non-contract flight from ACT (Waco, TX) for \$420. The traveler would be able to exchange the City Pair fare, through the TMC, and since they would be eligible for reimbursement up to \$307, they would be responsible for the additional \$113 for the return flight home from Waco, TX.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

1. FTR Part 301-10, Subpart A, General - Transportation Expenses

4.1.2.2 Transportation Gratuities

It is HHS policy that tips, to a taxi, shuttle service, or courtesy transportation driver are limited to 15 percent of the charge for service. If there is no service charge, the limit for tips is \$5. Employees are expected to make maximum use of courtesy transportation (e.g., free airport/hotel shuttle service) in lieu of incurring charges for

the same transportation. Transportation Gratuities should be listed as a miscellaneous expense on the Travel Voucher in the ETS.

Note: This expense should be recorded as a transportation expense on the voucher; it is not included in the “incidentals” portion of per diem.

4.1.3 Procuring Common Carrier Transportation

4.1.3.1 Prohibition Against the Use of Personal Funds for Common Carrier Transportation

Employees are required to use a government individually billed travel charge card, CBA, or a Government Transportation Request (GTR) to pay for common carrier transportation services. If a new employee or an invitational or infrequent traveler, who is unaware of proper procedures, makes an unauthorized purchase of common carrier transportation using personal funds, reimbursement to the employee will be limited to the constructed cost of such transportation using the City Pair Fare (if no City Pair is available, the fare provided by the TMC will be used) and authorized method of payment.

Unauthorized purchases of common carrier transportation include:

1. Use of personal credit cards;
2. Cash withdrawals from an ATM using the Government travel charge card; and
3. Checks, both personal and Travelers.

Employees who repeatedly use personal funds to pay for common carrier expenses may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy and Table 4 below.

Table 4 - Purchase of Common Carrier with Personal Funds Table of Actions

Offense	Action
First Offense	Reimbursed up to the constructed cost of the City Pair Fare
Second Offense	Reimbursed up to the constructed cost of the City Pair Fare and may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy

For passenger transportation services costing \$100 or less, an employee may use personal funds to pay for the services only when use of the Government individually-billed travel charge card, CBA, and GTR are not practicable.

For passenger transportation services costing more than \$100, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's AO can authorize or approve the use of a cash-equivalent purchase method to obtain a reduced fare for group, charter, or excursion arrangements, or to procure non-contract carrier transportation under emergency circumstances and/or where the use of other methods is not possible. Such as in developing nations where the TMC cannot be used to reserve flights on certain airlines. To justify the use of personal funds in excess of \$100, both the employee and the employee's AO must certify on the travel claim the necessity for such use.

4.1.3.2 Personal Liability for Purchase of Indirect Route Transportation Tickets for Personal Convenience

Employees must travel to and from their official destination points by the usually traveled route. Employees who for personal convenience travel by an indirect route or interrupt travel by a direct route are personally liable for any additional costs. In the case of indirect or interrupted travel, reimbursement cannot exceed the constructive cost of direct routing or the actual cost of travel, whichever is less.

Travel Example: An employee decides to travel by an indirect route for personal convenience. They exchange a refundable transportation ticket (contract fare) issued for the official travel duty locations, for the personal purchase of a transportation ticket for the indirect route. The employee is personally liable for the entire cost of the personal ticket if the official travel is subsequently canceled by the OPDIV/STAFFDIV.

This is because the Government ticket was refundable, so the constructive cost of the canceled official trip to the Government was zero. It was the employee's personal choice to exchange the refundable direct route ticket for an indirect route ticket for personal convenience. Also, see Section 4.1.4.2, When Contract Fares May Not Be Used, for personal convenience and indirect travel.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-10, Subpart A, General
- FTR Part 301-51, Subpart B, Paying for Common Carrier Transportation

4.1.3.3 Government Liability for Authorizing Restricted, Non-Contract Fares for Common Carrier Transportation

The FTR Part [301-10](#), Subpart B, Common Carrier Transportation, lists at [301-10.107](#) (Use of Contract City Pair Fares) exceptional circumstances when a contract government fare does not have to be used. One such exception is when a lower fare is available to the public, which results in a lower overall cost of the trip to the Government (FTR [301-10-107\(c\)](#)). If the exception is authorized, by the appropriate delegated official, the ticket still needs to be booked through the contracted TMC.

Use of non-contract fares due to lower cost should not be authorized unless the AO and the employee has full confidence that the trip will occur on the precise schedule

indicated when the non-contract fare ticket is purchased unless no charge will accrue if the ticket must be exchanged or cancelled. If a traveler prepays for common carrier transportation (air, rail, etc.) prior to the departure, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV cannot reimburse travelers for the expense until after the trip has been completed.

Domestic/Non-Foreign/CONUS

It is HHS policy that AOs may not approve use of a non-contract fare under this low cost exception, as per FTR [301-10-107](#)(c), unless the cost saving on the non-contract fare ticket will be at least 40 percent of the total cost of the contract fare (i.e., the ticket price is 60 percent of the contract fare or less). If the exception is authorized by the appropriate delegated official, the ticket still needs to be booked through the contracted TMC.

International

It is HHS policy that AOs may not approve use of a non-contract fare under this low cost exception, as per FTR [301-10-107](#)(c), unless the cost saving on the non-contract fare ticket will be at least 15 percent of the total cost of the contract fare (i.e., the ticket price is 85 percent of the contract fare or less). If the exception is authorized, by the appropriate delegated official, the ticket still needs to be booked through the contracted TMC. For additional requirements for International Travel, see Chapter 6.

If the AO authorizes the purchase of a restricted or non-refundable, less-expensive commercial fare for the official trip and the Government unilaterally undertakes an action (such as canceling the trip or changing the travel dates) for purely official business-related reasons that result in:

1. The inability of the traveler to use the restricted ticket and obtain a refund; or
2. The incurrence of a cancellation or re-issuance fee to change dates,

Then the Government is liable for the costs arising from its actions.

The employee must submit such an unused authorized ticket to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV, according to its procedures.

However, the Government is not liable for:

1. Any cancellation or re-issuance fee, if the reason for the change in ticketed flight is personal and/or initiated by employee request or choice, rather than being a unilateral action by the Government for solely work-related reasons; and/or
2. Any additional costs resulting from personal actions taken by the employee, such as exchanging an authorized restricted commercial fare for direct travel on official business for a different commercial fare in order to accommodate indirect travel for personal convenience. See Section 4.1.3.2, Personal Liability for Purchase of Indirect Route Transportation Tickets for Personal Convenience.

4.1.3.4 Accountability for Tickets and Other Transportation Documents

Employees are responsible for all transportation tickets and other transportation documents for official travel issued to them. Employees may be personally liable for any additional cost for official travel resulting from improper safeguarding of these transportation documents. For example, employees may be personally responsible for any airline fee to reissue a lost or stolen airline ticket for official travel. Employees must submit any unused tickets, coupons, or other evidence of refund to their OPDIV/STAFFDIV or contract TMC, in accordance with OPDIV/STAFFDIV procedures.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-51, Subpart B, Paying for Common Carrier Transportation
- FTR Part 301-72, Agency Responsibilities Related to Common Carrier Transportation

4.1.4 Mandatory Use of Contract Fares and When Contract Fares May Not Be Used

4.1.4.1 Mandatory Use of Contract City Pair Fares

If the GSA City Pair contract fare for passenger transportation services is available to an employee for official travel, the employee must use the contract carrier, unless one or more of the exceptions listed in FTR [301-10.107](#) applies. The employee is personally liable for any additional costs or penalties incurred resulting from unauthorized use of non-contract service. See section 4.1.3.3 above for additional guidance on the use of restricted, non-contract fares.

Contract airfares may be used when an employee takes annual leave at the TDY duty station before or after the official travel assignment when there is no deviation of routing from the official travel points. However, OPDIV/STAFFDIVs may issue policies, which are more restrictive, especially when extensive leave will be taken at the TDY station in advance of the official travel. Refer to Section 4.1.10.1, Common Carrier Transportation.

If a traveler works in a market with more than one airport, such as Washington, DC, the traveler should provide a cost comparison showing the total constructed cost travelling from each of the available airports, including round-trip airfare and ground transportation. The cost comparison should be uploaded into the ETS. The traveler should use the airport with the lowest constructed cost. In addition, the AO may do their own cost comparison for any trip and may direct the traveler to use the airport that is most advantageous to the Government.

Use of Capacity Controlled Contract [-CA] fares

In addition to the typical contract City Pair airfare [YCA], contract carriers will sometimes offer reduced-rate capacity controlled fares, known as [-CA] fares, for certain City Pair flights. If the contract carrier offers a capacity controlled [-CA] fare,

the reduced-rate fares will appear right next to the [YCA] on the GSA City-Pair website: <http://apps.fas.gsa.gov/citypairs/search/index.cfm?ft>

Capacity controlled [-CA] fares can be reserved far in advance and purchased two days in advance of travel, like the [YCA] fare. They can be exchanged and are fully refundable with no fees or penalties. However, if a traveler changes their reservation, there is no guarantee a [-CA] fare will be available as seating is based on a limited inventory. It is recommended that travelers book early when trying to procure the [-CA] fare. These fares have the same benefits as the [YCA] fares and can save the agency up to 40 percent of the [YCA] airfare costs.

4.1.4.2 When Contract Fares May Not Be Used

Official Travel Being Paid Directly by Non-Federal Sources

GSA contract airfares should only be used for official travel that is being paid by Federal funds. This includes approved HHS-348 sponsored travel under FTR Part 304, Payment of Travel Expenses from a Non-Federal Source, when the agency pays for the employee's transportation and is the Non-Federal source reimburses the agency (this should only occur on an exceptional basis). Contract fares should not be used for official travel being paid directly by other funding sources (personal or non-Federal organizations). For example, contract fares should not be used for the travel of an intern whose salary and travel expenses during his/her internship with HHS are being paid directly by a State government.

Personal Travel and Official Travel by an Indirect Route for Personal Convenience

GSA contract airfares may not be authorized for personal travel by employees. Personal travel includes when an employee, for personal convenience, travels by an indirect route or interrupts travel by a direct route on an official travel assignment. Employees who choose to travel by an indirect route for personal convenience may not obtain government contract fares for the indirect route portions of their trip, which are considered personal travel. In addition, they may not use the Government travel charge card or a CBA to pay for tickets for these indirect travel points. Usually, the employee will be issued a round-trip ticket (at the Government contract fare, if available) by the OPDIV's TMC for the direct route to and from the official duty points. If the employee chooses to travel by an indirect route for personal convenience, they can request the TMC to exchange a part or all of the Government authorized ticket for travel by an indirect route. See Section 4.1.3.2, Personal Liability for Purchase of Indirect Route Transportation Tickets for Personal Convenience.

Contractors (Including Cost-Reimbursable Contractors)

Use of GSA contract carrier airline passenger fares is governed by GSA's contracts with the airlines. These contracts provide that contractors (including cost-reimbursable contractors) are not eligible to use GSA's contract city fares.

Government contract fares must not be issued to a contractor, nor should a contractor be placed on an Invitational Travel Order.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-10, Subpart B (Common Carrier Transportation), 301-10.107-.117

4.1.5 Coach Class and Other than Coach Class Upgrades

Employees must use coach class accommodations for travel by common carrier (air, rail, bus, etc.) unless specifically authorized/approved to use a higher class of service in accordance with the provisions of [FTR 301-10](#), Subpart B. Travelers should pay strict attention to the FTR definitions of the different service classes because airlines frequently identify them by a different term. For example, the FTR states that when an airline flight only has two classes of accommodations, the higher class is considered to be First Class, regardless of the term used by the airline for that class (such as Business Class). Employees must follow the FTR class of service definitions.

For Other than Coach Class upgrades due to special needs, see Section 5.2.5, Travel of an Employee with Special Needs.

For HHS travelers, the following guidance applies for all Other than Coach Class travel requests. These instructions supersede all previous directives for Other than Coach Class travel. Managers should discourage Other than Coach Class travel whenever possible.

HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIVs engaged in travel have the primary responsibility to ensure any Other than Coach Class travel is consistent with the Department and Government's mandate to operate efficiently and effectively.

HHS travelers must submit their requests for Other than Coach Class travel along with their requests for Travel Authorization, as appropriate, via the ETS. A justification memorandum must be attached to the travel request and must accompany the travel authorization.

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV AO must review and approve both the memorandum and any required cost-analysis justification, before authorizing the purchase of Other than Coach Class accommodations.

4.1.5.1 ETS Recommendations

The ETS currently triggers a conditional route to designated approving officials when a trip contains Other than Coach Class travel. The HHS Travel office also recommends using the memorandum on the HHS Travel Office website located at <http://www.hhs.gov/travel>.

The HHS Travel Office recommends that OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs also turn on the pre-audit in the ETS that will trigger when a Travel Authorization has an Other than Coach Class fare. The pre-audit is called "BUS or 1st Class." The pre-audit will state, "First or Business Class has been selected." If the Travel Authorization is for an international trip, please attach a justification memorandum located at

www.hhs.gov/travel. (This is a free form text field and the text can be modified; see Table 5 below.)

Table 5 - Other than Coach Class Pre-Audit Set Up in ETS

Conditional Routing	Message Displayed
BUS or 1st Class Air	First Class or Business Class has been selected. If this TA is for an international trip please attach a justification memorandum along with cost comparison located at www.hhs.gov/travel .

4.1.5.2 Other than Coach Class Accommodations – First Class

HHS employees may request Other than Coach Class (First Class) accommodations only under the following circumstances:

1. There is no space available in coach class, and the trip cannot be scheduled on other flights/carriers or routed in time to accomplish the purpose of travel, which is so urgent the travel cannot be postponed;
2. The physical condition of the traveler requires use of Other than Coach Class travel service, as documented by a letter signed by the traveler's personal physician, specialist, or other medical provider as described in Section, 5.2.5 Travel of an Employee with Special Needs;
3. Other than Coach Class accommodations are required for security purpose(s), as documented in a letter from the Chief of Security of the Department;
4. When required because of OPDIV/STAFFDIV mission, consistent with the employee's OPDIV/STAFFDIV's policy and procedures; or
5. Frequent-traveler benefits permit an upgrade in the class of service, either by using frequent flier miles or by virtue of the employees' advanced frequent traveler status, at no cost to the Government.

4.1.5.3 Other than Coach Class Accommodations – Business Class

HHS employees may request Other than Coach Class (Business Class) accommodations only under the following circumstances:

1. The physical condition of the traveler requires use of Other than Coach Class travel service, as documented by a letter signed by the traveler's personal physician or specialist as described in Section 5.2.5, Travel of an Employee with Special Needs;
2. Other than Coach Class accommodations are required for security purpose(s), as documented in a letter from the Chief of Security of the Department;

3. Regularly scheduled flights between origin/destination points (including connecting points) provide only Other than Coach Class accommodations and the employee must certify such on his/her voucher;
4. The employee's transportation costs are paid in full through agency acceptance of in-kind services from a non-Federal source in accordance with Chapter 7, Acceptance of Payment of Travel Expenses from a Non-Federal Source;
5. The use of Other than Coach Class accommodations would result in an overall cost savings to the Government (note that a cost analysis to this effect must accompany the travel authorization, as described below);
6. There is no space is available in coach class, and the trip cannot be scheduled on other flights/carriers or routed in time to accomplish the purpose of travel, which is so urgent the travel cannot be postponed; or
7. When required because of OPDIV/STAFFDIV mission, consistent with the employee's OPDIV/STAFFDIV's policy and procedures.

When an HHS employee requests Other than Coach Class – Business Class travel by using the fifth criteria above (Overall Cost Savings), he/she must complete a cost-analysis justification, and attach it to the travel authorization. In this analysis, the employee must compare the total costs of coach-class to Other than Coach Class, including the cost of the ticket(s), additional subsistence expenses incurred during a rest stop (if applicable), overtime (if applicable), and lost productive person time. Based on this cost analysis, Other than Coach Class is only justified when it is the lesser of the two. (See examples in Section 6.4.)

4.1.5.4 Train Travel

Travelers must use Coach Class accommodations for all train travel in accordance with FTR [301-10.160](#).

Acela

The Acela is an extra fare train service, as defined by the FTR, and its use requires prior authorization. For travel by train, extra fare service may be authorized if the traveler's OPDIV/STAFFDIV determines it is more advantageous to the Government or is required for security reasons (see FTR [301-10.163](#) and [301-10.164](#)). Failure to receive prior authorization will result in not being reimbursed for the related expenses. As Business Class is the lowest available class on the Acela, approval for extra fare train service is the only approval necessary.

First Class accommodations on the Acela may only be authorized as provided in FTR [301-10.162](#). It is important to note that **if a traveler is requesting the use of Other than Coach Class (First Class) accommodations on Acela, this requires a separate approval, in addition to the approval required for the use of Acela as an extra fare train service, as described above.**

A memo of justification for the use of First Class accommodations, on the Acela, should be submitted in accordance with OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy; see Chapter 6 for the “Justifications for use of Other than Coach Class travel” memo. The signed memo should be uploaded into the ETS.

4.1.5.5 Travel by Ship

For travel by ship, employees must use the lowest class of reserved accommodations available, unless specifically authorized in advance to use a higher class of service in accordance with the provisions of [FTR 301-10](#), Subpart B.

4.1.5.6 Upgrades Through Frequent Traveler Programs

Please refer to Section 3.4.2 for HHS policies on using frequent flyer benefits for transportation accommodation upgrades.

4.1.5.7 Seating Upgrade Programs

Seating upgrade programs are often called “Coach Elite,” “Coach Plus,” “Preferred Coach” or some other identifier. Under these airline programs, a passenger may obtain a more desirable seat choice within the coach-class cabin for a fee.

These airline upgrade or preferred seat choices are generally available for an annual fee, at an airport kiosk or gate, or as a frequent flier benefit. These coach upgrade options are not considered a new or higher class of accommodation since the seating is still in the coach cabin.

However, the use of these upgraded/preferred coach-seating options is generally a traveler’s personal choice and therefore is at the traveler’s personal expense. HHS will not reimburse expenses related to seating upgrades in coach class, for personal preference, nor any other ancillary fees. Ancillary fees include but are not limited to:

1. Fee to book round trip ticket by phone;
2. Preferred Seat;
3. Priority Boarding;
4. Airport Club Lounge;
5. Headset;
6. Pillow/Blanket; and
7. Global Entry / TSA Approved Expedited Screening Programs.

If travelers are flying on a City Pair Fare and the only seat(s) available requires the purchase of a seating upgrade in coach class, the expense may be reimbursed if allowed by the AO. Travelers should check with the AO and their

OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy for additional information.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-10, Subpart B, Airline (301-10.121), Train (301-10.160), and Ship (301-10.180) Accommodations
- FTR 301-10.164 (Use of Extra-Fare Train Service)

4.1.6 Fly America Act and U.S. Flag Ship Requirements

Under the Fly America Act (49 U.S.C. 40118), anyone whose air travel is financed by U.S. Government funds must use U.S. flag air carrier service for all air travel, unless their travel is covered under one of the few exceptions provided in the FTR. U.S. flag air carrier service includes service provided under a code share agreement with a foreign air carrier when the ticket, or documentation for an electronic ticket, identifies the U.S. flag air carrier's designator code and flight number. An employee will not be reimbursed for any transportation cost for improper use of a foreign air carrier service. In addition, all OPDIV/STAFFDIVs require that a completed form, "Certification of use of non-US flag air carriers" is signed by the travel AO and uploaded into the ETS.

Under 46 U.S.C. 1241, employees must travel by a U.S. flagship, when available, unless mission necessity requires use of a foreign ship.

4.1.6.1 Open Skies Agreements

49 U.S.C. 40118, commonly referred to as the "Fly America Act," requires federal travelers to use United States air carrier service for all air travel and cargo transportation services funded by the U.S. Government. One exception to this requirement is transportation provided under a bilateral or multilateral air transport agreement, to which the U.S. Government and the government of a foreign country are parties, and which the Department of Transportation has determined meets the requirements of the Fly America Act.

The U. S. Government has entered into several air transport agreements that allow federal funded transportation services for travel and cargo movements to use foreign air carriers under certain circumstances.

There are currently three bilateral/multilateral "Open Skies Agreements" (U.S. Government Procured Transportation) in effect:

- An Open Skies air transport agreement between the U. S. Government and the European Union (EU) effective April 30, 2007 and the US-EU Amendment effective June 24, 2010;
- An Open Skies air transport agreement between the U.S. and Australia effective October 1, 2008; and
- An Open Skies air transport agreement between the U.S. and Switzerland effective October 1, 2008.

Information on the three Open Skies agreements (U.S. Government Procured Transportation) and other specific country agreements may be accessed via the Department of State's website at <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/tra/ata/index.htm>.

The rights given to airlines concerning U.S. Government procured transportation under the Open Skies Agreement do not apply to transportation obtained or funded by the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of a military department.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-10, 301-10.131-143 (Airline) and 301-10.180-183 (Ship)

4.1.7 Compensation from Airline for Denial of Seat versus Voluntarily Vacating Seat

The FTR states that when an airline denies a Federal employee a confirmed reserved seat on a plane during official travel, any payment for reimbursement (liquidated damages) belongs to the Federal government. Such payment should be made out to the Treasurer of the United States.

In contrast, if an employee voluntarily vacates his or her seat, the employee may keep any compensation provided by the airline if the conditions specified in the FTR are met:

1. Vacating the seat will not interfere with performing official duties; and
2. Additional travel expenses, if incurred because of vacating the seat, are borne by the employee and are not reimbursed.

If volunteering to give up a seat delays the employee's travel during duty hours, the employee must request an appropriate type of leave for any part of the delay period, which is official duty time. If the employee does not submit such a request in a timely manner, management of the OPDIV must charge the employee with annual leave for the additional hours.

4.1.8 Government Aircraft

Per FTR [301-10.260](#), an employee may use government aircraft for travel only if he/she has authorization from an executive agency under the rules specified in FTR. Because the taxpayers should pay no more than necessary for a Federal employee's transportation, generally he/she may travel on government aircraft only when a government aircraft is the most cost-effective mode of travel.

Travel on government aircraft includes aircraft that an agency owns, borrows, operates as a bailed aircraft, or hires as a CAS, to carry Federal and non-Federal travelers,

Approval to travel on government aircraft requires pre-authorization and approval by the ASA. Requests for the use of government aircrafts should be submitted as far in advance as possible to the HHS Travel Office for review and submission to the ASA. In addition, the use of Government aircraft has separate reporting requirements as defined in OMB Circular A-126, which can be found at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a126/#10.

4.1.8.1 Required Use Travel

In accordance with FTR 301-70.803, Required Use Travel on Government (Chartered) Aircraft requires that the Department develop written standards as to when we will require travelers to use Government Aircraft.

Such designated travelers are required to use Government Aircraft due to one or more of the following:

1. Their continuous requirement for secure communications;
2. For security;
3. For responsive transportation to satisfy exceptional scheduling requirements dictated by short-notice travel, which makes commercial transportation unacceptable;
4. Certain HHS Missions which require use of Government (Charter) aircraft to fulfill the needs of the mission including but not limited to:
 - a. Division of Strategic National Stockpile is deployed in support of an event that requires a Technical Advisory Response Unit including training exercises related to the particular type of response;
 - b. Division of Emergency Operations is deployed in support of a national emergency, e.g., Hurricane Katrina-type event, pandemic flu, food-borne poison episode, an anthrax event, etc.; or
 - c. In support of the Aeromedical Biological Containment System (ABCS) – Tail # N163PA or N173PA. The ABCS is a portable, tent-like device that can be quickly installed inside a modified Gulfstream III (G-III) aircraft. It provides a rapid, readily available, aeromedical evacuation asset to perform emergency movement of infectious/contagious CDC personnel from the field or site of exposure to a facility that can provide adequate and appropriate medical care. The ABCS is authorized to be used only in one of two aircraft which are owned by Phoenix Air Group. The tail numbers are N163PA and N173PA. Both aircraft are G-III and can be used for multiple purposes – passenger, cargo, and MEDEVAC transport (with or without the ABCS installed).

This policy does not waive or alter the procedural or approval requirements as otherwise required by law or HHS policy, e.g., the approval of the agency's chief legal office on a trip-by-trip basis, the issuance of travel orders, and compliance with procurement and appropriations law for the acquisition of aircraft and expenditure of funds.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-10, Subpart B, Common Carrier Transportation

4.1.9 Use of Privately Owned Vehicles (POVs), Rental Cars, and Other Special Conveyances

Policies on the use of POVs and special conveyances (taxis, shuttles, rental vehicles, etc.) for official travel are covered in Federal Travel Regulations:

- FTR Part 301-10, Subpart D, Privately Owned Vehicle (POV)
- FTR Part 301-10, Subpart E, Special Conveyances

4.1.9.1 Use of Privately Owned Vehicles (POVs)

When an employee is authorized to use a POV for official travel, the employee may be reimbursed for the mileage to and from the official destination at the current FTR mileage cost rate, plus fees for parking, ferries, and tolls. An employee may not be reimbursed for gasoline purchases, repairs, depreciation, replacements, grease, oil, antifreeze, towage, and similar expenses. Other non-reimbursable costs include parking violations, locksmith charges, and flat tires.

Mileage is defined in the FTR as the distance “As shown in paper or electronic standard highway mileage guides, or the actual miles driven as determined from odometer readings.” Sources such as MapQuest, Google Maps, etc., would be considered as electronic standard highway mileage guides under this definition.

Mileage to the Airport

The traveler may claim one total round trip to an airport, up to the constructed cost of using a special conveyance (taxi, shuttle, etc.). The FTR states that a traveler will be reimbursed for the cost from “...residence directly to a common carrier terminal (airport).”

If someone drives the traveler to the airport, instead of the traveler driving, the traveler may be reimbursed up to the constructed cost of either:

1. Using a special conveyance such as a taxi, shuttle, etc.; or
2. Driving to the airport and any necessary parking costs (e.g. if waiting is required) in the lowest costing available parking facility/lot.

The traveler should provide the constructed cost of both options to the AO so that they can determine the most advantageous method for the traveler. Mileage to the airport should be authorized in advance.

Note: Per 5 U.S.C. 5704, the FTR mileage cost rate is developed by GSA based upon a review and analysis of factors, such as depreciation of original vehicle cost, gasoline and oil (excluding taxes), maintenance, accessories, parts, and tires, insurance, and State and Federal taxes. Because these items are factored into the FTR mileage cost rate paid to the employee, there is no separate, additional

reimbursement for them.

4.1.9.2 Rental Vehicles

When an employee is authorized in advance to hire a rental vehicle for official travel, the employee may use the rental vehicle for official purposes while at the TDY station, including travel to and from restaurants near the work site or hotel. Any justification for rental car usage needs to include both a logistics and cost rationale for official purposes. Rental cars may not be added after the fact except under emergency circumstances.

Employees must obtain vehicles from rental agencies that have negotiated agreements with the DTMO, when they have the type of rental cars available, which meet mission requirements (e.g. large van for additional passengers or materials). The terms and conditions of the agreements and rates apply to all Federal employees on official travel and include unlimited free mileage, plus full loss/collision damage waiver (LDW/CDW) on the rental vehicle as long as the Government Administrative Rate Supplement (GARS) fee of \$5.00 per day is charged. Travelers will not be reimbursed for the purchase of additional insurance CONUS and OCONUS – Non-Foreign. Travelers are advised to examine FTR [301-10.451](#) guidelines when renting a car in a foreign country.

Travelers are expected to fill up the gas tank prior to returning the rental car. Travelers who return the rental car with an empty tank of gas and incur an additional fuel service charge will only be reimbursed the fuel service charge, in accordance with OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy, when it is advantageous to the Government. In addition, travelers are not authorized to purchase pre-paid fuel, per the car rental agreement with DTMO and HHS policy.

Additionally, employees should be aware that the Government would deny liability for any loss or damage to a vehicle rented for official business purposes using a government travel charge card if that loss/damage arises from activities outside the scope of official business travel. Even if they will not claim travel reimbursement for any associated costs of personal use of such a vehicle, employees should check all personal automobile insurance policies or coverage carefully before considering using a vehicle rented for business purposes for personal use on non-duty time, as coverage may be unavailable under these circumstances.

A rental is only to be used for official transportation similar to a Government Owned Vehicle as covered in FTR [301-10.201](#). Official transportation includes:

1. Transportation between places of official business;
2. Transportation between such places and places of temporary lodging when public transportation is unavailable or its use is impractical;
3. Transportation between places of official business/temporary lodging and 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; or

4. As otherwise authorized by your OPDIV/STAFFDIV under 31 U.S.C. 1344.

If an employee takes a personal trip away from the TDY point on a weekend or other non workday, or at any other time for reasons not related to official travel, any additional expenses incurred (such as gasoline purchases that cover travel mileage for personal reasons) may not be claimed. In addition, if a traveler is staying at a TDY site after the official trip is over, on personal leave, the rental car must be returned and a car rented at the travelers own expense.

Note: Generally, a rental car will not be authorized if the employee is staying at the hotel where the conference or official business is taking place unless there are specific reasons why the rental car is necessary.

Global Positioning System (GPS) for a Rental Car

The optional GPS for a rental car requires authorization in advance. After the fact, reimbursement will not be authorized except in the event of an emergency. The STO or their designee within the traveler's OPDIV/STAFFDIV must approve any after the fact exceptions.

During a Disaster Response, if the traveler requires a GPS to get to the disaster response location, the STO or their designee must authorize the expense. For additional information, see Chapter 11, Travel – Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Services including National Special Security Events (NSSE) and similar situations, of this manual.

Default Rental Car Size

Per HHS Travel Policy, the default size for a rental car is compact or economy. Any other size of rental car requires pre-authorization and the appropriate justification for the use of other than the default car size. Per 5 U.S.C. 5733, "travel of an employee shall be by the most expeditious means of transportation practicable and shall be commensurate with the nature and purpose of the duties of the employee requiring such travel."

Every effort should be made to obtain authorization in advance of travel. When prior authorization is not possible or practical, post-trip approval may be issued through an amended travel order, in accordance with the pertinent OPDIV/STAFFDIV's policy and procedures. However, without proper authorization travelers risk not being reimbursed for expenses that are incurred.

4.1.9.3 Buses

There are no government-preferred providers for bus service. If a traveler wishes to

use bus as a means of common carrier transportation, it requires pre-authorization by the AO.

If a traveler wishes to use a bus service (e.g., Greyhound, Bolt, Vamoose, etc.) the service may require the purchase of a non-refundable ticket. If the AO authorizes the use of a non-refundable bus fare, the same restrictions as in Section 4.1.3.3, Government Liability for Authorizing Restricted, Non-Contract Fares for Common Carrier Transportation, apply.

4.1.9.4 Use of Other and Special Conveyances for Transportation

Employees are expected to use prudence and good judgment when choosing the mode of transportation between sites when on TDY travel (e.g., between residence and carrier terminal, place of lodging and temporary work site, carrier terminal and place of lodging).

Courtesy Shuttles

Courtesy transportation offered by hotels and motels should be used whenever possible; a tip up to \$5 may be reimbursed when these complimentary services are used.

Public Transportation

Public transportation (e.g., local bus, train, or ferry) should be used whenever reasonable under the circumstances.

Multiple Party Transportation

Suitable government-sponsored (e.g., scheduled vans) or multiple-party transportation (e.g., airport shuttle services) should be used whenever available.

Taxicabs

Taxicabs may be used when these other modes of short-distance transportation are not reasonably available or if safety is a concern (e.g., late night return from temporary duty site to place of lodging). A cost comparison may be required to assist in determining the most advantageous mode of transportation, for example, for the cost of a taxi versus the cost of a shuttle service.

More Expensive Means

More expensive means of local transportation (e.g., limousines) may be used only when strictly necessary, and require advance approval by the AO except in an emergency for which the employee is not responsible. Only the usual fare (plus tip of up to 15 percent of that amount) for the most reasonable mode of transportation under the circumstances may be reimbursed. If an employee chooses to use an unnecessary mode of transit, they are expected to pay any additional cost associated

with that choice.

4.1.10 Internal Controls over the Authorization and Payment of Transportation Expenses

Heads of OPDIV/STAFFDIVs or their designees are responsible for establishing appropriate management controls over the authorization and payment of transportation expenses to ensure compliance with the FTR, the HHS Travel Manual, and their own supplemental policies and procedures.

OPDIV/STAFFDIV travel and finance offices are encouraged to obtain and use the [U.S. Government Passenger Transportation Handbook](#) as a reference tool. This document provides extensive information on using and controlling government Transportation Requests, handling transportation refunds, redeeming unused tickets, and other pertinent topics. The handbook is issued by GSA's Federal Supply Service; copies can be obtained from Audit Division, Federal Supply Service (FBT), GSA, 1800 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20405.

4.1.10.1 Common Carrier Transportation

OPDIV/STAFFDIV travel managers are responsible for establishing supplemental policies and procedures to control the issuance of TDY tickets through their TMCs, including when employee leave and/or indirect travel are involved. Controls are needed to ensure that tickets are issued in accordance with agency mission requirements (not to facilitate personal travel plans), in the interest of compliance with the FTR, and in keeping with sound cash management practices. In addition, AOs may require a cost comparison between different arrival and departure airports. Controls must include administrative procedures to identify and collect unused, partially used, and exchanged tickets, refund receipts, or ticket refund applications, and denied boarding compensation.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR 301-70, Subpart B, Internal Policy and Procedure Requirements Relating to Transportation
- FTR 301-72 Agency Responsibilities Related to Common Carrier Transportation

4.1.10.2 Rental Vehicles and Use of Privately Owned Vehicles – General Administrative Responsibilities

OPDIV/STAFFDIV travel/logistics/administrative managers are responsible for establishing appropriate supplemental policies and procedures to control the authorization and use of government, rental, and POVs for official use. For example, these managers should:

1. Provide guidance to their employees regarding the terms and limitations of government rental car agreements, including loss and damage coverage, exclusions, and billings;

2. Provide guidance on factors applicable to selection of appropriate rental vehicles in a prudent manner (for example, size, type, number of days actually needed, use of upgrades, consolidating travelers going to the same site to reduce number of vehicles needed, etc.) and require written justification for any vehicle rented which might appear imprudent or unnecessary under the circumstances or disallow the excess cost;
3. Advise employees about special policies and procedures for operating rental and POVs in foreign countries, if applicable; and
4. Advise employees about filing personal property loss or damage claims resulting from the use of a vehicle while on official business in accordance with HHS claims policies and procedures.

4.1.10.3 Scheduling Travel to Avoid Lost or Unproductive Duty Time

All managers and AOs are responsible for ensuring that employees schedule official business travel in a manner and on a time schedule that minimizes lost or unproductive work hours. Employees should work a complete day (the usual number of hours in their tour of duty) on travel days, or take an appropriate type of leave for the hours not worked.

4.1.10.4 Management Responsibility to Ensure Compliance with FTR and HHS Travel Manual When Approving Travel Vouchers

OPDIV/STAFFDIV officials who are responsible for approving travel payments must ensure compliance with the FTR guidelines, the HHS Travel Manual, and OPDIV/STAFFDIV policies, including proper exercise of discretion in approving the amount of reimbursement claimed by employees. Failure to exercise discretion consistent with applicable policies and guidance, and/or approval of reimbursement that is inappropriate under them, may be cause for disciplinary actions, an indication of performance deficiencies, and/or personal liability for the improper amount of payment.

4.2 Miscellaneous Expenses

This section provides supplemental guidance for HHS employees and invitational travelers on reimbursable miscellaneous expenses incurred during official travel.

4.2.1 Reimbursable Miscellaneous Expenses

HHS authorizing and approving officials may authorize or approve reimbursement of miscellaneous expenses, as listed in the FTR Part [301-12](#) and these supplemental HHS policy guidelines. Each type of miscellaneous expense will be reported as a separate line item on the travel voucher, indicating the amount and dates when incurred. Unless otherwise specified, receipts are required only when the individual expense is greater than \$75. The purpose of the receipt is to justify the amount to be reimbursed; therefore, the receipt details are required to ensure that no prohibited items are being claimed. Original receipts must be kept by the traveler for two (2) years. In addition, there are special requirements for the types of miscellaneous expenses listed below.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-12 Miscellaneous Expenses

4.2.1.1 Hotel Taxes

Continental U.S. (CONUS)

GSA does not include hotel taxes in the lodging rates that are issued as part of the per diem rates for the continental U.S. Hotel taxes are a miscellaneous expense item. (See FTR [301-11.27](#).) Travelers are required to request exemption from state and local taxes where applicable; see Section 5.1.5, Exemption from State or Local Tax on Hotel/Lodging Accommodations.

Non-foreign Duty Areas (OCONUS)

The Department of Defense does not include hotel taxes in the lodging rates for non-foreign duty areas outside of the continental U.S. Non-foreign areas include: Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and territories and possessions of the U.S. Hotel taxes are a miscellaneous expense item. Travelers are required to request exemption from state and local taxes where applicable; see Section 5.1.5, Exemption from State or Local Tax on Hotel/Lodging Accommodations.

Foreign Duty Areas (OCONUS)

The Department of State includes hotel taxes in its per diem lodging rates for foreign duty areas. Hotel taxes in foreign areas may not be authorized or claimed as a miscellaneous expense item unless and until a change in policy is published by the State Department and becomes effective for travel by employees of this Department.

4.2.1.2 Personal Telephone Calls

It is HHS policy that commercial charges for brief telephone calls placed for personal reasons while in travel status are reimbursable as a miscellaneous travel expense to civilian employees, subject to the following restrictions:

1. Employees are expected to incur telephone call expenses in the same manner as a prudent person would. An average of one call per day is authorized for domestic travel. In accordance with the General Services Board of Contract Appeals rulings, a traveler may be reimbursed for the cost of telephone calls made while on TDY, if the AO determines that the calls were in the Government's interest, and then, only to the extent the cost falls under the \$5 ceiling explained below.
2. The employee must incur a minimum of one night's lodging on official travel, domestic, non-foreign, or foreign.
3. Government-provided long distance telephone systems and services (including government-issued calling cards and government cell phones) are not available, so that a commercial toll service must be used. If they do not have government-issued calling cards or cell phones, employees should make their allowable personal call(s) from the TDY station before departing for the day, to avoid incurring expensive commercial telephone charges.

Travel within CONUS

The Department's policy for travel within the CONUS is that reimbursement for personal telephone calls should be limited to actual expenses not to exceed an amount equal to \$5 times the number of consecutive nights on official business. OPDIVs may set policy limits for their employees, which are more restrictive than the Department's.

Guidelines regarding personal telephone calls made while traveling OCONUS to Alaska, Hawaii, and U.S. territories and possessions follow the CONUS policy as calling conditions and rates are expected to be similar to these areas.

Travel OCONUS

The Department's basic requirements for personal telephone call reimbursement for periods of travel OCONUS to foreign areas are as follows:

1. The determination that telephone calls home from a foreign country, will be allowed, must be made prior to the beginning of travel. Once the determination is made, authorization for these calls must be made on the travel order.

2. Due to major costs differences in foreign phone rates, the AO must also authorize the frequency and estimated cost of telephone calls on the travel order. Major deviations beyond what is authorized on the travel order must be accompanied by a written justification describing the circumstances for the deviation. The AO is responsible for reviewing such claims and making the final determination that the amounts claimed are reasonable.

Note: If an employee incurs costs for personal telephone calls under this policy (i.e., does not use government-provided long-distance telephone systems and services for the call(s) he/she makes on travel), the employee must provide a receipt for those costs claimed on his/her travel voucher. Acceptable receipts include hotel bills with long distance telephone calls and numbers marked.

Employees must sign a certification to accompany the receipt(s), stating that the entire claimed expense was in fact incurred for telephone calls permissible under the rules of this section.

Pre-paid Phone Cards

If an employee purchases a Pre-Paid phone card, he/she must provide a store receipt listing the purchase of pre-paid phone cards or turning in the phone card whose cost/value is annotated on the card. Any remaining value of the Pre-Paid Phone Card becomes the property of the OPDIV/STAFFDIV.

Employee Owned Personal Communication Devices

No reimbursement is permitted for the use of employee owned personal communication devices such as cell phones, blackberries, PDAs, Smart Phones, etc., for domestic or non-foreign travel.

However, for foreign travel to remote areas where long distance telephone systems are inaccessible, the use of an employee owned cell phone may be authorized once it is determined necessary and authorized on the travel order prior to departure on travel. An itemized receipt indicating specific costs for each call is required for reimbursement.

Note: Whenever possible, calls should be made from the TDY location, on the employee's government-issued mobile device (cell phone, blackberry, smart phone, etc.), or from the employee's hotel room. If a call on an employee owned personal communication device e.g. cell phone must be made, it will only be reimbursed if:

1. The call was made outside of the employee's regular plan minutes (including text and data); and
2. The bill must show the date, time, telephone number, and cost per minute of the personal call. (However, if the call is within the employee's plan minutes and shows as a cost of \$0.00, the employee will not be reimbursed for the cost of the call.)

4.2.1.3 Business Calls

It is HHS policy that all necessary and reasonable charges for official business calls incurred while on official TDY travel must be reimbursed as a miscellaneous travel expense. Generally, there are no dollar caps placed on official business calls. However, it is the travel approving official's responsibility to ensure that all charges are necessary and reasonable. Excessive costs should be fully justified on the travel voucher.

Whenever possible, business calls should be made from the TDY location, on the employee's government-issued mobile device (cell phone, blackberry, smart phone, etc.), or from his/her hotel room. If a call on an employee owned personal communication device e.g. cell phone must be made, it will only be reimbursed if:

1. The call was made outside of the employee's regular plan minutes (including text and data); and
2. The bill must show the date, time, telephone number, and cost per minute of the business call. (Note that if the call is within the employee's plan minutes and shows as a cost of \$0.00, the employee will not be reimbursed for the cost of the call.)

4.2.1.4 Internet Fees

Expenses for Internet Fees must be pre-approved on the Travel Authorization (see Section 3.1.1.4). In addition, they require justification as to why the Internet Fee is not included in the cost of the hotel room as a majority of FedRooms properties provide free internet access. This same requirement for approval applies to:

1. Wireless access (internet fees) during a conference;
2. While at the airport waiting for a flight (whether origination or connection);
or
3. Airplane internet fees.

These fees will not be authorized after the fact except in emergency circumstances.

In addition, some OPDIV/STAFFDIVs have wireless access (air cards) available for use. Check with the appropriate OPDIV/STAFFDIV Travel Office and IT department to determine if one is available for use.

Note: If an employee incurs costs for internet fees under this policy (i.e., the hotel does not provide free internet access), the employee must provide a receipt for those costs claimed on their travel voucher. Acceptable receipts include hotel bills with internet fees clearly marked.

4.2.1.5 Laundry, Dry Cleaning, and Pressing of Clothing

CONUS Travel

In the continental U.S., laundry, cleaning and pressing of clothing services at a temporary duty location are reimbursable as a miscellaneous expense item to civilian⁷ employees, subject to the following restrictions:

1. The employee must incur a minimum of four consecutive nights lodging on official travel.
2. The Department's guideline states that reimbursement should be limited to actual expenses not to exceed an amount equal to \$5 times the number of consecutive nights on the trip for the first 30 nights at a TDY location.
3. Receipts are required for all laundry/dry cleaning purchases claimed for reimbursement (except coin-operated machine usage where receipts are not available).

Extended or Long-term Temporary Duty Assignments

Each OPDIV is responsible for setting a policy on limitations to reimbursement. The Department's guideline is that for extended or long-term TDY travel, at the same location, reimbursement should be limited to actual expenses not to exceed an amount equal to:

1. \$5 times the number of consecutive nights on the trip for the first 30 nights;
2. \$3 times the number of consecutive nights on the trip for nights 31 through 90; and
3. \$2 times the number of consecutive nights on the trip for nights 91 and beyond.

OCONUS Travel

In non-foreign OCONUS and foreign areas, laundry, dry cleaning, and pressing of clothing expenses are covered under the incidental expenses component of per diem allowances issued by the Department of Defense and Department of State, respectively. They may not be authorized or approved as a separate miscellaneous expense item. Non-foreign areas include Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and territories and possessions of the U.S.

⁷ Members of the Commissioned Corps follow the JFTR policy related to reimbursement of laundry expenses.

Emergencies

For guidance regarding reimbursement during a Disaster Relief or Emergency Response Services, see Section 11.3.4.

4.2.1.6 Baggage Fees

Per FTR [301-12.2](#), an employee may be reimbursed for the following baggage fees:

1. Transportation charges for authorized excess.
2. Necessary charges for transferring baggage.
3. Necessary charges for storage of baggage when such charges are the result of official business.
4. All fees pertaining to the first checked bag. In addition, charges relating to the second and subsequent bags may be reimbursed when the agency determines those expenses necessary and in the interest of the Government (see FTR [301-70.300](#), [301-70.301](#)).
5. Charges or tips at transportation terminals for handling Government property carried by the traveler.

Items 1, 2, 3, and 4 require pre-approval on the authorization. Failure to receive prior approval may result in an employee not being reimbursed for the expense.

In addition, by presenting a travel authorization to some airlines, they may waive the baggage fees.

4.2.1.7 ATM Fees

Certain fees associated with ATM withdrawals may be reimbursed by an employee's OPDIV/STAFFDIV according to their policy. These fees include but are not limited to:

1. ATM Fees for Full-Time Employees (FTE) who do not have an IBA per the HHS Travel Charge Card policy (see Section 10.2, Mandatory Use of Government Contractor-Issued Travel Charge Card);
2. ATM Fees for individuals who are authorized to travel on behalf of the Department (i.e., Invitational Travelers who, for example, do not have an IBA and are not eligible for a travel advance); or
3. When a travel charge card cannot be used at a foreign hotel due to the merchant code not being allowed.

NOTE: ATM Fees that are incurred to withdraw an advance that was direct deposited via an EFT are not reimbursable as this is considered a personal expense. See Section 3.3, Travel Advances, for additional information.

4.2.1.8 Emergency and Other Authorized Miscellaneous Expenses

HHS AOs may authorize or approve reimbursement of miscellaneous expenses beyond the examples listed in the FTR 301-12, Miscellaneous Expenses, when they determine these expenses to be directly related to the employee's official business travel and justification is provided for the necessity of the purchase.

Note: If a traveler is at a TDY site where a particular facility (hotel, restaurant, etc.) refuses to accept the travel charge card for payment of the bill, and the employee uses a personal credit card rather than paying with cash, no interest accrued on the personal credit card for that payment may be reimbursed under any circumstances.

Heads of OPDIV/STAFFDIVs or their designees are responsible for establishing appropriate management controls over the authorization and approval of miscellaneous expenses to ensure compliance with the FTR and these supplemental guidelines. Additionally, they are responsible for ensuring that purchases of goods and services that should be ordered and authorized through purchase card procurement processes are not approved for payment on travel claims, including TDY, relocation, and local travel vouchers.

4.3 Authorization of a Per Diem Allowance at the Official Station or within the Local Travel Area

This section provides supplemental guidance for HHS civilian employees, invitational travelers, and OPDIV/STAFFDIVs regarding the authorization of a per diem allowance in conjunction with official business that takes place at the employee's official station or within the HHS defined local travel area. It also applies to officers of the Commissioned Corps U.S. Public Health Service. Local travel expenses do not require a no-cost travel order.

4.3.1 Definition of Official Station

The FTR definition of an Official Station, per amendment 2010-07, which was effective January 1, 2011, is:

An area defined by the agency that includes the location where the employee regularly performs his or her duties, or an invitational traveler's home or regular place of business. The area may be a mileage radius around a particular point, a geographic boundary, or any other definite domain, provided no part of the area is more than 50 miles from where the employee regularly performs his or her duties, or from an invitational traveler's home or regular place of business. If the employee's work involves recurring travel or varies on a recurring basis, the location where the work activities of the employee's position of record are based is considered the regular place of work.

4.3.1.1 Authorization of a Per Diem Allowance at the Official Station

In accordance with the above definition of official station (i.e., the place where the employee regularly performs their duties), a per diem allowance will not be allowed. This prohibition includes reimbursement for meals and incidentals, even when the workday extends beyond 12 hours.

4.3.1.2 No Per Diem Can Be Authorized at the Official Station

Rulings by the Comptroller General (CG) and the CBCA state that there is no authority to allow per diem at the employee's official station (this includes the local travel area as defined below in Section 4.3.2), even if authorized in advance by government officials. This applies even in situations where per diem expenses are incurred under extraordinary circumstances, such as:

1. Late conference sessions;
2. Heavy volume of work;
3. Adverse weather conditions (blizzards, ice storms, etc);
4. Protective missions by security personnel; and
5. Inability to leave duty post.

4.3.2 HHS Definition of the Local Travel Area

The FTR does not define “local travel area” and instead delegates that responsibility to the Federal agencies. Thus, it is from the term official station, as described in Section 4.3.1 above, that HHS has developed the following definition for the term “local travel area:”

1. If the meeting site is 50 miles or less (using the most direct route) from the employee’s (or invitational traveler’s) primary place of work, the site is considered to be within the local travel area; or
2. If the meeting site is 50 miles or less (using the most direct route) from the employee’s (or an invitational traveler’s) residence, the site is considered to be within the local travel area.

4.3.2.1 Authorization of a Per Diem Allowance in the “Local Travel Area”

As a rule, authorization of a per diem allowance will not be allowed unless one of the exceptions discussed in the subsections below can be applied.

4.3.2.2 Exceptions Authorized at the OPDIV/STAFFDIV Level (80 Mile Rule)

Per diem will not be paid in the local travel area as defined above unless the following narrow exception applies, in which all criteria must be met:

1. The local travel is not being performed to attend or participate in a conference, meeting, or training for which the agency had any influence over or input into the site selection; and
2. The local travel assignment will last at least three consecutive nights and four days, and entail at least nine and one-half consecutive hours of work per day on each of those days; and
3. It is clearly within the Government’s interest, for accomplishment of its mission, to permit a particular employee to stay overnight at the site of the local travel assignment on one or more of those night(s), not necessarily consecutive; and
4. That employee would be required to perform an extensive amount of driving (defined as at least 80 miles) each way between his/her residence and the site of the local travel assignment, on a daily basis (in a carpool situation, each employee must live at least 80 miles from the TDY site to qualify for this exception); and
5. Significant safety issues are raised by the combination of the extended hours of work and the extensive amount of driving for the employee performing this local travel assignment.

Note: Once all of the above criteria have been met, a travel authorization must be approved, in advance to authorize the applicable travel and per diem expenses.

OPDIV/STAFFDIV Heads or their designees have the authority to increase the minimum distance for the local travel area above 50 miles, if they deem it to be in the best interest of their organization. However, they may not reduce it below the HHS policy.

4.3.2.3 GETA Statutory Exception

A per diem allowance may be authorized within the above defined local travel area, consistent with a specific statutory exception found in the Government Employees Training Act. Refer to Section 5.1.3.8 of this manual for additional information.

4.3.2.4 Exceptions Authorized at the Assistant Secretary for Administration (ASA) Level

If a meeting takes place within the defined local travel area but the exception in Section 4.3.2.2, or 4.3.2.3 cannot be applied, a formal request may be submitted by the OPDIV/STAFFDIV STO to the ASA. This waiver request may be submitted only if there is a need to authorize a per diem allowance due to religious observances, reasonable accommodations, or another exigency (e.g., statutory requirement). The letter should be sent 30 days in advance of the meeting to the HHS Travel Office for review and submittal to the ASA on behalf of the STO. The following information must be included in the request:

1. Dates of meeting;
2. Type of meeting;
3. Purpose of meeting;
4. Reason for the venue;
5. How far away the traveler lives (residence) from the meeting site;
6. How far away the traveler works (official station) from the meeting site;
7. The total costs associated including, per diem: room, room tax, M&IE, any fees;
8. Whether per diem costs as well as lodging costs are being requested;
9. Conference services costs (if applicable);
10. Total number of attendees;
11. Federal employee vs. non-federal employee attendee distribution;

12. Number of attendees who live w/in 50 miles (residence);
13. Number of attendees who live 50 or more miles away (residence) from meeting site;
14. Distance from residence to work versus the distance from residence to the meeting location;
15. Why it is necessary to lodge overnight or to be reimbursed for a meal(s);
16. The number of attendees who are on OPDIV/STAFFDIV travel orders;
17. Agenda items and times;
18. Frequency with which the meeting held;
19. Location of the meeting site;
20. Meeting organizer information and the logistics that necessitate this request;
21. Any statutory or regulatory requirement for this meeting; and
22. Any HHS or OPDIV/STAFFDIV initiative linked to this meeting

4.3.2.5 Use of Government Charge Card

If the exception in either Section 4.3.2.2, Section 4.3.2.3, or Section 4.3.2.4 applies, the employee should use his/her government travel charge card for per diem expenses consistent with Section 10.2.8 of this manual.

4.3.3 HHS Policy Regarding the Local Travel Area

When an employee is required to secure transportation to transact official government business in the local travel area, they may be reimbursed for allowable travel expenditures, if approved.

4.3.3.1 Use of Travel Charge Card

It is HHS policy that the travel charge card may only be used for official travel and official travel-related expenses connected with TDY travel or relocation. The travel charge card may not be used for local transportation or travel-related expenses, except as outlined in Section 10.2.8.

4.3.3.2 Reimbursement of Expenses

Reimbursement for allowable local travel expenditures will usually be claimed via an electronic local voucher in the ETS or hard copy version of [SF 1164](#), Claim for Reimbursement for Expenses on Official Business, because no travel authorization was required or issued. Claims may be filed as frequently as necessary, but

preferably no more often than on a monthly basis, so that administrative processing may be kept to a minimum.

If a Travel Authorization is issued by management of an OPDIV/STAFFDIV under an exception in Sections 4.3.2.2, 4.3.2.3, or 4.3.2.4, or written authorization is given for rental of a vehicle for official local travel as per Section 4.3.5.4, this expense should be claimed using the ETS.

Receipts

Receipts for local travel expenditures are generally not required, except for any single expense costing over \$75. Receipts for rental cars, laundry/dry cleaning, personal telephone calls as discussed under Section 4.2.1.2, and in the rare circumstance when authorized for lodging, are required regardless of amount. Original receipts must be kept by the traveler for two (2) years.

If the employee is unable to furnish receipts where required, he or she will make a full explanation on the claim or voucher. Mere inconvenience in obtaining receipts will not be accepted as a satisfactory explanation.

4.3.4 Criteria for Determining Allowable Local Travel Transportation Expenses

4.3.4.1 Non-Reimbursable Local Travel Transportation Expenses

Employees are expected to bear the cost of transportation between their homes and places of duty (commuting costs), and the cost of transportation between places where meals are taken and places of duty. Payment shall not be allowed for transportation expenses on non-regular weekdays and weekends, between an employee's home and official duty station for the purposes of commuting to and from work, or the performance of overtime or emergency duty. However, payment for mileage, parking, tolls, etc., may be allowed for a meeting/conference/training that takes place away from the employee's official duty station on a non-workday or on a weekend.

Exception: If an employee is officially ordered unexpectedly to work at his or her designated post of duty beyond official working hours, he or she may be allowed reimbursement of the usual taxicab fare for travel between office and home provided that: (1) he or she is dependent on public transportation for such travel, and (2) travel is during hours of darkness or infrequently-scheduled public transportation.

4.3.4.2 Reimbursable Local Travel Transportation Expenses

Employees may be reimbursed transportation expenses incurred in the local travel area to perform official business, except for commuting costs. Generally, reimbursement may be allowed from whatever point the employee begins the journey to perform official business. However, when the journey begins and/or ends

at the employee's home, the AO must ensure that appropriate reduction is made for normal commuting expenses in accordance with Section 4.3.4.1 above.

A traveler will not be reimbursed if the transportation expenses do not exceed the normal commuting costs. However, AO can take into consideration unusual circumstances and not require a reduction of normal commuting costs when the employee has no normal commuting costs, or where the employee has prepaid normal commuting costs and loses their benefit because of local travel requirements (see below for further explanation).

Unusual Circumstances Where Reduction of Normal Commuting Cost is Not Required

Some examples of unusual circumstances where reduction of normal commuting costs is not required include:

1. Employees working from home on a scheduled day under an approved flexi-place agreement, who need to travel locally on official business, have a zero normal commuting distance. Therefore, no reimbursement reduction is required.
2. This exception does not apply on a scheduled work-at-home day, if the employer cancels the scheduled work-at-home day and requires the employee to work at the normal duty office or at an alternate TDY location in the local travel area for most or all of the day.
3. Employees who prepay normal commuting expenses on a weekly, monthly, or other basis to a common carrier, vanpool, parking lot, etc. may incur the cost and receive no (or reduced) service/benefit because of the requirement for local travel. These "sunk" commuting costs should not be included in any reduction (although if an employee uses the pre-paid expense to cover part of the local travel cost, no reimbursement is due for that cost).

Calculating Allowable Reimbursement

Allowable reimbursement is calculated as the difference between the total expenses incurred and the employee's normal commuting expense, for instance:

1. If an employee normally commutes from home to an official duty station office via a POV and on a particular day must travel to a temporary work site via POV, the normal commuting distance between the employee's home and official duty station office should be deducted from the total mileage claimed.

Example: An employee normally drives 20 miles each way between home and office. Today, the employee must drive from home to a TDY location for a morning meeting and then drive to his/her regular office for the rest of the day. The trip from home to the meeting and then to the regular office totals 30 miles. The employee may be reimbursed for 10 miles.

2. If an employee is a member of a car pool and shares the driving with the members of the car pool, the Comptroller General has ruled that the appropriate reduction for commuting expense is the total mileage the employee is expected to drive in a week divided by five, and the resulting figure is the daily reduction.

Example: An employee drives 100 miles round trip one day per week as a member of a carpool. The reduction for each day the employee travels to a temporary work location would be 20 miles per day ($100/5 = 20$).

3. If an employee normally uses public transportation, the amount expended for public transportation and any parking fees incurred in the course of the employee's normal commute would be included in any reduction unless the parking fees are paid monthly and considered a "sunk" cost.

When Employee Receives Transit Subsidy

If the employee receives a transit subsidy, which encourages employees to use public transportation when commuting to and from work as a benefit, the rules stated above still apply.

Example 1: If the transit subsidy is used to secure a fare card or bus tokens with no time limitation on use, and the employee's normal, one-way commuting cost on the subway or bus is \$2.05, then when the employee must drive a POV to a temporary work site for the day and mileage reimbursement is calculated as \$2.50, the employee may be reimbursed only the extra commuting cost: \$.45 each way (or \$.90 for round-trip) if he/she retains the transit subsidy money for that day.

The employee could also reduce her/his next transit subsidy amount, to reflect the day the subway/bus was not used. If that is done, the full amount of the mileage for the temporary duty day could be reimbursed.

Example 2: If the transit subsidy is used to pay for a fixed amount monthly bus/train pass or car pool ridership with time limitations on use, there should be no reduction for this "sunk" commuting cost. The employee may be reimbursed the full commuting cost for the POV vehicle: \$2.50 each way (or \$5.00 for round-trip).

4.3.5 Modes of Travel

4.3.5.1 Public Transportation

Public transportation, such as buses, subways, etc., should be used when practical between points where official business is being conducted, except:

1. Employees should use government shuttle service when available rather than subways, streetcars, buses, and other public means of transportation.
2. Taxicabs or a POV may be authorized when public transportation or shuttle service is not available, is impractical to use, or would result in undue loss of government time.
3. A rental car may be authorized when it is the mode of transportation most advantageous to the Government for a local travel assignment. In determining cost advantage, consideration should be given to incidental costs associated with rental car use in lieu of public transit or shuttles/taxicabs, etc., such as gasoline, parking fees (at duty points and lodging facilities), tolls, accessibility, etc.

4.3.5.2 Privately-Owned Vehicles

When necessary and determined by the approving official to be advantageous to the Government, the use of a POV will be allowed on a mileage basis, not to exceed the applicable rates specified in the FTR. Such allowance shall be based on either tables of official distance or odometer readings taken at the beginning and end of the trip. In addition to mileage, the cost of parking fees, ferry fares, bridge, road, and tunnel tolls will be allowed.

Mileage is payable to only one employee when two or more employees travel in the

same vehicle on the same trip. The employee claiming reimbursement will list on the voucher the names of other passengers accompanying him or her.

4.3.5.3 Government Vehicle

A government vehicle may be used when authorized, and reimbursement of the cost of parking fees, ferry fares, bridge, road, and tunnel tolls will be allowed. Per FTR [301-10.310](#), if an employee is authorized to use a government vehicle and use a POV instead, he/she will be reimbursed based on a constructive mileage rate limited to the cost that would be incurred for a Government automobile. For the current rate, see www.gsa.gov/mileage.

Note: For additional policy guidance on the authorization of government vehicles, refer to the [HHS Logistics Management Manual](#), Chapter 103-38: “Motor Vehicle Management.”

4.3.5.4 Rental Vehicles

If a rental vehicle is determined to be the most advantageous mode for local travel, there must be specific written authorization or prior approval to obtain this service. Appropriate arrangements should be made in advance with the rental agency. There may be instances when an OPDIV/STAFFDIV is required to furnish the rental agency acceptable written authorization (e.g., letter on official agency letterhead signed by AO).

In the rare emergency situation where the usual advance written authorization cannot be made, rental of a vehicle may be approved less formally, but some type of written authorization must be prepared to document the action and provided to the employee (e.g., by fax). The informal authorization should be explained on the reimbursement paperwork (SF-[1164](#) or SF-[1012](#)) after travel is completed, and a copy of the informal approval documentation attached when the claim/voucher is submitted.

It is preferable for a travel order to be issued when a rental vehicle is authorized for local travel. A travel order will provide the necessary written authorization and obligate funding for this purpose. Therefore, employees should follow their OPDIV’s authorization and vouchering procedures for rental of cars in the local travel area.

5. Per Diem and Subsistence Allowances

5.1 Per Diem Rates, Actual Expense Reimbursement, and Lodging Requirements

This chapter provides supplemental guidance for HHS civilian employees, invitational travelers, and OPDIV/STAFFDIVs regarding allowable per diem and subsistence expenses for TDY travel. For information about authorizing a Conference Lodging Allowance for conferences, meetings, etc., refer to Section 1.3.2, Conference Planning Involving Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel.

As covered in Section 1.2.2, travel policies and per diem rates for Commissioned Corps officers of the USPHS are governed by the JFTR. The JFTR is available at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/travelreg.cfm>.

5.1.1 General

HHS AOs, as well as HHS travelers, must follow the provisions of the FTR and these supplemental HHS policy guidelines in authorizing, incurring, and approving per diem and subsistence expenses.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-11, Per Diem Expenses
- FTR Part 301-70, Subpart C, Policies and Procedures Relating to Per Diem Expenses

These sections of the FTR provide detailed guidance to the employee and to the agency's management, respectively, regarding per diem and actual expense policies. Topics in FTR Part [301-11](#) include:

Subpart A - General Rules (for Per Diem and Subsistence Expenses)

- Eligibility for an allowance
- Reimbursement for different types of lodgings and sharing of rooms
- Long-term rental expenses, including prepayment issues
- Complimentary meals by common carrier or hotel/motel
- Adjustment of allowance when meals provided
- Rest periods for long flights overseas
- Travel reimbursement for non-workdays or leave
- Receipt requirements
- Hotel taxes and tax exempt certificates
- Laundry and dry cleaning expenses

Subpart B – Lodgings-Plus Per Diem

- Allowance for lodging
- Allowance for meals and incidental expenses

Subpart C - Reduced Per Diem

- Authorization circumstances

Subpart D - Actual Expense

- Authorization circumstances, limitations, and requirements

Conference Lodging Allowance (See FTR [301-74](#))

5.1.2 Eligibility for Per Diem or Actual Expense Allowance

An HHS employee is entitled to per diem, conference lodging rate, or actual expense allowance as follows:

1. If the employee performs official travel outside the official station as defined in Section 4.3.1; or
2. If the employee performs travel within the HHS defined local travel area, and:
 - a. Has been authorized per diem under the narrow exceptions for local travel as per Section 4.3.2.2 or 4.3.2.4; or
 - b. Has been authorized per diem under the GETA statutory exception (see Section 4.3.2.3); and
3. If the employee is in travel status for more than 12 hours.

HHS officials who authorize travel that meets the above conditions must pay a per diem or subsistence allowance to the employee, unless:

1. The employee performs travel to a training event under the GETA (5 U.S.C. 4101-4118), and the OPDIV/STAFFDIV does not authorize reimbursement for per diem or subsistence expense; or
2. The individual performs pre-employment interview travel, and the hiring HHS component does not authorize payment of per diem expenses; or
3. The employee is authorized annual leave in conjunction with the TDY travel (see Section 5.2.1 and Section 6.5).

5.1.3 Per Diem and Actual Expense Allowances

5.1.3.1 Lodging-Plus Per Diem

HHS employees are expected to travel on a lodgings-plus per diem basis, except in limited, unusual situations when a conference lodging allowance, reduced per diem,

or actual expense reimbursement is specifically authorized or approved for the particular trip. Under the lodgings-plus per diem method, a maximum per diem rate is established for lodging, plus M&IE, at a specific location. The following government organizations establish per diem rates:

1. General Services Administration: CONUS areas
2. Department of State: Foreign areas
3. Department of Defense: Non-foreign areas OCONUS

In most circumstances, employees may choose lodging facilities (up to the maximum lodging rate for the TDY location) at their discretion, but every HHS traveler must keep in mind the mandate to be prudent when incurring charges for official travel. Reserving hotel lodging that requires an advance deposit on the travel charge card may be authorized when there is no FedRooms or Government rate available in accordance with OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy. If a traveler prepays lodging prior to the departure, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV may or may not reimburse travelers for the expense until after the trip has been completed in accordance with FTR [301-11.16](#), [301-11.32](#) and OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy.

Employees are expected to stay in the location of the TDY assignment if appropriate lodging is available there. For example, employees should not choose a lodging facility a significant distance away from the temporary duty site and at greater expense to the Government if local lodging is available, reasonable, and safe (e.g., staying 20 miles away from the duty site, at a resort, would not be prudent; the employee will bear any extra cost for the distant facility). The high charge for parking at downtown hotels should be considered when choosing a lodging facility in major cities, if that charge could be avoided by driving a few extra miles without substantial inconvenience.

5.1.3.2 Lodging

Travelers or designated personnel should make lodging reservations using the lodging reservation module in the ETS. First consideration must be given to establishments that are contracted by GSA under the FedRooms program to ensure that travelers stay in fire-safe accommodations at a rate that is at or below per diem. In addition, a majority of FedRooms property provide additional benefits such as free internet access. The TMC partnered with HHS will also assist travelers to identify the commercial lodging facilities in the FedRooms program.

Compliance with the E-Gov Travel System Procedures

In the ETS, FedRooms facilities are listed under the “Govt Preferred” tab in the lodging section. Lodging facilities participating in the FedRooms program offers hotel rates at or below government per diem, are USFA-certified, offer a cancellation deadline of 4:00 p.m. or later on the day of arrival, and have a 2-star or higher rating. If there are no FedRooms properties at the TDY location, they may select a hotel

listed under the “Other Lodging” tab in the lodgings section of the ETS.

The FTR does require travelers to book all reservations through the ETS or their TMC. However, some extenuating circumstances for which it may not be possible or practical to use the ETS online booking tool to book lodging are:

1. When attending a conference where the conference sponsor has negotiated with one or more lodging facilities to set aside a specific number of rooms for conference attendees and to ensure that a set aside room is available, it is necessary to book lodging directly with the lodging facility.
2. When travel is to a remote location and it is not possible to book lodging accommodations through the ETS online booking tool. In this instance, travelers should work with the TMC to determine lodging availability. Travelers should contact their OPDIV/STAFFDIV for additional assistance.
3. When such travel arrangements are so complex and circumstances will not allow for booking travel through the online self-service booking tool in the ETS. Travelers should contact the TMC for assistance.

Personal convenience is not an exception to the FTR. If an employee uses an unauthorized travel agent, or unauthorized TMC, or unauthorized travel service such as Orbitz, Travelocity, etc., the employee will be responsible for all additional costs that result from the unauthorized use and may be subject to disciplinary action according to OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy.

Some lodging facilities charge taxes from which government travelers may be exempt. See Section 5.1.5.

Note: When selecting lodging facilities, first consideration must be given to lodging facilities contracted by GSA under the FedRooms Program. (See [FTR 301-11.11.](#))

5.1.3.3 Conference Lodging Allowance (CLA)

Federal employees who travel to attend a conference may be authorized a CLA of up to a 25 percent increase (rounded to the next higher dollar) of the lodging portion of the applicable per diem allowance. The M&IE portion of the per diem allowance may not be increased under the CLA.

Please refer to Section 1.3.2 for additional guidance on use of this allowance. If a government agency is sponsoring the conference, only that agency may set the CLA rate, and all Federal employees attending the conference must be allowed that rate for lodging (although it is permissible for an employee to stay at another lodging facility by choice at a lower rate). If a non-Government entity sponsors a conference, the AO may authorize the employee to be reimbursed for lodging expenses incurred up to the conference lodging allowance rate. See FTR [301-74.8](#) and [301-74.9](#).

5.1.3.4 Reduced Per Diem

Federal Travel Regulation Part [301-11](#), Subpart C, Reduced Per Diem, states that agencies may prescribe a reduced per diem rate lower than the prescribed maximum when:

1. The agency can determine in advance that lodging and/or meal costs will be lower than the per diem rate; and
2. The agency specifies the lowest authorized per diem rate in the employee's travel authorization in advance of his/her travel.

5.1.3.5 HHS Maximum Subsistence Rate Guidelines for Extended/Long-term TDY Assignments

General HHS Policy

An "extended" travel assignment is one where the employee stays for official duty purposes in the same TDY station for at least 14 lodging nights, although the procedures discussed in this section are considered appropriate to apply for any assignment in a single TDY duty station that lasts longer than one week.

For extended and long-term travel assignments, in line with FTR Part [301-11.200](#), per diem rates must be reduced in accordance with the HHS Maximum Subsistence Rate Guidelines for Extended/Long-term TDY Assignments listed in Table 6 and Table 7 below to establish an appropriate per diem rate for a particular extended assignment. AOs are expected to ensure that a realistic reduced per diem rate is authorized for employees who are on extended travel for TDY assignments. The rate should provide the employee with adequate reimbursement to cover necessary living expenses. Employees on an extended long-term assignment should be able to maintain a reasonable standard of living, without reaping any significant financial gains, suffering any significant losses, or living in an unsafe location.

Specific HHS Maximum Per Diem Rate Reduction Guidelines

Assignments within CONUS and Non- Foreign Travel Areas:

For Assignments Less than 30 Nights

The maximum daily amount in the FTR for the traveler's locality may be used when reasonable for the expected duration of the assignment.

Assignments of 30 Nights or Greater

For longer-term assignments, the allowable per diem should be reduced, as employees are expected to secure Extended Stay or Long-term Lodging Facilities at substantially lower rates. Such lodging will normally include cooking facilities, so the M&IE rate shall be reduced. Close attention must be given to setting a daily lodging rate appropriate for the timing of the

assignment and the particular location involved. The goal is to reduce the cost to the Government as much as possible for the entire period of travel/occupancy, while providing safe and adequate lodging to the employee, with reasonable transportation option(s) to the TDY site at a cost not exceeding the lodging savings. Travelers will always receive 75 percent of per diem on travel days.

The following guidelines in Table 6 and Table 7 below are provided for setting per diem rates for assignments of 30 nights or more. The guidelines are based upon the length of the entire TDY assignment, and do not represent a sliding scale during the length of the TDY assignment. The reduction begins on day one, unless the traveler's OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy allows for a different rate for the first 29 nights, in which case the reduction begins in accordance with OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy.

Table 6 - Reduced Per Diem Lodging Allowances

Assignment Period	Percent Reduction
30 to 90 Nights	70% of lodging per diem rate for location
91 to 180 Nights	60% of lodging per diem rate for location
Over 180 Nights	50% of lodging per diem rate for location

Table 7 - Reduced Per Diem M&IE Allowances

M&IE Allowance	Percent Reduction
Cooking facilities included in lodging	50% of M&IE rate for location
No cooking facilities or meals provided	75% of M&IE rate for location
Lodging site provides all meals	Only Incidental Expenses allowance for location

Employees may elect to secure lodging that is more expensive, for personal convenience, but they must pay the excess cost over the authorized rate.

Assignments outside the Continental United States (OCONUS)

Assignments of Less than 30 Nights

The maximum daily amount in the FTR for the traveler's locality may be used when reasonable for the length of the assignment; however, a lower amount may be more appropriate. The rate should be realistic and fair for the location involved, given the timing of the travel.

Assignments of 30 Nights or Greater

For long-term assignments OCONUS, the allowable per diem should be reduced if, it is reasonable to expect employees to be able to secure Long-term Lodging Facilities at substantially lower rates within the location. Due to varying considerations of availability, cost, safety, and features of lodging

options in foreign areas, no guideline amounts for setting reduced rates for lodging in foreign countries will be provided in this section.

Supervisors or AOs should gather sufficient reliable information about the location of the assignment to enable them to assess what is a reasonable and fair lodging rate given the circumstances of the travel and length of assignment. The rate must be specified on the travel order and discussed with the employee.

If lodging options that include meals or meal preparation facilities are reasonably available, the M&IE rate must be reduced or, if all meals are provided with the lodging, only the incidental expenses portion of the locality's M&IE rate should be authorized.

An employee's personal preference (e.g., staying in superior accommodations) may not be considered a necessary living expense. Employees are responsible for incurring only those expenses that a prudent person would incur while traveling on personal business, and claiming reimbursement accordingly.

Occasionally, circumstances unique to a particular travel assignment may lead the AO to the conclusion that a rate higher than the guideline maximum is in the public interest and critical to the agency's mission. Under such unusual conditions, the AO may increase the guideline reduced maximum rate to a prudent rate consistent with the conditions and necessary costs that must be incurred by the employee.

Note: In all discussions of reducing rates for extended/long-term travel, the term "night" refers to a lodging night, and all such nights are to be counted sequentially. If an employee is absent from the TDY station for a short period (e.g., for personal or official business travel elsewhere), the number of "nights" is not reduced to account for that break in presence at the TDY location.

Example: An individual on a 90-night assignment to Rockville, MD is scheduled to work at the TDY station 4 days per week requiring four lodging nights; however, since the length of the assignment is for 90 nights, the lodging and M&IE should be reduced according to the guidelines in Table 6 and Table 7.

Assuming 70% of lodging at \$211/day = \$147.70 and 50% M&IE at \$71/day = \$35.50, for a total of \$183.20 per day. Calculation of the maximum authorized per diem allowance for the three month assignment would be 48 (number of actual days worked) x \$183.20 = \$8,793.60.

Recommended Lodging Facilities

When selecting lodging facilities, employees should follow the guidelines and give first consideration to the type of lodging facilities in Table 8 - TDY Length and Lodging Selection below.

Table 8 - TDY Length and Lodging Selection

Term	From	To	Lodging
TDY	1	13 Nights	FedRooms/Extended Stay
Extended TDY	14 Nights	29 Nights	Extended Stay
Long-term TDY	30 Nights	90 Nights	Extended Stay/Long-term Lodging Facilities (Apartments)
Long-term TDY	91 Nights	End of Assignment	Long-term Lodging Facilities (Apartments)

TDY Lodging Facilities

For TDY travel, first consideration must be given to FedRooms properties in accordance with FTR [301-11.11](#). In addition, employees can look at extended stay lodging facilities. Extended stay hotels are a type of lodging with features unavailable at standard hotels. These features are intended to provide more home-like amenities such as laundry and kitchen facilities. Extended Stay Facilities may offer discounts for extended stays, beginning at five nights.

Extended TDY Lodging Facilities

For extended TDY stays of 14 nights to 29 nights, first consideration must be given to Extended Stay Facilities. Extended Stay Facilities may or may not be a participant in the FedRooms program. They often include the term “Suite” in the name.

Long-term TDY Facilities – 30 – 90 Nights

For Long-term TDY of 30 nights to 90 nights, first consideration must be given to Extended Stay Facilities. In addition, travelers should check Long-term Lodging Facilities to determine if they are a more cost-effective option. Long-term Lodging Facilities include apartment or condominium-type properties that may be furnished with all the amenities of a regular home. Returning home on the weekends, because it is more cost effective, does not preclude the use of either Extended Stay or Long-term Lodging Facilities. A cost comparison should be completed to determine what is most advantageous to the Government. If an Extended Stay or Long-term Lodging Facility is not selected, proper justification must be provided.

Long-term TDY Facilities – 91 Nights to end of Assignment

For Long-term TDY greater than 91 nights, first consideration must be given to Long-term Lodging Facilities. Long-term Lodging Facilities are available on the GSA schedule at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21816>. In addition, check the

HHS Travel Office website at www.hhs.gov/travel for specific Long-term Lodging Facilities available to HHS employees. Returning home on the weekends, because it is more cost effective, does not preclude the use of either Extended Stay or Long-term Lodging Facilities. A cost comparison should be completed to determine what is most advantageous to the Government. If a Long-term Lodging Facility is not selected, proper justification must be provided.

It is the responsibility of the HHS AO to ensure that the appropriate research takes place, by the traveler or travel preparer, and proper consideration is given to Extended Stay and Long-term Lodging Facility choices and reduced per diem allowances before an employee is authorized and issued travel orders for an extended or long-term TDY assignment.

Temporary Change of Station

For TDY duty assignments at one location that are expected to last more than six months, the use of a temporary change of station move for eligible categories of employees should be considered in lieu of per diem. For additional information on both Temporary Change of Station (TCS) and Permanent Change of Station (PCS), see Chapter 12, Relocation Allowances.

Long-term Lodging

FTR [301-11](#), Subpart A, General Rules, provides detailed information on what expenses may be considered part of the daily lodging cost when an employee rents a room, apartment, house, or other lodging on a weekly, monthly, or other long-term basis. It also provides guidance on how to compute the daily lodging rate for long-term rentals.

Travelers should work with the TMC or their OPDIV/STAFFDIV Travel Office to determine lodging availability. Long-term Lodging Facilities are available on the GSA schedule available at www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21816. In addition, check the HHS Travel Office website at www.hhs.gov/travel for specific Long-term Lodging facilities available to HHS employees. Returning home on the weekends, because it is more cost effective, does not preclude the use of either Extended Stay or Long-term Lodging facilities. A cost comparison should be completed to determine what is most advantageous to the Government. If a Long-term Lodging Facility is not selected, proper justification must be provided.

In addition to reducing the lodging expenses, careful consideration should be given to reducing the allowance for meals and incidentals. Long-term lodging accommodations that include facilities for preparing/eating meals and/or storing food should be used, when available and economical to the Government. When an employee on long-term assignment rents accommodations with cooking facilities, the M&IE portion of their per diem rate must also be reduced, generally by at least one-half of the locality's M&IE rate.

Authorized Temporary Duty Travel away from the Extended or Long-term

TDY Location

An employee who is authorized to perform TDY travel away from the Extended/Long-term TDY location will receive transportation and per diem allowances in the same manner, and at the same rates, as if they were performing typical TDY travel. An employee engaged on such an assignment will be authorized transportation or mileage to return home in accordance with Section 5.2.3.3, Periodic Returns to Official Duty Station for Non-Official Reasons.

Per Diem

An employee, who is receiving per diem at the Extended/Long-term TDY location, as prescribed in this section, will be entitled to the entire M&IE for the day of departure from the place of Long-term TDY at the rate authorized for the official duty. On the day of return to the Long-term TDY location, the M&IE rate will be paid through midnight of that day. Because there are two per diem rates, care must be exercised to ensure duplicative expenses for per diem are not authorized. On the first and last day of travel, the employee will receive the following entitlements:

1. 25 percent of the authorized Extended/Long-term TDY M&IE rate; and
2. 75 percent of the TDY M&IE rate.

Dual Lodging

An employee who is receiving per diem at the Extended/Long-term TDY location, and who is required to perform official TDY travel either back to the permanent official station or to another TDY location, is not normally entitled to per diem as a travel expense at the Extended/Long-term TDY Location. This would be considered Dual Lodging because the employee would be receiving reimbursement for lodging in both locations. However, if the employee obtained a reduced long-term lodging rate, such as an apartment that is paid on a monthly basis, in accordance with the HHS Maximum Subsistence Rate Guidelines for Extended/Long-term TDY Assignments, the traveler may be reimbursed the payment of the lodging cost for the days not spent at the Long-term TDY location.

The payment is based upon the daily lodging rate. To calculate the daily lodging rate, the number of days of actual occupancy during the billing period, excluding days of travel, should be divided into the monthly (periodic) rate billed for the lodging. See the examples provided below in Tables 9 and 10.

Table 9 - Daily Lodging Rate Example 1 – Reimbursed Full Amount

Daily Lodging Per Diem Rate for Washington, DC	Monthly Billing Rate for the Long-Term Lodging Facility	Monthly Daily Lodging Rate
\$211	\$2,500	\$2,500/ 30 = \$84

Table 10 - Daily Lodging Rate Example 2 – Traveler Pays the Difference

Daily Lodging Per Diem Rate for Washington, DC (over 180 Nights)	Monthly Billing Rate for the Long-Term Lodging Facility	Monthly Daily Lodging Rate
\$211 X 50% = \$105	\$3,400	\$3,400/ 30 = \$113

Note that if that daily rate is within the approved lodging rate set on the employee's travel order, as in Table 9, reimbursement in full is appropriate. However, if the re-computed daily rate exceeds the daily lodging rate approved on the travel order, as in Table 10, the employee must pay the difference unless the AO approves a one-time exception to the authorized daily rate.

Reduced Per Diem for Commissioned Corps members

Per JFTR U4177 "NO PER DIEM OR A PER DIEM RATE IN A LESSER AMOUNT," the Secretary concerned may authorize per diem rates in lesser amounts (to zero) when the circumstances of the travel or duty to be performed so warrant and are peculiar to that particular Service (see paragraph U4105-D for the complete regulation). This authority may be delegated to a chief of an appropriate bureau or staff agency of the appropriate Service, but may not be further re-delegated.

The authorized reduced per diem rate must be stated on the order before travel begins (or as part of an order amendment). If the reduced per diem is not stated on the travel order in advance, the full per diem rate for the locality is used.

The reduced or zero per diem rate, does not apply to any day the member is traveling. The reduced per diem rate should incorporate an amount for laundry/dry-cleaning if the travel is OCONUS or for less than seven days in CONUS.

5.1.3.6 Actual Expense Allowance

Federal Travel Regulation Part [301-11](#), Subpart D, Actual Expense, states that actual expense reimbursement may be warranted when:

1. Lodging and/or meals are procured at a prearranged place such as a hotel where a meeting, conference, or training session is held, and no

- feasible less expensive alternative exists;
2. Costs have escalated because of special events (e.g. sporting events, conventions, natural disasters, etc.), lodging and meal expenses within prescribed allowances cannot be obtained nearby, and costs to commute to/from the nearby location consume most or all of the savings achieved from occupying less expensive lodging;
 3. Because of mission requirements; or
 4. Any other reason acceptable and approved by the agency.

In accordance with FTR [301-11.302](#), requests for reimbursement of actual expenses must be made in advance of travel.

In these unusual circumstances, delegated officials may authorize a daily actual expense reimbursement rate up to 300 percent of the applicable maximum per diem rate, but the reimbursement rate should not be set higher than necessary under the circumstances for each day of travel. There is no regulatory authority to exceed the 300 percent ceiling. A per diem rate at or near the ceiling level should be exceedingly rare and must be thoroughly justified on the travel documentation.

Actual expense reimbursement may be authorized for the same types of expenses covered by per diem rates: lodging, meals, and incidental expenses. Only those expenses that actually will exceed the maximum per diem rate due to the unusual circumstances in the locality will be increased.

5.1.3.7 Authorization of Actual Expense Allowance(s)

Generally, consideration for actual expense allowance (AEA) is permitted only when there is no hotel(s) in the area that is within the maximum per diem. As such, if there is a hotel available to the traveler whose lodging costs are within the per diem allowance AEA is not to be authorized unless:

1. There is concern for personal safety;
2. It can be demonstrated that the hotel within the per diem rate is not the lowest cost option when the cost of ground transportation to and from the work/meeting location is considered; or
3. It can be demonstrated that travel time between the hotel and the work/meeting site is excessive.

When authorizing an AEA, the AO should consider the following when evaluating the reasons listed above in Section 5.1.3.6, items 1-4:

Conference Lodging Allowance of 125 Percent

For Item 1, in Section 5.1.3.6 above, the AO should only authorize the CLA of up to

125 percent for lodging only as described in Section 1.3.2.3, Conference Lodging Allowance (CLA). This allows for the increase in the cost of lodging at the designated conference facility but does not allow for an increased expenditure of meals and incidental expenses. The AEA memo is not necessary for the CLA. In addition, see Section 1.3, Travel Planning and Section 1.3.2.3, Conference Lodging Allowance (CLA), for additional information.

Actual Expense

For Items 2 – 4, in Section 5.1.3.6 above, travelers must submit documentation justifying the increase in expenses, which includes hotel cost comparisons from at least three (3) hotels within the TDY location (see Section 5.1.7, Request for Actual Expense Allowance (AEA) Memorandum Sample). The documentation must be attached to the Travel Authorization in the ETS. In addition, the justifications in the ETS (Pre-Audits) should contain detailed information, which allows the AO to substantiate the request.

One of the hotels for the comparison must be at the maximum lodging rate set by GSA. If there is no hotel available at the maximum per diem rate, as provided by the TMC, the traveler must provide this information as part of the justification. The cost comparisons also should include the cost of ground transportation (e.g., taxi/shuttle) from the hotels to the site, and the location and distance in miles from the meeting site. Based upon the cost information provided by the Traveler or Travel Preparer, the AO should only authorize the actual amount necessary for the specific expenses that are impacted by the circumstances and, therefore, that are above the per diem rate set by GSA.

The use of the full 300 percent should be limited, and the AO should only raise the expense category by the amount (percent) necessary to cover the expenses for the TDY location. The AO should note the actual expense amount (percent) increase authorized, and for which expense categories, either on the authorization or in a document that is then attached to the Travel Authorization. The AO should authorize one of the following:

- Up to 300% of Lodging Only
- Up to 300% of M&IE Only
- Up to 300% of both Lodging and M&IE

For example, the AO may authorize a higher lodging component under actual expense, but limit meals and incidentals to the locality's M&IE rate.

A request for authorization for actual expense reimbursement must be made in advance of travel, and authorization should be documented on the travel order in accordance with the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's delegation of authority and ETS procedures. Actual expense reimbursement may also be approved after travel is completed ("post-approval") when properly justified, under the following conditions:

1. Emergency situations in which requests for prior travel authorization were not possible;
2. Unanticipated and exceptional circumstances which, during the course of the specific travel assignment, resulted in the incurrence of actual and necessary subsistence expenses that were much greater than the authorized per diem allowance; or
3. Other circumstances that would necessitate approval by the appropriate delegated official.

Authorization for actual expense allowances after the fact may require approval by the STO or their designee, depending on the individual OPDIV/STAFFDIV's policy.

Note: Each OPDIV/STAFFDIV is responsible for establishing procedures for authorizing actual expense and ensuring that justifications for its use are appropriately documented.

5.1.3.8 Statutory Exception

The Government Employees Training Act (see 5 U.S.C. 4109 and 5 CFR 410.304) states that agencies “may pay, or reimburse the employee for, all or a part of the necessary expenses of the training.”

When the OPDIV/STAFFDIV requires all participants in a training course to stay in a local hotel in order to participate in daytime and evening training activities, a per diem allowance at the training location within the HHS defined local travel area may be authorized as a necessary expense of training. Training that takes place within the local travel area and any corresponding expenses paid, including special authorization of per diem, must be authorized, approved, and paid in accordance with the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's policies.

This authority does not come from the FTR. For policy guidance on TDY travel expenses for training under the GETA, please refer to Section 1.8.

5.1.4 Hotel/Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990

Title 5 of the U.S.C. Section 5707a(a), requires agencies to ensure that not less than 90 percent of the commercial lodging room nights within CONUS and non-foreign OCONUS locations for a fiscal year are booked in approved places of public accommodation that meet fire safety guidelines. Whenever available, employees are strongly encouraged to stay in public accommodations that are on the FEMA List of Hotels and Motels that meet the requirements of the Hotel/Motel Fire Safety Act. The travel management services provided by the HHS OPDIV will assist employees in reserving lodging in an approved, fire-safe accommodation.

5.1.5 Exemption from State or Local Tax on Hotel/Lodging Accommodations

The FTR requires employees on official travel to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent (financially responsible) person would exercise if traveling on personal business. This includes claiming a Federal exemption from payment of state and/or local taxes on lodging wherever this option is available to employees on official travel. Not all states and localities offer tax exemption, and some locations do not specify a particular form on which to claim it.

Some information on hotel tax exemptions and locally required forms are available on the GSA travel web page: www.gsa.gov/statetaxforms. Additional information is available through the GSA SmartPay program at <https://smartpay.gsa.gov/about-gsa-smartpay/tax-information/state-response-letter>.

HHS travelers are expected to inform themselves about the tax exemption status of each location prior to departing on official travel, and should make every effort to obtain and use any locally approved lodging facility tax exemption form. If official travel takes place in a location where the lodging property is listed at either [GSA's Website](#) or the [SmartPay website](#), and the traveler's voucher claim includes domestic lodging tax reimbursement, the traveler must have made every effort to obtain the lodging tax exemption and failing that, include proper justification in the "Comments" block of the voucher.

Failure to obtain the tax exemption or not having proper justification in the "Comments" block may be a basis for denial by the AO of the reimbursement for the lodging tax. Employees should inquire at the lodging check-in desk about availability of state and/or local tax exemption for Federal official duty travel. In the event there is no locally approved or lodging facility-provided form, the traveler should present a copy of his/her official Travel Authorization with their Government ID card and Government Travel Charge card, if applicable, to the lodging facility in order to find out whether the facility might be willing to offer lodging tax exemption.

Valid reasons a traveler may be required to pay hotel taxes may include:

1. State does not offer tax exemption to Federal travelers; or
2. State offers tax exemption, but lodging establishment refused to acknowledge.

It is extremely important for a traveler to carry his/her Government-issued travel charge card, Government ID card, and a copy of his/her approved Travel Authorization to demonstrate his/her eligibility for these exemptions or discounts.

Failure to make that inquiry, resulting in payment of state and/or local tax in an exempt area, may result in denial of reimbursement for the lodging tax.

5.1.6 Internal Controls on Authorization and Payment of Per Diem Rates and Actual Expenses

Heads of OPDIV/STAFFDIVs or their designees are responsible for establishing appropriate

management controls over the authorization and payment of per diem rates and actual expense reimbursements to ensure compliance with the FTR, the HHS Travel Manual, and their own supplemental policy and procedure requirements.

FTR Part [301-70](#), Subpart C, Policies and Procedures Relating to Per Diem Expenses, identifies additional policies and procedures that OPDIV/STAFFDIV management should establish for authorization and payment of per diem expenses. Most of these policies pertain to internal delegations of authority.

5.1.7 Request for Actual Expense Allowance (AEA) Memorandum Sample

The following sample memorandum should be used for documentation as described in Section 5.1.3.7, Authorization of Actual Expense Allowance(s).

Memorandum

Date: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

To: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Through: [Click here to enter text.](#)

From: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Subject: Request for Approval of Actual Expense Allowance

The current Government per diem rate for this geographic location is [Click here to enter text.](#) for lodging and [Click here to enter text.](#) for Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE). I am requesting authorization of AEA expenses for lodging for the following event:

Event	Information
Name of Meeting:	Click here to enter text.
Dates of Meeting:	Click here to enter text.
Geographic Location:	Click here to enter text.
Date(s) for which AEA is being requested:	Click here to enter text.

Justification for requesting Actual Expense Allowance: Check the one box below that best describes why a request for AEA is warranted, in accordance with FTR 301-11.300, and complete the Hotel Cost Comparison Data and Information for all four (4) Hotels as provided below:

1. Hosting organization has a prearranged meeting site (i.e., rooms are booked with the hotel well in advance of the meeting dates). Note: Checking this box is not an automatic justification for authorization of an AEA hotel rate. The Hotel Cost Comparison Data and Information section below must be completed.

2. Hotel accommodations at the maximum (i.e., Government) lodging rate cannot be obtained within a five-mile radius of the TDY Location/meeting site in a major city. Local ground transportation (e.g., taxi) costs to commute to and from the hotel at the Government lodging rate to the meeting site would negate any savings achieved by staying at the hotel with the Government lodging rate. The Hotel Cost Comparison Data and Information section below must be completed.

3. Hotel accommodations at the maximum (i.e., Government) lodging rate cannot be obtained because travel is to a geographic location where the costs have escalated temporarily due to a special event (e.g., sporting, festival, major conference, etc.) and nearby

cities/towns have escalated their hotel rates. Note: Checking this box is not an automatic justification for authorization of an AEA hotel rate. The Hotel Cost Comparison Data and Information section below must be completed.

4. Safety and security concerns (e.g., heightened terrorist alerts, disease outbreak, etc.). The Hotel Cost Comparison Data and Information section below must be completed. Please provide additional information/justification for the AEA request below.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

5. Other. The Hotel Cost Comparison Data and Information section below must be completed. Please provide additional information/justification for the AEA request below. Note: This can include a scenario where there is no special event taking place (see box 3 above), yet a hotel at the maximum (i.e. Government) lodging rate cannot be procured in the geographic location.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Proposed AEA Hotel

Proposed Hotel	Information
Name of Hotel:	Click here to enter text.
Address of Hotel:	Click here to enter text.
Phone Number of Hotel:	Click here to enter text.
Distance from meeting site ⁸ :	Click here to enter text.
Daily ground transportation costs if applicable:	Click here to enter text.
Other daily costs, if applicable:	Click here to enter text.
Proposed Percent Per Diem Increase:	Click here to enter text.

⁸ If the hotel is the meeting site, indicate zero (0) miles.

Hotel Cost Comparison and Information⁹:

Hotel Comparison #1	Information
Name of Hotel:	Click here to enter text.
Address of Hotel:	Click here to enter text.
Phone Number of Hotel:	Click here to enter text.
Lodging Rate:	\$Click here to enter text.
Distance from meeting site ¹⁰ :	Click here to enter text.
Daily ground transportation costs if applicable:	\$Click here to enter text.
Other daily costs, if applicable:	\$Click here to enter text.

Hotel Comparison #2	Information
Name of Hotel:	Click here to enter text.
Address of Hotel:	Click here to enter text.
Phone Number of Hotel:	Click here to enter text.
Lodging Rate:	\$Click here to enter text.
Distance from meeting site:	Click here to enter text.
Daily ground transportation costs if applicable:	\$Click here to enter text.
Other daily costs, if applicable:	\$Click here to enter text.

Hotel Comparison #3	Information
Name of Hotel:	Click here to enter text.
Address of Hotel:	Click here to enter text.
Phone Number of Hotel:	Click here to enter text.
Lodging Rate:	\$Click here to enter text.
Distance from meeting site:	Click here to enter text.
Daily ground transportation costs if applicable:	\$Click here to enter text.
Other daily costs, if applicable:	\$Click here to enter text.

Note: Lodging Tax is not to be included in a requested AEA lodging rate in a domestic or non-foreign location; lodging tax is to be included in the requested AEA lodging rate in an international geographic location.

Additional Justification (if applicable): [Click here to enter text.](#)

⁹ One of the hotels for the comparison must be at the maximum lodging rate set by GSA. If there is no hotel available at the maximum per diem rate, as provided by the TMC, the traveler must provide this information as part of the justification.

¹⁰ If the hotel is the meeting site, indicate zero (0) miles.

Authorization of AEA not to exceed \$ [Click here to enter text.](#) which is [Click here to enter text.](#)% above the government lodging rate and \$ [Click here to enter text.](#) which is [Click here to enter text.](#)% above the M&IE rate for a maximum of \$ [Click here to enter text.](#) per day is requested for the dates above.

Traveler Signature

<hr/>	Approved	<hr/>	Date
<hr/>	Disapproved	<hr/>	Date

5.2 Special Travel Situations including Leave while on TDY Travel Domestic/Non-Foreign and Reasonable Accommodations

This section provides supplemental guidance for HHS civilian employees, invitational travelers, and OPDIV/STAFFDIVs regarding special travel situations including the use of annual and compensatory leave.

5.2.1 HHS Leave Policy while on TDY Travel Domestic/Non-Foreign

The leave policy for employees on domestic/non-foreign TDY is as follows:

1. An employee who spends a minimum of three lodging nights may be authorized, not to exceed, three (3) days of annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with domestic/non-foreign trips.
2. An employee who spends a two (2) or more lodging nights may be authorized, not to exceed, two (2) days of annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with domestic/non-foreign trips.
3. An employee who spends only one (1) lodging night may be authorized, not to exceed, one (1) day of annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with domestic/non-foreign trips.
4. An employee whose TDY trip includes no overnight stay will not be authorized annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with a domestic/non-foreign trip.

For items 1, 2, and 3, lodging nights include conventional lodging (e.g., hotel/motel), Government quarters, lodging with friend(s) or relative(s) (with or without charge), nonconventional lodging (e.g., college dormitories or similar facilities), and recreational vehicles (e.g., trailers/campers) in accordance with FTR [301-11.12](#). In addition, overnight en route travel time is included in the number of lodging nights. This includes hotel rooms booked when arriving after midnight in accordance with FTR [301-11.7](#).

Employees on TDY must adjust their schedule to conform to the hours of the TDY assignment and revert to a standard tour of duty for the pay period(s) during which the TDY occurs.

The leave needs to be planned in accordance with Section 4.1.3.2, Personal Liability for Purchase of Indirect Route Transportation Tickets for Personal Convenience.

In cases of long term TDY travel (in excess of 30 days), the OPDIV/STAFFDIV STO, or their designee may consider other approved annual or compensatory leave requirements. In addition, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV STO, or their designee, may consider other approved annual or compensatory leave requirements due to personal/immediate family related emergencies, health related issues and in instances of imminent dangerous circumstances.

It is HHS policy that employees will not be authorized annual or compensatory leave in

conjunction with any trips that are sponsored, in whole or in part, by non-Federal sources, whether for-profit or non-profit. This includes domestic, non-foreign, and/or foreign travel.

5.2.2 Reimbursement for TDY Travel in Conjunction with Approved Leave - TDY Domestic/Non-Foreign

5.2.2.1 Return from Approved Leave - General Rule

When an employee is away from their official station on leave of absence, they assume the obligation of returning to the official duty station at their own expense. Reference Comptroller General Decision B11 Comp. Gen. 336 (1932).

5.2.2.2 Orders for TDY Travel Issued Before Departure on Approved Leave Where Indirect Travel is Involved

An employee, who is authorized, prior to departure on annual leave, to travel to a TDY station and to return to the permanent duty station, may be reimbursed for the cost of his/her actual TDY travel expenses. However, this reimbursed cost is not to exceed the cost to the Government of uninterrupted travel by a direct route between the permanent duty station and the temporary duty station.

(Reference Comptroller General Decision B 58 Comp. Gen. 797 (1979). In this decision, airfare reimbursement was the sole claim at issue. The employee had scheduled annual leave for vacation in Toronto, Canada, and had made necessary travel plans. Before departure from his headquarters/official duty station (Boulder, CO), he was directed to perform TDY in Norfolk, VA before returning to his headquarters. His actual trip involved an indirect route (Denver to Toronto to Norfolk to Denver) and cost \$387. He was entitled to reimbursement for the cost of his actual expenses not to exceed the cost of a direct round-trip between headquarters (Boulder/Denver) and the official temporary duty point (Norfolk). The direct trip cost would have been \$312, so this was the amount that could be reimbursed.)

The same rule related to indirect travel applies in the rare case when an agency requests an employee, before they depart on annual leave, to perform TDY travel at or near a planned vacation site. Even if the agency request is based solely on the fact that the employee will be taking leave at or near the TDY site (otherwise the request would not have been made), the agency should reimburse the employee only those costs attributable to performing the temporary duty in excess of those the employee would have incurred for personal reasons.

5.2.2.3 Orders for Official Duty While in Leave Status Away from Official Station

Employee Chooses or Is Directed to Return to Official Station

When an employee proceeds to a point away from their official station on annual leave and during such leave, they are required to perform TDY and are required or choose to return to their official station after completion of the TDY, the employee may be reimbursed only for the difference between:

1. What it cost them to return to their official station via the TDY location; and

2. What it would have cost them to return to their official station directly from the place where they were on leave.

In other words, the Government is responsible only for the difference between the cost attributable to the TDY and what it would have cost the employee to return to their official station from the place where they were on leave.

(Reference Comptroller General Decisions B 11 Comp. Gen. 336 (1932), 56 Comp. Gen. 96 (1976), and 64 Comp. Gen. 28 (1984). In 56 Comp. Gen. 96, an employee traveled from his permanent duty station, Lincoln, NE, to Waterbury, CT, while on annual leave. Shortly before his personal stay was scheduled to end, he was issued travel orders to go to Billings, MO, to testify before a court. His reimbursement was limited to the difference between the costs he actually incurred in traveling from Waterbury to Billings to Lincoln and the costs he would have incurred if he had returned from Waterbury to Lincoln, as originally planned.)

Employee Chooses to Resume Leave Status

Travel expenses not to exceed the cost of travel to and from the place where the leave was interrupted to the place where the duty was performed may be authorized, if the following conditions apply:

1. The employee is on authorized leave of absence away from their official station; and
2. The authorized leave of absence is temporarily interrupted because they are recalled to duty at their official station; or
3. The authorized absence is interrupted because they are ordered to perform TDY at another place; and
4. The employee wishes to resume leave status immediately after the completion of official duty; and
5. A statement is included in the travel order that an administrative determination was made that it would be unreasonable to require the employee to assume the additional travel expense in compliance with the TDY. (Reference: Comptroller General Decision B 39 Comp. Gen. 611 [1960].)

Example: An employee travels from his official station, Los Angeles, CA, to Seattle, WA, while on annual leave. While in Seattle, the employee is issued a travel order to go to New Orleans, LA immediately for a three-day operational review. Upon completion of the TDY assignment in New Orleans, the employee returns to Seattle, to continue their annual leave. Subsequently, the employee travels back home to Los Angeles. The employee may be reimbursed for his actual travel expenses to go from Seattle, where he was on leave, to New Orleans, his TDY point, and to return to Seattle, where he resumed leave.

5.2.2.4 Per Diem/Actual Expense Reimbursement when Annual or Compensatory Leave is Taken While on Official Travel

If an employee takes annual or compensatory leave at the TDY location during the official travel period, it is HHS policy that appropriate adjustments must be made to reimbursement for the period of leave.

Approved Annual or Compensatory Leave in Conjunction with TDY Trips to Domestic & Non-Foreign Locations

It is HHS policy that:

1. No allowance for M&IE may be paid for days of annual leave or equivalent time off (e.g., compensatory time, credit hours).
2. No per diem or actual expenses for lodging may be authorized or paid for days when annual leave or equivalent time off is taken if the employee is paying a daily lodging rate, because they could check out during the period of leave.
3. However, when an employee performing an extended/long-term travel assignment in one location secures a reduced lodging rate based on long-term occupancy, the lodging rate is set and billed by extended periods (e.g., monthly) the employee must pay for the entire period of occupancy irrespective of leave taken. In this circumstance, isolated days or hours of annual leave or equivalent time off will generally not affect their right to reimbursement, as the daily rate will be calculated as covered in Section 5.1.3.5, HHS Maximum Subsistence Rate Guidelines for Extended/Long-term TDY Assignments.
4. In some circumstances, however, the approved daily lodging rate may be exceeded using HHS Maximum Subsistence Rate Guidelines for Extended/Long-term TDY Assignments when accounting for annual/equivalent leave days. If that occurs, any days in which annual/equivalent leave was taken for one-half of the scheduled work day or less (e.g., if the employee is scheduled to work 8 hours and takes 4 hours of such leave on that day), should not be counted as a day with leave for purposes of calculating the daily lodging rate. If the daily lodging rate using this method exceeds the daily lodging rate

approved on the travel order, the employee must pay the difference for that billing period.

5.2.2.5 Per Diem Reimbursement for Indirect/Interrupted Official TDY Travel Involving Annual or Compensatory Leave

When employees travel by indirect routes, or interrupt official travel for personal convenience and/or to take leave, they are entitled to per diem and travel expenses not to exceed those that would have been incurred on uninterrupted travel by a usually traveled route for official business. (Reference Comptroller General Decision Letter, B-248868, dated September 2, 1992.)

Example: An employee is authorized to travel on a Monday afternoon for TDY duty in Denver on Tuesday and chooses to depart on Sunday for personal reasons. The employee is approved to take annual leave on Monday morning and is required to report for duty on Tuesday. The employee incurs a lodging cost on Monday night, within the locality's per diem rate.

Since the employee was authorized to travel officially on Monday, the employee may be reimbursed the per diem expense on Monday, not to exceed the constructive cost of what the employee was authorized to incur for per diem on that day.

Similarly, if a traveler elects to travel on Sunday rather than Monday, for official duties which begin on Tuesday morning, the 75 percent M&IE payable for the first day of travel may be paid for Monday, the designated official duty travel day, or for Sunday, the actual travel day, but not both.

Refer to Section 4.1.2, Transportation Method and Routing, and Gratuities, and Section 4.1.4.2, When Contract Fares May Not Be Used, for additional guidance on procuring transportation when travel is indirect or interrupted for personal convenience or leave.

5.2.2.6 Recording Leave on Travel Voucher

When leave is taken prior to or upon completion of an official travel assignment, leave should not be recorded in the official dates of travel, but must be annotated on the travel order and voucher. When leave is taken during an official travel assignment, the number of hours of leave for each day must be reported on the employee's travel voucher. Employees should check with their OPDIV/STAFFDIV to find out if planned leave should also be shown on the travel authorization (this policy is discretionary and varies within HHS).

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-10, Subpart A, General

5.2.3 Per Diem/Actual Expense Reimbursement for Non-Workdays while on Official Travel

Non-workdays are defined as weekends, legal Federal holidays, or other scheduled days when work does not occur.

In general, an employee will be reimbursed for per diem or actual expenses, as authorized, as long as the employee's travel status requires their stay to include a non-workday. HHS AOs should determine and authorize the most cost-effective situation between the following:

1. Having the employee stay at the TDY location in travel status during the non-workdays and pay per diem or actual expenses; or
2. Returning the employee back to his/her duty station during the non-workdays.

It is the responsibility of the designated HHS AO to determine whether an employee will be reimbursed for non-workdays when they take leave immediately before or after the non-workday (e.g., Friday or Monday).

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-11, Subpart A, General

5.2.3.1 Required Return to Official Station

If an employee is required to return to his/her official station on a non-workday by the agency, the employee will be reimbursed the per diem or actual expense amount allowable for return travel.

5.2.3.2 Periodic Returns to Official Station for Business Reasons

An Agency may authorize per diem or actual expense and round-trip transportation expenses for periodic return travel on non-workdays to the employee's home or official duty station under the following circumstances:

1. The agency requires the employee to return to his/her official station to perform official business; or
2. The agency will realize substantial cost savings by returning the employee home.

5.2.3.3 Periodic Returns to Official Duty Station for Non-Official Reasons

Periodic return travel home may be justified incident to an extended/long-term TDY travel assignment. The number and frequency of such trips home, which are authorized by the approving official, must be stated on the employee's travel order.

The only expenses, which may be reimbursed by the Government for such authorized return travel home, are the cost of round-trip transportation between the TDY station and home/official duty station (plus associated local transportation to and from the point of departure from the TDY site and the employee's home). These reimbursement guidelines should be annotated on the travel order.

Return Trips Home

If an employee is on a long-term assignment, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV may authorize a return trip home in keeping with the guidelines below.

For assignments that are less than 30 lodging nights:

1. Employees will not be authorized a return trip home at Government Expense.
2. Should the employee decide to return home any other time, see Section 5.2.3.4, Voluntary Return to Home or Official Station without Travel Order, for applicable policy guidelines.

For assignments that are greater than 30 lodging nights:

1. An employee may return home no more than two (2) times per month at the Government's expense in consultation with and approval by the AO.
2. Should the employee decide to return home any other time, see Section 5.2.3.4, Voluntary Return to Home or Official Station without Travel Order, for applicable policy guidelines.

An OPDIV/STAFFDIV may choose to implement this policy in a more restrictive manner within its own OPDIV/STAFFDIV.

5.2.3.4 Voluntary Return to Home or Official Station without Travel Order

If an employee, by personal choice and without a travel order, returns home or to his/her official station on non-workdays during a TDY travel assignment, the maximum reimbursement for all expenses (including round trip transportation and per diem or actual expense) is limited to what would have been allowed for per diem/actual expense under his/her travel order had the employee remained at the TDY travel location.

5.2.3.5 Voluntary Travel Away from TDY Station (Excluding Return to Home or Official Station) on Non-Workdays

If an employee voluntarily travels away from the TDY station on non-workdays and incurs lodging, meals, and incidental costs at a different location (other than their home or official station as discussed above), per diem or actual expense is limited to what would have been allowed had the employee remained at the TDY travel

location. In addition, the employee may not claim any transportation costs for this personal travel, even though there were no per diem costs incurred.

Example: If an employee takes a train to another location to stay with relatives over a weekend, the employee may not be reimbursed for the cost of the train trip to offset the fact that they incurred no lodging costs by staying with relatives.

5.2.4 Emergency Travel while on TDY

Emergency travel may result from:

1. An employee becoming incapacitated by illness or injury not due to his/her own misconduct;
2. The death or serious illness of a member of the employee's immediate family (as defined in FTR [300-3.1](#) and [301-30.2](#)); or
3. A catastrophic occurrence or impending disaster, such as fire, flood, or act of God that directly affects the employee's home.

If an employee has to interrupt or discontinue his/her TDY travel due to one of the emergencies listed above, the employee should contact his/her delegated travel official for instructions as soon as possible.

If emergency travel is approved for the employee, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV may reimburse the following expenses:

1. Per diem at the location where the employee incurred or was treated for an incapacitating illness or injury for a reasonable period (generally up to 14 calendar days), or where the family member is ill (the OPDIV/STAFFDIV at its discretion may pay for a longer period);
2. Transportation and per diem expense for travel to an alternate location to receive medical treatment, or to be with immediate family due to serious illness or death;
3. Transportation and per diem expense to return to the traveler's official station; and
4. Transportation costs of a medically necessary attendant.

When an employee in TDY travel status experiences the death or serious illness of a member of his/her immediate family, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV may, at its discretion, reimburse the cost of transportation from the TDY site to the alternate site (location of the family member) and return to the TDY site. The reimbursed cost, however, must not exceed what it would have cost for the employee to have traveled in the most economical means possible, using the City Pair fare, from the employee's official station to the alternate site and back to the official station.

Note: In order to be eligible for any reimbursement, the employee must travel from the alternate site back to the TDY site. If they travel from the alternate site to any other location (e.g., back to the official station), no reimbursement may be authorized (see FTR [301-70.505](#), [301-70.507](#), and [301-70.508](#)).

Travel Example: An employee travels from her official duty station in Atlanta, GA, to Washington, DC on an official business trip. While on TDY travel in Washington, a member of her immediate family dies in NY. She purchases, out-of-pocket, a round-trip ticket between Washington and NY, the cost of which is \$400. The constructive cost of a contract-carrier coach class round-trip ticket from Atlanta to NY is \$800. The employee would not be entitled to any reimbursement, as no excess cost is involved; the cost of the Atlanta-NY ticket is higher than the ticket she purchased from Washington to NY.

5.2.4.1 Telephone Calls

An employee may be reimbursed (via post-trip approval) for a personal call during emergencies. When personal emergencies occur, the approving official may approve a higher amount than the OPDIV's standard reimbursement policy limitation when the following requirements are met:

1. Government-provided long distance telephone systems and services are not available, so that a commercial toll service must be used;
2. A justification for the higher personal telephone expense allowance must be documented on the approved travel voucher; and
3. Receipts are required for all charges, to the extent that the calls were placed through a method that provides a receipt.

Employees calling to an area stricken by a disaster should be mindful that emergency services workers need extensive communications capacity and, therefore, restrict calls into that area to the minimum necessary.

In all cases, employees should make personal calls during lunch, break, or other off-duty periods, if possible. To the maximum extent practicable, employees should place calls on government-provided long distance telephone systems and services instead of using commercial toll services, in accordance with their OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs' policies.

Approving officials must be sensitive to the employee's needs yet, at the same time, protect the Government's interest by assuring that any reimbursement of or towards the expense of such calls is prudent. Numerous conditions can affect the cost of a telephone call, such as hotel surcharges and high rates for calls placed from individual rooms. Additional cost factors arise in foreign countries, including the country's telephone carrier system and additional tariffs. If telephone calls for personal reasons during travel cannot be made on a government telecommunications system, reasonable restrictions and guidelines should be issued to ensure that costs are minimized.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-30
- FTR Part, 301-70, Subpart F

5.2.5 Travel of an Employee with Special Needs

An agency may pay for additional travel expenses necessary to accommodate a special physical need, which is either:

1. Clearly visible and discernible; or
2. Substantiated in writing by the traveler's personal physician, specialist, or other medical provider.

All travelers, including invitational travelers, who request accommodations for special needs (medical reasons), must follow the HHS Reasonable Accommodation process as outlined in Chapter 4, "Reasonable Accommodation," of the HHS Equal Employment Office (EEO) and Diversity Management Policy and Procedures Manual, and as implemented by the traveler's OPDIV/STAFFDIV. The period for processing requests should be taken into consideration when planning travel. Response time varies but is a minimum of 10 business days, in accordance with the Reasonable Accommodation guidelines found in the EEO Manual. For travelers that already have a medical waiver currently in place, they will be required to follow their OPDIV/STAFFDIV Reasonable Accommodation process when the existing medical waiver expires and needs to be recertified.

5.2.5.1 Reasonable Accommodation Certification Time Frames

The following guidelines apply to the length of the reasonable accommodation request, based upon the determination made by the office responsible for the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's reasonable accommodation process:

1. Employees with permanent disabilities, as assessed by the office responsible for the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's reasonable accommodation process, may be authorized use of Other than Coach Class accommodations or reimbursement for additional expense(s) not to exceed a three-year period.
2. Employees with disabilities that are assessed, by the office responsible for the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's reasonable accommodation process, as serious but where the medical records do not substantiate a permanent condition, may be authorized use of Other than Coach Class accommodations or reimbursement for additional expense(s) not to exceed a one-year period.
3. Employees with a temporary disability, as assessed by the office responsible for the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's reasonable accommodation process, may be authorized use of Other than Coach Class accommodations or reimbursement for additional expense(s) not to exceed a six-month period.

After these respective periods have lapsed, a request must be re-submitted for approval. This re-submission is necessary to ensure that there continues to be a need for the approval and to keep authorization records current. Authorizations that have exceeded the expiration date should not be considered valid and must be reissued.

5.2.5.2 Reasonable Accommodation Requests

The following guidelines apply to the information that must be contained in the reasonable accommodation request:

1. A written request from the traveler must justify and clearly define the need for the expense and include any possible cost basis for Other than Coach Class accommodations (e.g., employee with a special need for wider seat capacity due to his/her size may be required by an airline to purchase two coach seat tickets, but could purchase only one business class ticket). A cost comparison between the two total fares involved would determine whether Other than Coach Class should be authorized in this instance. Cost comparisons should only be undertaken after it has been established that multiple options¹¹ would provide the needed accommodation(s).
2. Letters from the physician or specialist must detail in which particular situations special accommodations are needed (e.g., on flights that exceed more than five (5) hours) and which level of accommodation is required (e.g., legroom beyond what Coach Class provides on the aircraft involved). The physician attesting to the medical condition must be the traveler's personal physician, specialist, or other medical provider, and not within the traveler's chain of command (either up or down).

5.2.5.3 Requests for Other than Coach Class Accommodations

Authorization for the use of Other than Coach Class accommodations, including First and Business Class, due to medical reasons, must be made a minimum of 10 business days in advance of the actual travel, unless extenuating circumstances or emergencies make advance authorization impossible. If advance authorization cannot be obtained, the employee must obtain approval in accordance with the reasonable accommodation temporary authorization process of their OPDIV/STAFFDIV. Without specific approval, travelers may be held responsible for all additional costs resulting from the use of Other than Coach Class accommodations minus the difference of the constructed cost of Coach Class (City Pair) accommodations.

When requesting approval to use Other than Coach Class accommodations solely because of a medical reason, the form "Justification for Use of Other than Coach Class Travel" must be properly completed for all such requests. A copy of the form can be found on the HHS Travel Office website at www.hhs.gov/travel/policies.

5.2.5.4 Request for Additional Expenses

Request for authorization for additional expenses as an accommodation due to medical reasons shall be made a minimum of 10 business days in advance of the

¹¹ An Agency may determine that there are multiple reasonable accommodation options. If that is the case, then a cost comparison should be done if multiple options are available to accommodate the particular reasonable accommodation request.

actual travel, unless extenuating circumstances or emergencies make advance request for authorization impossible.

If advance authorization cannot be obtained, the employee must obtain approval in accordance with the reasonable accommodation temporary authorization process.

Without specific approval, travelers may be held responsible for all additional costs.

The reimbursable expenses include the following:

1. Transportation and per diem expenses of one escort/attendant, to accommodate the special need, if necessary;
2. Specialized transportation to the hospital/facility;
3. Specialized services provided by a common carrier;
4. Costs for handling the employee's baggage that are a direct result of the special need;
5. Renting and/or transporting a wheelchair; and
6. Other than Coach Class accommodations necessary to accommodate the special need, if properly justified. (See Chapter 6 for information on use of premium class accommodations for international travel.)

Other expenses may be reimbursable if medically required. All requests for authorization of additional expenses to accommodate for special needs (medical reasons) are subject to independent review, assessment, examination, and/or verification.

Note: If the employee is a patient (whether or not they require an escort/attendant), please refer to Section 1.6 for guidelines for additional expenses.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-13, Travel of an Employee with Special Needs

5.2.6 HHS Travel Orders for Congressional Members or Staff

When it is determined that agency appropriations may be used to fund the travel of Congressional members or staff, an HHS travel order should be issued to the Congressional member or staffer to travel as an HHS “invitational traveler.” The HHS travel order will authorize the Congressional member or staffer to travel under the policies and procedures of the executive branch (i.e., the Federal Travel Regulation, the HHS Travel Manual, and the funding OPDIV/STAFFDIV), instead of the legislative branch. Travel reservations should be made through the OPDIV/STAFFDIV’s TMC.

Each Congressional committee has its own rules and procedures for allowing members or staff of the Committee to travel, when the travel costs will be paid from an executive branch appropriation. HHS offices that are asked to pay for such travel should check with their Committee contact, usually within the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Regional Representatives, as to the appropriate travel reimbursement requirements.

5.2.7 TDY Travel in conjunction with Special Arrangements Due to Religious Observances

When an employee requires special travel arrangements (e.g., lodging, common carrier transportation, etc.) due to their religious beliefs, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV AO must follow the reasonable accommodation process in accordance with their OHR and EEO to ensure that the proper analysis is completed. Proper analysis includes a determination that all accommodation options are considered and that the accommodation option that is selected does not pose a hardship on the agency. Additional expenses should reflect the most cost effective modes of transportation and travel related services.

5.2.7.1 Additional Travel Expenses

Request for authorization for additional expenses as an accommodation due to religious beliefs shall be made a minimum of 10 business days in advance of the actual travel unless extenuating circumstances or emergencies make advance authorization impossible.

If advance authorization cannot be obtained, the employee shall obtain approval in accordance with the reasonable accommodation temporary authorization process. Without specific approval, travelers may be held responsible for all additional costs.

Note that the following guidelines apply:

1. For Other than Coach Class accommodations, all existing FTR provisions in Section [301-10](#) and corresponding HHS policy guidelines in Section 4.1.5 and Section 6.4 of this manual should be followed.
2. For per diem, all existing FTR provisions in Section [301-11](#) and corresponding HHS policy in Chapter 5, Per Diem and Subsistence Allowances, of this manual should be followed.
3. For annual leave in conjunction with international travel, all existing HHS policies in Section 6.5 of this manual should be followed. This includes, if applicable, the waiver process outlined in Section 6.7.
4. For annual leave in conjunction with Domestic/Non-Foreign travel all existing HHS policies in Section 5.2.2, Reimbursement for TDY Travel in Conjunction with Approved Leave - TDY Domestic/Non-Foreign, of this manual should be followed.

6. International Travel

This chapter provides information on purposes, policies, and procedures relating to all types of official international travel (excluding change of duty station) and defines, and outlines categories of international travel. It also describes the requirements for review and approval by the OS of foreign travel, and the preparation of corresponding quarterly travel reports and individual trip reports. This chapter applies to civilian employees, officers of the Commissioned Corps, U.S. Public Health Service, and invitational travelers.

In addition to the FTR, the [Department of State Standardized Regulations](#) (DSSR) are applicable to international travel. Employees who are posted overseas for employment should also consult with OHR and [HHS Instruction 301-1](#) Overseas Employment.

6.1 General Policy

6.1.1 HHS International Travel Goals

International travel is important to achieving Departmental goals. However, such travel is typically very expensive and entails security concerns and other sensitivities. Therefore, managers must carefully monitor the frequency of the overseas travel performed by their employees and others authorized to travel for HHS. OPDIV/STAFFDIV Heads must maintain proper delegations of authority to ensure they approve proposed official international travel only when it effectively and safely serves the goals of the Department.

International travel can and should serve the following goals:

1. To fulfill regulatory or inspection obligations, such as the inspection of foreign manufacturers of foods, drugs, medical devices, and biologicals;
2. To respond to epidemics in other countries that could have an impact on the health of U.S. citizens;
3. To contribute, with the guidance of the U.S. Department of State, to U.S. foreign-policy objectives;
4. To fulfill U.S. responsibilities as a Member Government of multilateral organizations, including the United Nations (UN), World Health Organization (WHO), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Codex Alimentarius Commission, UN agencies such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and others;
5. To participate in research and science-related activities deemed of high importance to HHS; and
6. To provide technical assistance.

6.1.2 Oversight

International travel is often of high priority and must be subject to stringent procedures for justification, approval, and monitoring beyond those applied to travel within the U.S. HHS employees who travel abroad represent the United States and the American people to other nations. International travel is especially visible, and subject to Congressional and public scrutiny. Travelers abroad fall under the scope of responsibility of the Chief of Mission (COM) authority at the U.S. Embassy or Mission and are required to adhere to COM mandates—including security directives, except in emergency evacuations (refer to the Department of State’s [Foreign Affairs Manual](#) (FAM) 7 FAM 1800 Consular Crisis Management). Therefore, the ASA retains the authority to review all international travel and must approve certain types of foreign trips, as referenced in Section 6.3.1. The ASA has delegated the authority to the STO to approve expenditures up to \$25,000 per trip. However, the ASA retains the authority to disapprove any international travel in consultation with the STO and the OPDIV/STAFFDIV Heads. The authority designated above can only be re-delegated to a direct-report official of the STO.

The OPDIV/STAFFDIVs and the OS, in consultation with the OGA and the Office of Security and Strategic Information (OSSI), have a shared responsibility for the placement of controls over international travel that are both efficient and effective, including travel funded by non-Federal sources.

HHS OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs engaged in international travel must ensure Federal funds are used appropriately. Employees authorized to travel OCONUS must avoid the perception of misusing Federal funds or taking advantage of their status as a Federal employee to receive benefits unavailable to the public. Accordingly, individuals should use prudence when traveling to resort or vacation destinations. Travelers must be particularly sensitive to the perception generated by their travel to conferences or meetings outside the U.S. when accepting full or partial sponsorship by non-Federal sources and outside organizations, whether for-profit or non-profit.

Note: The AO should consult with the OPDIV/STAFFDIV Deputy Ethics Counselor (DEC) and/or the Office of the General Counsel (OGC), Ethics Division to ensure that there is a thorough conflict of interest analysis. For additional information, please see Section 7.4.1.4.

Managers must also be sensitive to the high cost of registration fees for conferences held OCONUS, and the perception that Federal funds are subsidizing outside organizations. Excessive registration fee costs, in most circumstances, should preclude attendance by groups of employees or individual employees. OPDIV/STAFFDIV Heads and their STOs should be directly involved in developing the annual forecasts for attendance at international conferences and administrative meetings to maximize early registration discounts for attendees.

Managers may only permit U.S.-based employees to attend continuing-education seminars and other training opportunities (such as technology-training courses) held OCONUS after determining that the same or substantially similar courses or sessions are unavailable within the U.S., or that there is a clearly definable, mission-related documented rationale for the employee’s attendance at such an event.

6.2 International Travel Requirements

Employees who request approval for international travel must allow no less than 30¹² days for authorization. Travelers must submit such requests through the NFT process in the ETS. Refer to Section 6.2.2, Notification of Foreign Travel, for further ETS system guidance.

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV and/or the employee must complete the following requirements no later than seven (7) days prior to departure:

1. Review the Department of State current travel advisories and HHS travel warnings available at <http://www.globalhealth.gov> to determine if there are any restrictions on official travel to the destination country.
2. Process international travel requests for clearance through the NFT within the ETS (GovTrip) travel system. The uses of the GovTrip Travel System and NFT systems are not currently required for HHS employees employed, assigned permanently, or on long-term TDY overseas when travel services are provided by the Department of State. However, travel must be performed under HHS travel policies.
3. Ensure the employee, if eligible, obtains a valid official (maroon) or diplomatic (black) passport and visa(s), if required by the country or countries visited.
4. Ensure employee meets all medical requirements, including appropriate vaccinations and examinations.
5. Ensure the employee obtains Department of State e-Country Clearance (eCC) through the eCC system prior to travel.
6. Ensure the employee completes an in-house OPDIV/STAFFDIV travel safety briefing, approved by the OSSI in consultation with the U.S. Department of State for all travel.
7. OPDIV/STAFFDIVs will ensure that every employee conducting international travel to non-designated countries annually receives an OSSI approved travel safety and security brief irrespective of the length of travel. OSSI may conduct travel safety and security briefings and debriefings of any HHS employee on a case-by-case basis. HHS employees and locally employed workers who are stationed outside the United States traveling from country to country should follow instructions in the country clearance message and promptly make contact with and maintain contact with the appropriate embassy representative while deployed.
8. OPDIV/STAFFDIVs will ensure that employees on TDY to designated

¹² It is the policy of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that requests for International Travel must be submitted 45 days in advance.

countries receive safety, security, and threat briefings in consultation with OSSI. OSSI may conduct threat and/or counterintelligence briefings to employees holding Top Secret/SCI clearance levels. Debriefings may be conducted by OSSI and/or the appropriate OPDIV/STAFFDIV security director on a case-by-case basis. Anyone traveling with an Assistant Secretary level person or above will be required to attend a debriefing by OSSI within ten (10) business days of return from official travel. OSSI may consult with OPDIV/STAFFDIV personnel with possible recommendations for modification of travel plans.

9. When required for travel to a designated country, as defined by OSSI, ensure the employee received a travel safety and threat briefing, as needed, in consultation with OSSI. OSSI may consult with an OPDIV/STAFFDIV head with possible modification of travel plans.
10. When an employee plans to be on official duty travel in one location for 30 days or longer, complete the U.S. Department of State's Foreign Service Institute (FSI) approved minimum four-day training course, "Serving Abroad for Families and Employees." HHS/CDC also offers a similar training course, "Preparing for Work Overseas," which has been certified as compliant to the Department of State. Once the traveler has completed the basic course, he or she will only be required to attend a shorter, security-refresher course every five (5) years.

A link for the U.S. Department of State Travel Warning and e-country guidance is available on the HHS Travel Office website at www.hhs.gov/travel. Note: All tickets for foreign trips must be issued with the traveler's full name, as it appears on their official (maroon) or diplomatic (black) passport.

6.2.1 Employees with Sensitive Compartmented Information Access (SCI)

6.2.1.1 Official Travel

Employees granted a security clearance must adhere to government wide national security policies and procedures. Persons granted accesses to SCI incur a special security obligation and are to be alerted to the risks associated with travel to countries of concern and areas subject to substantial risk of terrorism.

HHS employees and contractors who are cleared for SCI must notify either their respective OPDIV/STAFFDIV Personnel Security Representative (PSR) or the HHS Special Security Officer (SSO) of their intent to travel to any foreign country at least fifteen business days prior to departure.

Departmental employees with SCI access traveling on official duty to designated countries are also required to report the proposed travel to their OPDIV/STAFFDIV PSR who will coordinate with OSSI to provide required briefings and debriefings.

Departmental employees with SCI access who are assigned or directed to conduct

hazardous travel will be afforded a defensive security briefing and/or risk of capture briefing by the Regional Security Officer subsequent to arriving in-country. If travel will not include a stop at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate, this briefing will be facilitated by OSSI.

6.2.1.2 Unofficial Travel

All persons having access to SCI who plan unofficial international travel, including leave taken in conjunction with official travel:

1. Must notify their respective OPDIV/STAFFDIV PSR or the HHS SSO of their intent to travel to any foreign country at least fifteen days prior to departure;
2. May request a classified, country specific, travel brief from their OPDIV/STAFFDIV PSR or from OSSI if OPDIV/STAFFDIV resources are unavailable;
3. May receive a defensive security briefing from the HHS SSO for unofficial travel;
4. Must immediately contact the nearest U.S. Consul, Attaché, or Embassy Regional Security Officer or Post Duty Officer if detained or subjected to significant harassment or provocation while traveling; and;
5. Must report to the HHS SSO any unusual incidents, including incidents of potential security concern, encountered during travel.

Non-compliance with the reporting requirements contained in this policy may result in revocation of a security clearance, access to SCI, and/or disciplinary action up to and including removal from the federal service.

6.2.2 Notification of Foreign Travel

The HHS Travel Office, in collaboration with the STOs, will maintain a system of controls for international travel for the Department. This process is commonly called Notification of Foreign Travel (NFT). These controls will:

1. Ensure that the Department receives advance notice of all international travel through an automated reporting tool via the ETS;
2. Ensure the dispatch of e-country clearance requests for HHS employees;
3. Ensure appropriate travel safety briefings; and
4. Assist travelers regarding official (maroon) passports or diplomatic (black) passports, and visas.

HHS employees planning an international trip must create a Travel Authorization using the ETS and route a NFT request, via the ETS, to OPDIV/STAFFDIV's designees at least 30 days prior to their proposed trip departure date. In exceptional circumstances, OPDIV/STAFFDIVs may accept late notification, with proper justification. All notifications must include the following detailed cost data:

1. Airfare or cost of other common carrier transportation, with indication of class of service;
2. Government-established per diem for lodging and M&IE, or actual expenses, or a conference lodging allowance, where authorized;
3. Registration fees; and
4. Miscellaneous expenses.

If more than one HHS employee from an OPDIV/STAFFDIV is traveling for the same purpose, that OPDIV/STAFFDIV shall create a separate travel order for each employee.

HHS travelers on official international travel are required to create and route a travel voucher for trip expenses to their OPDIV/STAFFDIV within five (5) working days following their return to the U.S. for all travel categorized in Section 6.3 below.

6.2.3 U.S. Department of State Country Clearance

Under no circumstances will an HHS employee depart on an official business trip outside the U.S. without first receiving country clearance (i.e., permission to enter a foreign country) from the relevant U.S. Embassy or Mission overseas. Note that if a HHS employee has not obtained prior permission, the COM at a U.S. Embassy or Mission:

1. Can terminate the traveler's visit to a country;
2. May be unable to provide security escort/transportation in "sensitive" countries or to dangerous areas; and
3. May be unwilling to accommodate true HHS emergencies, if OPDIV/STAFFDIVs frequently ask for last-minute clearances because of their non-compliance with country-clearance guidelines.

OPDIV/STAFFDIVs are responsible for reviewing eCC through the U.S. Department of State at <https://ecc.state.gov>.

6.2.4 Passports and Visas

To enter a foreign country, HHS employees on official business and immediate family members authorized to accompany employees on permanent assignment must have the appropriate:

1. Passport(s);

2. Visa(s), if required by the country visited;
3. Country clearance(s) from the U.S. Embassy, Consulate, or Mission;
4. Health clearance and immunizations; and
5. Travel security briefings and trainings.

HHS employees should always consult with the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's international office or OGA to verify when a visa is required. HHS employees should refer to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's international office for specific procedures on obtaining an official (maroon) U.S. passport.

HHS employees are responsible for obtaining the necessary visa(s) required for their official international travel. Please note that many countries that do not require visas for U.S. citizens who travel on tourist (blue) passports often require visas for U.S. Government officials who travel on official (maroon) or diplomatic (black) passports. Consult with the Department of State's website at www.state.gov for information.

Travelers should check the visa requirements for holders of official (maroon) or diplomatic (black) passports for anticipated/potential stopover sites where they might wish to leave the airport.

6.2.4.1 Passports

As discussed below, there are three types of passports: diplomatic, official, and personal/tourist. The colors of U.S. passports vary depending on the type:

Passport Type	Color
Official	Maroon
Diplomatic	Black
Personal/Tourist	Blue or Green

Passport applicants must be U.S. citizens.

Official (Maroon) and Diplomatic (Black) Passports

Official (maroon) passports are valid, no-fee passports issued to an employee of the U.S. Government who is traveling abroad for official business.

The categories of personnel eligible for diplomatic (black) passports that are pertinent to HHS include: U.S. Government employees accorded diplomatic titles; those assigned abroad for at least one year who are under the authority of the COM at a U.S. Embassy or Mission, and their authorized accompanying family members who are on official travel orders¹³; and personnel assigned to foreign-service posts

¹³ Each authorized, accompanying child, including infants, must have his or her own passport. Family members /dependants who are not U.S. citizens must travel under their own passports.

where the Department of State has determined diplomatic passports are necessary for reasons of personal security, or because of unusual local conditions that prevent the accomplishment of assigned duties without diplomatic passports.

Eligible HHS employees who are on official international travel must travel under an official (maroon) or diplomatic (black) U.S. Government passport, unless the Department of State specifically advises OGA otherwise (e.g., because of security concerns).

Please note that a HHS employee on detail to an international organization might have to travel under a United Nations Passport (Laissez Passer) while on official business.

Official and diplomatic passports are for official use only, and employees must never use them for personal travel.

HHS employees who are not U.S. citizens and who are traveling on HHS official business must travel under their own passports; they are not entitled to U.S. passports.

Bearer of official (maroon) or diplomatic (black) passports may receive certain privileges, depending on their assignments and the particular countries and Embassies involved. While many may perceive a diplomatic passport as a symbol of status and prestige, it does not automatically afford the bearer with diplomatic status or privileges and immunities. Only when granted a diplomatic title by the Department of State do HHS overseas assignees have full diplomatic status.

HHS staff may not simultaneously hold diplomatic (black) and official (maroon) passports. HHS employees may, however, hold a personal/tourist passport (blue) while also holding a diplomatic (black) or official (maroon) passport, and may carry a personal passport with them while on official duty travel, as long as they use their official (maroon) passport for all entry, exit and other formalities with the host Government(s).

HHS employees must return their diplomatic (black) or official (maroon) passports when they expire to the Department of State, through their OPDIV/STAFFDIV international office. HHS employees may request the return of their canceled passports as a souvenir.

Official (maroon) and diplomatic (black) passports are U.S. Government property, and HHS employees must store them under lock and key in HHS facilities. All HHS STAFFDIV personnel who have official (maroon) or black (diplomatic) passports must store them with OGA. Under no circumstances should HHS staff send any passports through interoffice mail. The official passports issued while at HHS must be returned to the Passport Holding Office from which it was issued within five (5) working days after the traveler has returned from their TDY.

Personal/Tourist (Blue or Green) Passports

HHS employees who are on personal leave must use their personal (blue) passports. Spouses and immediate family who accompany HHS staff on their international TDY travel must use their personal passports.

6.2.4.2 Visas

Each individual Government sets the requirements for visas. The U.S. Department of State website, www.state.gov, details official visa travel requirements for each country. HHS travelers should always check with their OPDIV/STAFFDIV's international office, or with OGA, to verify when a visa is required.

HHS employees should apply for the required visas as early as possible, but no later than three (3) weeks before travel. If multiple visas are required, travelers must allow time for acquiring each visa.

The traveler's employing office will assist HHS employees and their family members in obtaining the visas required for official purposes. OGA can also often be of help in this regard, because of its special relationships with many foreign Embassies in Washington, DC. As noted above, in some cases visa requirements are different for holders of tourist (blue) and official (maroon) or diplomatic (black) passports. Travelers should check the visa requirements for holders of official (maroon) or diplomatic (black) passports for anticipated/potential stopover sites where they might wish to leave the airport.

6.2.5 Medical Requirements

All HHS personnel, civilians, and Commissioned Corps officers who are going on long-term overseas assignment/detail, TDY of 60 or more days, or who undertake frequent overseas TDY travel (60 days or more per year – not necessarily consecutive) must have medical examinations, and usually must obtain medical clearance from the Department of State. They must also receive immunizations appropriate for their assignment. Accompanying immediate family members/dependents must also have medical examinations, obtain medical clearance, and receive required immunizations. HHS employees are not authorized to depart for overseas assignments without medical clearance or an approved waiver.

The Department of State allows a medical clearance to be granted for some assignments and not for others, if an employee or accompanying immediate family member has a medical condition that would put that person at risk because of the poor quality of medical care in a given country. Department of State medical clearances are valid for a tour of duty (generally, two or three years). If HHS personnel extend, renew, or take new overseas assignments, they must undergo a new medical examination.

The "sending" HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIV pays for all usual and reasonable medical expenses that result from a medical clearance. All medical information is confidential, and any medical information transmitted between HHS and officials of the Department of State overseas will be in "Eyes Only" cables.

6.2.5.1 Separation Exam

Upon completion of their overseas assignment (other than TDY duty), employees, and immediate family members must have a separation medical examination to identify medical conditions that could have developed during the overseas assignment.

6.2.5.2 Immunizations

All HHS overseas travelers must receive recommended immunizations, unless specifically exempted because of religious or other reasons, as allowed by regulation. Immunizations may be reimbursed as a miscellaneous expense if not available from the office of Occupational Health or an OPDIV/STAFFDIV medical facility. Dependents/ immediate family members who are accompanying the HHS staff assigned/detailed overseas must also receive recommended immunizations. Current immunization recommendations are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/vaccinat/htm> or <http://www.tripprep.com>

6.2.5.3 Post Travel Illness Evaluations

Returning international travelers need to report any post-travel illness promptly to their primary-care physician. For those returning from a malarial fever area, the possibility of malarial infection should be considered by the traveler and monitored by his/her medical provider for up to a year after return.

6.2.5.4 Clearance of Newborns

Generally, the Department of State will not grant a medical clearance to newborns and mothers until four weeks postpartum. If HHS employees travel at an earlier time after the birth of an infant, they may forfeit their medical benefits.

6.2.6 Department of State Overseas Positions and Extended TDY Requirements

All HHS personnel who are transferring to an overseas location under Department of State COM authority must complete appropriate overseas personal-security training prior to their travel. The same requirement also applies to HHS personnel who are requesting country clearance to perform long-term TDY travel, which is defined as more than thirty (30) days at a single overseas location.

The U.S. Department of State's Foreign Service Institute (FSI) conducts the approved minimum four-day training course, "Serving Abroad for Families and Employees." HHS/CDC also offers a similar training course, "Preparing for Work Overseas," which has been certified as compliant by the Department of State. Once the traveler has completed the basic course, he or she will only be required to attend a shorter, security-refresher course every five (5) years.

HHS must provide the U.S. Department of State (normally via the assignment notification or

country-clearance requests) certification that each traveler will complete the required training prior to his or her departure.

6.2.7 Annual Plans for Travel to International Conference and Administrative Meetings Travel

Each OPDIV/STAFFDIV will forward an annual plan to the ASA, with a copy to OGA, due by August 1 of each year for the upcoming Fiscal Year, that displays each international conference and administrative meeting to which the OPDIV/STAFFDIV anticipates sending more than 20 employees. Within one month, the HHS Travel Office will review and approve these forecasts to ensure that the level of participation in international conferences and meetings is commensurate with the Department's mission. OPDIV/STAFFDIV STOs must notify the ASA of any subsequent increases in the level of participation for conferences or meetings included in approved plans no later than five (5) days after the conclusion of international conferences, and any amendments to the original yearly plans contained in the ETS.

OPDIV/STAFFDIV Heads and their STOs should be directly involved in developing the annual forecasts for attendance at international conferences and administrative meetings to maximize the ability of HHS attendees to take advantage of early-registration discounts.

HHS attendees may not circumvent this policy by using purchase orders or travel charge cards to attend events or pay for expenses related to event attendance, absent an express, written authorization from the Head of their OPDIV.

6.2.8 Quarterly and Individual Travel Reports

6.2.8.1 Quarterly Reports

Following the end of each quarter of each fiscal year, OGA will prepare a report on all international travel for the ASA. Each report must include cost data for trips paid for by both appropriated funds and funds provided by outside sources. The report will also detail annual leave taken in connection with official international travel, and the use of Other than Coach Class accommodations.

6.2.8.2 Individual Reports

OPDIV/STAFFDIVs will require each traveler to prepare a brief, written report of the significant aspects and results of their trip, including a summary of the extent to which the purpose(s) of the trip was achieved.

OGA may request an individual trip report for any trip undertaken by an HHS official. Such reports should be faxed or scanned electronically and uploaded into the ETS.

6.3 International Travel that Requires HHS Notification and Approval, and Department of State Country Clearances

While under the travel-related Delegations of Authority issued by the Assistant Secretary for Administration, effective September 17, 2009 and until further notice, employees must obtain ASA approval, in consultation with OGA, for certain kinds of international travel, as described below. Travelers must also provide a report of work accomplished on international travel to the ASA.

6.3.1 Types of Travel Requiring ASA Approval

6.3.1.1 Politically Appointed or Approved

Politically Appointed (Schedule C) and Presidential Appointee Scheduled Senate-Confirmed (PAS), employees require ASA clearance and approval for all international travel.

6.3.1.2 U.S. Delegation Travel

Attendance at intergovernmental meetings held by multilateral organizations at which HHS employees will serve on official U.S. Delegations require prior approval from the ASA, through OGA.

6.3.1.3 Travel to Sensitive Countries

Travel to countries designated as “Sensitive” may require additional clearance and approval by the ASA, in consultation with OGA and OSSI. The State Department maintains a site with travel warnings about safety, including health, or insecurity at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis_pa_tw_1168.html. HHS travelers on official TDY travel to Taiwan must follow special procedures for obtaining permission and visas through the American Institute in Taiwan, and must not travel on their official (maroon) passports.

6.3.1.4 Travel to Designated Countries

OSSI will monitor the NFT. The list of designated countries includes State Sponsors of Terrorism and these can be found at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis_pa_tw_1168.html. Additionally, OSSI may add countries determined to be of interest based on current intelligence. OPDIV/STAFFDIV security offices will be consulted on the most expedient, sensitive and efficient method to implement changes. An OPDIV/STAFFDIV may develop their own list of Designated Countries, however, at a minimum their list must include all countries selected by OSSI. OPDIV/STAFFDIVs will ensure that employees selected to be on a TDY to designated countries receive safety, security, and threat briefs in consultation with OSSI prior to deployment.

6.3.2 Approval and Authorization for Participation in Official Intergovernmental Meetings as a Member of a U.S. Delegation

The Secretary reserves the authority to nominate Department personnel or individuals to

serve on official U.S. Delegations accredited by the Department of State. All requests to nominate members of official U.S. Delegations to intergovernmental meetings, including those held in the United States, must be submitted to OGA. OGA will consult with the Secretary and appropriate Department officials with respect to making nominations, which, upon the Secretary's approval, OGA will forward to the U.S. Department of State and the White House.

OGA is responsible for obtaining both the necessary OS approval and the certification of security clearance that the Department of State requires for nominees.

Under no circumstances may an HHS employee attend, in an official or personal capacity, an intergovernmental meeting to which the United States is sending an official Delegation, without having received the proper approvals to participate as a part of that Delegation.

6.4 Other than Coach Class International Travel

6.4.1 Other than Coach Class (Premium) Accommodations International Travel – General Administration

For general information on Other than Coach Class accommodations for Domestic TDY, see Section 4.1.5, Coach Class and Other than Coach Class Upgrades. For HHS travelers based overseas and in the United States, the following guidance applies for all international Other than Coach Class travel requests. These instructions supersede all previous directives for Other than Coach Class travel. Managers should discourage international Other than Coach Class travel whenever possible.

HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIVs engaged in overseas travel have the primary responsibility to ensure any international Other than Coach Class travel is consistent with the Department and Government's mandate to operate efficiently and effectively. The ASA retains the authority to review all requests for international Other than Coach Class travel, including those trips that require only notification. The ASA also retains the authority to deny any international Other than Coach Class travel request.

6.4.2 Other than Coach Class (First Class) Travel Accommodations

International First Class travel is not permitted, except for the following reasons:

1. To accommodate a medical disability or other special need, as documented by a letter from the traveler's personal physician or specialist, see Section 5.2.5, Travel of an Employee with Special Needs.
2. When other exceptional travel situations exist, such as security or mission critical travel, a written request from the traveler must justify and clearly define the need for Other than Coach Class accommodations in these circumstances. Approval will be granted on a case-by-case basis, as deemed necessary.
3. When Other than Coach Class (Business Class) accommodations are not reasonably available and the requirements and approval for Other than Coach Class (Business Class) travel have previously been met and approved.

All First Class travel must be fully justified, documented, and approved by the STO. When requested, the underlying documentation, which contains the justification, must be submitted to the HHS Travel Office.

6.4.3 Other than Coach Class (Business Class) Accommodations

HHS travelers may request international Other than Coach Class (Business Class) accommodations only under the following circumstances, in addition to those described in Section 4.1.5, Coach Class and Other than Coach Class Upgrades:

1. Travel by Coach Class on a foreign carrier does not provide adequate

sanitation, and the use of foreign-flag air carrier service is approved in accordance with the International Air Transportation Fair Competitive Practices Act of 1974 (P. L. 93-623), also known as the “Fly America Act” or an “Open Skies Agreement.”

2. The scheduled actual flying time, not including a domestic lay over or actual domestic segment(s) flying time is in excess of 14 hours, and the traveler cannot take a rest stop because of the urgency of the mission. Travel should be urgent because of the nature of the task-- not because the employee is delayed for personal reasons.

A rest stop is:

- i. A stop-over point during travel;
- ii. Of up to 24 hours;
- iii. Midway in the journey, or as near to the destination as the schedule permits; or
- iv. At the destination. See FTR [301-11.20](#) or JFTR [U4326](#).

HHS Policy: HHS travelers should also note these additional policies below.

1. Per HHS Policy, Coach Class must be used for all domestic segment(s) of trips using the exception in item 2 above. Any Other than Coach Class approval must be limited to the flight segment(s) between the gateway city (i.e., a city that serves as a departure or arrival point for international flights) and the foreign destination.
2. In most instances, the rationale supporting the urgency of the mission criterion will only be satisfied on the outbound flight; the return flight home will not generally be subject to identifiable mission urgency. Other than Coach Class accommodations may be approved solely for the outbound flight, unless specific mission urgency demands the employee’s return without a rest stop and scheduled actual flying time, not including domestic layovers or actual domestic segment(s) flying time is in excess of 14 hours.
3. Travelers must submit a memo with their request justifying why they are not able to schedule a rest stop (stopover) either midway or at the destination.

HHS travelers must submit their requests for international Other than Coach Class travel along with their requests for clearance/approval or notification, as appropriate, via the ETS. A justification memorandum must be attached to the travel request (see sample at the end of this Chapter), and must accompany the travel authorization. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV AO must approve both the memorandum and any required cost-analysis justification (see sample at the end of this Chapter), before submitting the international travel request to OGA.

When an HHS employee requests international Other than Coach Class travel by using the Overall Cost Savings justification, as covered in Section 4.1.5.3 of this manual, they must complete a cost-analysis justification, and attach it to the travel authorization. The employee must compare the total costs of coach-class to Other than Coach Class, including the cost of the ticket(s), additional subsistence expenses incurred during a rest stop, overtime (if applicable), and lost productive person time. Based on this cost analysis, Other than Coach Class is only justified when it is the lesser of the two. (See examples at end of this Chapter.)

6.5 Annual Leave in Conjunction with International Travel

The Department strongly discourages employees from using annual leave in conjunction with official international travel. Taking annual leave in conjunction with official international travel can generate the impression that Federal funds are being used to finance holidays or junkets for employees, or that travelers are taking advantage of their status as Federal employees to receive benefits that would not be accessible to members of the public. Accordingly, Department employees should especially avoid taking any annual leave in conjunction with official international travel to resort areas to which the public is attracted because of recreational facilities or sight-seeing attractions, such as Europe during the summer.

6.5.1 HHS Leave Policy while on International TDY

The leave policy for employees on international TDY is as follows:

1. An employee who spends a minimum of three lodging nights may be authorized, not to exceed, three (3) days of annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with International trips.
2. An employee who spends a minimum of two lodging nights may be authorized, not to exceed, two (2) days of annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with International trips.
3. An employee who spends only one (1) lodging night may be authorized, not to exceed, one (1) day of annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with International trips.
4. An employee whose TDY trip includes no overnight stay will not be authorized annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with an International trip.

For items 1, 2, and 3, lodging nights include conventional lodging (e.g., hotel/motel), Government quarters, lodging with friend(s) or relative(s) (with or without charge), nonconventional lodging (e.g., college dormitories or similar facilities), and recreational vehicles (e.g., trailers/campers) in accordance with FTR [301-11.12](#). In addition, overnight en route travel time is included in the number of lodging nights. This includes hotel rooms booked when arriving after midnight in accordance with FTR [301-11.7](#).

Employees on TDY must adjust their schedule to conform to the hours of the TDY assignment and revert to a standard tour of duty for the pay period(s) during which the TDY occurs.

Any requests for annual or compensatory leave needs to be planned in accordance with Section 4.1.3.2, Personal Liability for Purchase of Indirect Route Transportation Tickets for Personal Convenience.

In cases of long-term TDY travel (in excess of 30 nights or more), the OPDIV/STAFFDIV

STO, or their designee may consider other approved annual or compensatory leave requirements. In addition, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV STO, or their designee, may consider other approved annual or compensatory leave requirements due to personal/immediate family related emergencies, health related issues and in instances of imminent dangerous circumstances.

It is HHS policy that employees will not be authorized annual or compensatory leave in conjunction with any trips that are sponsored, in whole or in part, by non-Federal sources, whether for-profit or non-profit. This includes domestic, non-foreign, and/or foreign travel. Employees should not be permitted to evade this policy by paying part or all of the expenses for the round trip airfare themselves (whether out-of-pocket or through reimbursement from another source). This policy applies to trips taken by civilian employees, and officers of the Commissioned Corps U.S. Public Health Service.

6.6 Payment of Travel Expenses by a Non-Federal Source

6.6.1 General Information

The acceptance of payment of “in-kind” services from a non-Federal source for international travel should be the exception and not the rule. Departmental OPDIV/STAFFDIVs must not use their authorities to shift the cost of their normal international travel programs to non-Federal sources. The underlying principle of the Department’s policy is that if the employee’s participation in an international trip warrants the expenditure of official time, it also warrants the expenditure of HHS travel funds. Departmental employees must not solicit payment of international travel expenses from non-Federal sources. For additional guidance regarding acceptance of in-kind services, see Chapter 7 of this manual.

When a non-Federal source funds only a certain portion or type of travel expenses, reimbursement for the remaining expenses paid for by the Federal Government cannot exceed the applicable maximums established in the FTR.

HHS travel orders must reflect that an employee is accepting on behalf of the U.S. Government, in-kind services (or cash if applicable under 42 U.S.C. 3506) for travel and related expenses from a foreign Government or international organization. This does not apply if acceptance is under 5 U.S.C. 7342.

Note: The AO should consult with the OPDIV/STAFFDIV Deputy Ethics Counselor and/or the Office of the General Counsel, Ethics Division to ensure that there is a thorough conflict of interest analysis conducted prior to authorizing the non-Federal source reimbursement.

6.6.2 Reimbursement Received from a Non-Federal Source

HHS employees who are traveling on official business are permitted to receive airplane tickets or other common carrier transportation tickets, as well as other in-kind services incident to official travel, directly from foreign Governments or international organizations, when approved in accordance with the procedures outlined above in this Chapter and in Chapter 7. HHS employees may not accept cash from the organization to pay for the airplane tickets directly.

6.6.3 Reimbursement in Excess of Established Lodgings-Plus Per Diem Rates

When attendance at an international meeting is involved, HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIVs may accept payment in-kind in excess of the established lodgings-plus per diem allowances prescribed in the FTR, but only if HHS would have authorized acceptance of payment for such a higher allowance, and only under the following conditions:

1. The non-Federal source provides in-kind lodging services; and
2. The expense paid by the non-Federal source is comparable in value (at the higher lodging allowance) to that offered to, or purchased by, other similarly

situated meeting attendees.

An HHS traveler may only accept an actual expense for hotel lodging if HHS would have normally authorized such an expense. Under no circumstances may the 300 percent cap on actual expense allowance be exceeded. The invitation letter from the non-Federal source must contain language to this effect when an organization offers payment in-kind in excess of the maximum prescribed U.S. Government rates.

6.6.4 Other than Coach Class Common Carrier (Air) Travel Accommodations

AOs must be especially mindful of accepting payments in-kind for any Other than Coach Class (business) air accommodations from private, for-profit commercial entities, and from international organizations to which the U.S. Government pays dues or assessed contributions, including, but not limited to:

- World Health Organization (WHO)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- United Nations (UN)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

HHS travelers may only accept Other than Coach Class (business) accommodations under the following conditions:

1. The non-Federal source makes full payment for such transportation services in advance of travel (In-kind);
2. Transportation accommodations furnished are comparable in value to those offered to, or purchased by, other similarly situated attendees at the meeting; and
3. The condition for the use of Business Class accommodations specific to International Travel in Section 6.4.3 #2 is met, 14-hour rule.

However, the STO may consider the waiver of the business class criteria (#3 above) if # 1 and #2 above are met and the attendee is performing a vital function at the meeting (e.g., making a presentation; chairing a meeting, session, or group, etc.). The waiver should follow the same process as described in Section 6.7, Waiver of Provisions of this Chapter.

6.7 Waiver of Provisions of this Chapter

The ASA has delegated to STOs the authority to waive the following provisions of the HHS Travel Manual for individual trips. These provisions should only be waived for reasons they deem crucial to serving the goals of the Department:

1. Section 6.4.3 #2, also known as the 14-Hour Rule, regarding Other than Coach Class accommodations;
2. Section 6.5, regarding annual leave in conjunction with official international travel, when using appropriated dollars; or applying funding from a non-Federal source. A prohibition will remain against permitting employees to take annual leave in conjunction with trips that involve sponsorship for a spouse, in whole or in part, by non-Federal sources, whether for-profit or non-profit.; and
3. Section 6.6.4 #3, the business class criteria for acceptance of Other than Coach Class (Business) accommodations from a non-Federal Sponsor.

OPDIV/STAFFDIV STOs must make such determinations in writing, and they may not re-delegate this authority to any other person; no other person may sign waivers on behalf of the OPDIV/STAFFDIV STO, nor are autopen signatures acceptable. For international trips, travelers must continue to submit NFTs through the ETS, the electronic notification for the traveler concerned must include the justification for the waiver, and the OPDIV/STAFFDIV STO must send a copy of the signed original of the waiver determination to the HHS Travel to provide to the ASA when requested.

At the conclusion of each Fiscal Year, OPDIV/STAFFDIVs who have exercised this waiver authority during the preceding Fiscal Year must send a consolidated report to the HHS Travel Office to list all such waivers and their justifications in detail. All HHS international travelers granted waivers under this section must continue to use official (maroon) or diplomatic (black) passports, and must obtain country clearance from the Department of State for each overseas trip.

The waiver authority described in this section applies to trips taken by civilian employees, officers of the Commissioned Corps U.S. Public Health Service, and invitational travelers.

6.8 Other Applicable Travel Policies

The following policies also need to be taken into consideration while on International TDY.

6.8.1 Security Considerations

Security considerations related to international travel and contacts with foreign nationals appear in HHS and OPDIV/STAFFDIV security manuals including the “International Travel Safety and Security Policy” from OSSI. The points of contact for all pre and post-travel security questions are OSSI and/or the traveler’s OPDIV/STAFFDIV security office.

6.8.2 Change of Duty Station

Provisions related to change of duty station appear in FTR Chapter [302](#) and in Section 12, Relocation Allowances, of this manual.

6.8.3 U.S. Fly America Act

HHS employees should consult FTR Chapter [301-10.131](#) through .143 for guidelines in implementing the International Air Transportation Fair Competitive Practices Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-623). Under this Act, U.S. Government travelers must use U.S. Flag carriers or Flagships, except when the clearly specified circumstances in the FTR prevail. In addition, employees should check against the current Open Skies agreements (See Section 4.1.6, Fly America Act and U.S. Flag Ship Requirements, of this manual.)

6.8.4 Acceptance of In-Kind Payments

Provisions related to the acceptance of “in-kind” services (or cash reimbursement in exceptional situations) travel expenses from foreign Governments or international organizations appear in Section 6.6 and Chapter 7 of this manual.

Following is the Sample Memorandum referenced in Section 6.4.3

MEMORANDUM

TO: OPDIV/STAFFDIV Authorizing Official

FROM: Traveler's Name/Office

SUBJECT: Justification for Use of Other than Coach Class Travel

I am requesting Other than Coach Class travel accommodations based on the criteria checked below:

___ No space is available in Coach Class and the trip cannot be scheduled on other flights/carriers or routing in time to accomplish purpose of travel, which is so urgent that the travel cannot be postponed.

___ My physical condition, as documented by the attached letter signed by my personal physician or specialist, in accordance with the Reasonable Accommodation process, requires that I use Other than Coach Class travel service. (Letter must specify class of accommodations required by medical condition.)

___ Other than Coach Class accommodations are required for security purpose(s), as documented by the attached letter from the Chief of Security of the Department.

___ Travel by Coach Class on foreign carrier does not provide adequate sanitation, and use of foreign-flag air-carrier service is approved in accordance with the Fly America Act and Open Skies Agreement.

___ Use of Other than Coach Class accommodations would result in an overall cost savings to the Government. (Cost analysis must be attached to travel request/notification and authorization.)

___ Scheduled flight time, not including domestic layovers, is in excess of 14 hours, and a rest stop cannot be taken because of the urgency of the mission. (Travel should be urgent because of the nature of the task, not because the employee is delayed due to personal choices such as electing to take a later flight, which creates time pressure.)

A rest stop is:

1. A stop-over point during travel;
2. Of up to 24 hours;
3. Midway in the journey, or as near to the destination as the schedule permits; or
4. At the destination. See FTR [301-11.20](#) or JFTR [U4326](#).

(Explain in specific detail (on a separate sheet) how item(s) checked above applies to you.
All requests for round-trip accommodations via Other than Coach Class must be justified as
to each direction and/or segment of travel.)

_____	Approved	_____	Date
_____	Disapproved	_____	Date

Examples of Cost Comparison for Justification of Other than Coach Class**Example #1: Savings to Fly Coach Class**

	Coach Class	Other than Coach Class
Ticket Cost	\$ 1,000	\$ 2,000
Per Diem (Actual subsistence costs for rest stop)	\$ 150	\$ 0
Overtime		
Productive Person Hours (Lost productive time equals employee's hourly rate multiplied by the number of hours of duty time at rest stop)	\$ 500	\$ 0
Totals	\$ 1,650	\$ 2,000

Note: Compare total costs of coach class to Other than Coach Class and circle the lesser of the two. Based on this cost analysis, the traveler should fly coach class, because it is the lesser of the two.

Example #2: Savings to Fly Other than Coach Class Travel

	Coach Class	Other than Coach Class
Ticket Cost	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,500
Per Diem (Actual subsistence costs for rest stop)	\$ 150	\$ 0
Overtime		
Productive Person Hours (Lost productive time equals employee's hourly rate multiplied by the number of hours of duty time at rest stop)	\$ 800	\$ 0
Totals	\$ 1,950	\$ 1,500

Note: Compare total costs of Coach Class to Other than Coach Class and circle the lesser of the two. Based on this cost analysis, the traveler should fly Other than Coach Class, because it is the lesser of the two.

7. Acceptance of Payment of Travel Expenses from a Non-Federal Source

This chapter defines the policy of the Department with respect to the acceptance of monetary payment or services in-kind from non-Federal sources (also referred to as “HHS-348 Non-Federal Sponsored Travel” or “Sponsored Travel”), the purpose of which is to fund, in whole or in part, travel, subsistence, and related expenses. The chapter applies to HHS employees, including special Government employees, experts or consultants, and officers of the Commissioned Corps U.S. Public Health Service. Travelers should always consult with their OPDIV/STAFFDIV Deputy Ethics Counselor (DEC) or Ethics Office to determine whether the payment of travel expenses can be accepted.

7.1 In-Kind Expenses Only

Effective April 1, 2012, offers for Reimbursable (In-Cash reimbursement to the appropriation) Sponsored Travel will no longer be approved for HHS employees/travelers. Reimbursable Sponsored travel after April 1, 2012, that was approved¹⁴ prior to April 1, 2012, may be taken but no new travel authorizations for reimbursable travel will be approved after that date. Employees may continue to accept offers for in-kind sponsored travel, which provides several benefits over reimbursable sponsored travel including:

1. Items for which the Sponsor agrees to pay are given directly to the traveler;
2. There is no billing process between HHS or the OPDIV/STAFFDIVs, and Sponsors;
3. Vouchering is streamlined for the traveler because he/she does not have to wait for reimbursement of sponsored expenses; and
4. There are fewer budgetary risks for the programs as Sponsors with reimbursable agreements do not always reimburse HHS and the OPDIV/STAFFDIVs for all expenses offered in the letter of invitation.

Reimbursable Sponsored Travel Authorizations must not be approved on or after April 1, 2012, regardless of when the Letter of Invitation was received. Reimbursable sponsored travel may be allowed under exceptional circumstances with the approval of the employee’s STO.

Note: Reimbursable sponsored travel occurs when a non-Federal organization offers to reimburse HHS or the OPDIV/STAFFDIV for all or part of an employee’s travel expenses. In-kind sponsored travel occurs when a non-Federal organization provides transportation (i.e., airline tickets) food, lodging and other travel related services to the traveler in lieu of monetary payments to HHS or the OPDIV/STAFFDIV.

¹⁴ Approval is considered a HHS-348 signed and dated by the Authorizing Official, an electronic signature by the Authorizing Official in the ETS on the Authorization showing the allocation of the estimated reimbursable expenses or both with the HHS-348 attached to the Authorization in the ETS.

7.2 Legislative Authority

Acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source for travel, subsistence, and travel-related expenses is derived from the following legislative authorities.

7.2.1 31 U.S.C. 1353

This section of the U.S.C. provides authority for HHS to accept payment (or authorize an employee to accept such payment on its behalf) from a non-Federal source for:

1. Travel, subsistence, and related travel expenses in connection with attendance at “meetings and similar functions” relating to the official duties of the employee;
2. Acceptance of travel payments for an accompanying spouse in some circumstances; and
3. Acceptance of additional expenses when specific conditions are met in accordance with FTR [304-3.13](#).

The above applies, if the non-Federal source is not disqualified due to a conflict of interest under FTR [304-5.3](#).

7.2.2 42 U.S.C. 3506

This section of the U.S.C. provides authority for HHS to accept payment from non-Federal sources for travel expenses in connection with an employee performing “advisory services” related to HHS functions or activities.

7.2.3 5 U.S.C. 7342, Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act

This act provides authority for employees and members of an employee’s family and the employee’s spouse or dependents to accept gifts of travel expenses for travel taking place entirely outside the United States, when the donor of the gift is a foreign government (including international and multinational organizations). Acceptance under this authority must be consistent with the interests of the United States, and the appropriate AO must approve the travel, even when the employee travels in his/her private capacity on non-official time.

7.3 Departmental Policy and Guidance

7.3.1 Appropriate Legislative Authority

AOs are responsible for assuring that the appropriate acceptance authority (31 U.S.C. 1353, 42 U.S.C. 3506, or 5 U.S.C. 7342) is cited on the Travel Authorization and on the Form [HHS-348](#). The provisions of these acceptance authorities may not be combined when accepting travel expenses from non-Federal sources for a single trip with a single purpose. For example, an employee may not travel under 42 U.S.C. 3506 and the employee’s spouse

travel under 31 U.S.C. 1353.

7.3.2 Multiple Authorities

An employee can accept travel and subsistence expenses from multiple sponsors, under different authorities (Title 31, Title 42, or Title 5) for trips that include multiple segments (TDY locations) with multiple purposes, or trips with multiple purposes at a single TDY location, as long as multiple authorities are not being used to pay for the same portion of the trip. For instance, one portion of the trip, for a meeting, can consist of expenses paid under 31 U.S.C. 1353 by Sponsor A, while another portion of the trip, to provide advisory services, can consist of expenses paid under 42 U.S.C. 3506 by Sponsor B. However, an employee cannot accept such expenses, under different authorities, from multiple sponsors for a single trip with a single purpose. Employees may not, under any circumstances, accept an honorarium or retain cash in excess of actual expenses incurred.

7.3.3 Cost Avoidance

The acceptance of in-kind services from a non-Federal source for official duty travel should be the exception and not the rule. OPDIV/STAFFDIVs shall not use the authorities set forth above to shift the cost of their normal travel programs to non-Federal sources. The underlying principle of the Department is that if the employee's participation warrants the expenditure of official time, it also warrants the expenditure of HHS travel funds. Departmental employees shall not solicit payment of travel expenses from non-Federal sources. HHS employees cannot authorize their own travel; therefore, no delegated official can approve acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source for himself or herself.

7.3.4 Leave in Conjunction with Non-Federally Sponsored Travel

It is HHS policy that employees shall not be permitted to take annual leave in conjunction with any trips that are sponsored, in whole or in part, by non-Federal sources, whether the Sponsor is for-profit or non-profit. This includes domestic, non-foreign, and/or foreign (international) travel. The Secretary has delegated to Heads of OPDIV/STAFFDIVs the authority to waive this requirement for international travel, as described in Section 6.7.

7.3.5 Registration Fees for Locally Held Meetings

When a non-Federal source offers to waive a registration fee, an employee must first consult with their OPDIV/STAFFDIV DEC to determine whether the fee can be accepted under the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch (5 CFR 2635) regulations.

If the DEC determines that the acceptance is in accordance with the 5 CFR 2635 regulations, then the "free attendance" provision that is linked to the Widely Attended Gathering (WAG) approval process is to take place. Please check the OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy related to WAGs. In either case, an employee can only accept the waiving of a registration fee under the WAG authority or else they must pay to attend the event.

7.4 Additional Requirements by Legislative Authority

7.4.1 31 U.S.C. 1353 Provisions – Meetings or Similar Functions

7.4.1.1 General Conditions

An OPDIV/STAFFDIV may accept payment of travel expenses from a non-Federal source, received in the form of in-kind services only (or authorize an employee to receive such services on its behalf), when the appropriate delegated official determines in advance of the travel that the following conditions are met:

1. The employee (and/or the employee's spouse, when applicable) has been issued a travel authorization before the travel is scheduled to begin;
2. The travel is related to the employee's official duties and attendance is for a meeting or similar function;
3. The travel is in the interest of the Government;
4. The payment is from a person or entity meeting the definition of non-Federal source as provided in FTR [304-2.1](#); and
5. The non-Federal source is not disqualified due to a conflict of interest under FTR [304-5.3](#) as described below.

7.4.1.2 Definitions

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>Meeting or Similar Function</i>	A conference, seminar, speaking engagement, symposium, training course, or similar event that takes place away from the employee's official station. The term does not include a meeting or other event that is required to carry out a statutory or regulatory function of HHS, such as investigations, inspections, audits, site visits, negotiations, or litigation. It also does not include promotional vendor training or other meetings held for the primary purpose of marketing the products or services of the non-Federal source, nor long-term TDY or training travel per FTR 304-2.1 .
<i>Non-Federal source</i>	Any person or entity other than the Government of the United States. The term includes any individual, private or commercial entity, nonprofit organization or association, international or multinational organization (irrespective of whether an agency holds membership in the organization or association), or foreign, State or local government (including the government of the District of Columbia) see FTR 304-2.1 .
<i>Payment from a Non-Federal</i>	A monetary payment from a non-Federal source to a

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>Source or Reimbursable Sponsored Travel</i>	Federal agency for travel, subsistence, related expenses by check or other monetary instrument payable to the Federal agency (e.g., EFT, money order, charge card, etc.) or payment in-kind; see FTR 304-2.1 . Reimbursable sponsored travel may be allowed only under exceptional circumstances with the approval of the employee's STO or their designee.
<i>Payment in-kind</i>	Transportation, food, lodging, or other travel-related services provided by a non-Federal source, in lieu of monetary payments to the Federal agency for those services. Payment in-kind also includes waiver of any fees that a non-Federal source normally collects from meeting attendees (e.g., registration fees); see FTR 304-2.1 .
<i>Travel, subsistence, and related expenses" (travel expenses)</i>	Expenses for transportation, food, lodging, or other travel-related services, (payments are made in line with FTR Part 301) for official travel away from the employee's duty station. This includes conference or training fees and benefits that are incident to the meetings, which are made available by the meeting sponsor(s) to all attendees (see FTR 304-2.1).

7.4.1.3 Payment Method

Reimbursement by the non-Federal source by means of services in-kind, such as transportation tickets, meals, and lodgings, may be accepted by the employee on behalf of the Agency for the employee themselves or accompanying spouse, if applicable. Note that this authority prohibits employees and/or an accompanying spouse from accepting payment in cash, an electronic funds transfer, or a check or similar instrument made payable to either traveler from the non-Federal source.

7.4.1.4 Conflict of Interest (COI) Analysis

In line with 7.4.1.1 Item 5 above, AOs must be thorough in their review when determining if it is appropriate to accept payment from a non-Federal source that does business with, conducts activities regulated by, or otherwise has matters pending before the Department. This review should take into account the employee's role and whether it substantially impacts upon the Department's interaction with the entity. Particular care should be exercised in situations in which there is a regulatory relationship, or in which decisions affecting Federal funding for the entity are involved.

Items to Consider as Part of the COI Analysis

Specifically, FTR [304-5.3](#) states that the payment of travel expenses from a non-Federal source cannot be accepted if the AO determines that "acceptance of the

payment under the circumstances would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of all the facts relevant to a particular case to question the integrity of agency programs or operations.”

In making this assessment, the AO should weigh all relevant considerations, including but not limited to the:

1. Identity of the non-Federal source;
2. Purpose of the meeting or similar function;
3. Identity of other expected participants;
4. Nature and sensitivity of any matter pending at the agency which may affect the interest of the non-Federal source;
5. Significance of the employee’s role in any such matters; and
6. Monetary value and character of the travel benefits offered by the non-Federal source

Nature of the Event is Not a Factor

The conflict of interest analysis prescribed by FTR [304-5.3](#) expressly excludes “the importance of the event to the employee or the agency” as a factor to be considered. According to GSA, the evaluation standard does not employ a “balancing test.” GSA purposely deleted this as a factor to remove any implication that the importance of an event can override an appearance of impropriety. If acceptance of the payment from a non-Federal source under the given circumstances can reasonably be questioned, then the inquiry is at an end and the request for approval must be denied.

Determination of Acceptance from Potentially Prohibited Sources

The evaluation standard for determining a disqualifying conflict or an appearance of impropriety is not intended, however, as a flat ban on the payment from certain categories of donors simply because the non-Federal source happens to have matters pending before some component of the employee’s agency. According to GSA, the FTR recognizes that an outside “group most often will wish to invite a Federal speaker who is knowledgeable about the Federal programs or operations that affect that particular group” and that, “correspondingly, employees with an interest in a private group’s subject matter – whether presented in a conference, seminar, or training course – will often have duties that impact in some way on the event’s sponsor(s) or other non-Federal participant(s).”

To preclude the receipt by an agency of travel expenses from “prohibited sources,” defined as those persons or entities from whom an employee may not accept gifts under the Standards of Ethical Conduct regulation, or from entities substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of a particular employee’s duties,

would, according to GSA, be an “unreasonable regulatory limitation in view of the statute’s clear intent to permit agencies with tight travel budgets to benefit from travel expenses payments donated from outside sources.”

Appearance of Impropriety

The considerations enumerated above and in FTR [304-5.3](#) are not intended to be used to condone acceptance of payment where an appearance of impropriety is present. Rather, they are a guide to assist authorized agency officials in avoiding the acceptance of payment in circumstances that might lead a reasonable person to question the integrity of the agency’s programs or operations. While a flat ban on the acceptance of payment from certain categories of donors was not imposed, the FTR recognizes that the acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source in certain circumstances can give rise to an appearance of impropriety. Questions concerning the integrity of an agency’s programs may arise, for example, if the circumstances make it appear that it is the donor’s intent to influence the employee or agency in future actions or to reward the employee for past actions. Moreover, regardless of the donor’s apparent intent, the facts surrounding an offer of payment for travel expenses might give rise to an appearance that the offer will improperly influence an employee in the performance of their official duties or otherwise affect the integrity of the agency’s programs.

Examples: The following examples, which are drawn and adapted from GSA examples that accompanied the promulgation of the FTR, illustrate how the Acceptance of Payment from a non-Federal Source travel regulations apply in conflict of interest situations:

Example 1: An Assistant Secretary of the Army is asked to speak on the topic of reductions in force at an Army contractors’ convention. A contractor that has no matters pending under the official responsibility of the invited speaker offers to pay for his travel expenses. The company has a contract with another component within the Department of the Army. If the agency determines such official travel to be in furtherance of its mission, then acceptance of payment should not be precluded solely on the basis that the Non-Federal source seeks official action on some matter from someone at the agency.

Example 2: In the case of the Army Assistant Secretary described above, the authorized agency official would be expected to advise against acceptance of payment from the company if the Assistant Secretary was then serving as the source selection official for a procurement involving that contractor as a competitor. This would be true even if the contractors’ convention were viewed by the Army as an excellent forum at which to speak about the upcoming reductions in force.

Example 3: A large pharmaceutical association offers to fund a National Institutes of Health scientist's trip to a conference on AIDS. The scientist is at the time performing experiments in relation to a promising new hypertension drug developed by a company that belongs to the association. Assuming no other ethics factors militate against acceptance, the offer can be accepted inasmuch as the donor is not the company that is developing the drug, but instead an association, and the NIH does not directly regulate the pharmaceutical industry. If the scientist had been employed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), then FDA policy would preclude such acceptance.

Example 4: A Department of Transportation attorney is asked by a trucking industry association to address that body concerning the interpretation of a promulgated final regulation that the attorney drafted and that is applicable to the entire industry. The association offers to pay for her travel expenses. Applying the various factors to evaluate the offer, the agency may conclude that acceptance is permissible because the regulation is no longer pending before the invited speaker, her role had been that of a draftsman and not the final decision maker, and the regulation affects a broad class of trucking companies, but does not directly apply to the association itself. The agency might conclude, on the other hand, that because DOT regulates the trucking industry, it will decline the offer, as a prudential matter, despite the fact that the forum provides the best opportunity to explain the regulation to those most interested in the subject matter.

7.4.1.5 Limiting Acceptance

An agency may find that, while acceptance from the non-Federal source is permissible, it is in the interest of the agency to qualify acceptance of the offered payment by, for instance, authorizing attendance at only a portion of the event or limiting the type or character of benefits that may be accepted [see FTR [304-5.3\(b\)](#)].

While FTR [304-5.3\(a\)\(6\)](#) permits an authorized official to consider the value and character of offered travel benefits when determining whether to accept the payment in the first instance, paragraph (b) of the section permits acceptance to be qualified when deemed necessary to address appearance of impropriety concerns. Payment accepted under 31 U.S.C 1353 is accepted by the agency to facilitate the accomplishment of its mission, not for the personal benefit of the employee. On the other hand, in considering any qualified acceptance of travel benefits under paragraph (b), an authorized agency official should consider whether the limitation will be detrimental to the agency's interest by unduly restricting the Federal employee from participating in the event on the same basis as other participants.

AOs should be very mindful of how their approval will appear to outside entities or persons who have an interest in their organization, particularly the media, and Congress. In such cases, the AO should consult with their ethics official and if necessary, the OGC, Ethics Division.

7.4.1.6 Spousal Travel

OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs may authorize acceptance of payment of travel expenses for an accompanying spouse under very limited circumstances. The spouse must be issued a separate travel authorization that clearly references the employee's travel authorization and the purpose of the trip.

In addition, the following conditions must be thoroughly documented on the spouse's travel authorization:

1. The spouse is traveling with and attending the same event as the employee. The spouse must attend and/or participate in most of the events or sessions daily in order to fulfill the requirement of supporting the agency's mission. For example, the mere appearance at a dinner party during a weeklong conference does not satisfy the requirement of supporting the agency's mission.
2. The spouse's presence will support the mission of the employee's agency or substantially assist the employee through attendance at or participation in this event. For example, the spouse could be a nutritionist who could offer advice at a conference on healthy eating for a strong heart, or due to an unfortunate personal experience, could be an active participant at a conference on certain diseases. For acceptance to be authorized, the spouse should be able to contribute something of value that enhances the purpose of the meeting. There must be a full explanation of this with the travel authorization, and it must be made part of the official travel file.
3. Acceptance of payment of travel expenses from a non-Federal source for an accompanying spouse cannot be authorized if the non-Federal source is disqualified due to a conflict of interest under the criteria stated above for evaluating employee acceptance.

7.4.1.7 Maximum Subsistence Allowance

OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs may accept payment in excess of the established lodgings-plus per diem rates, as described in this manual and in the FTR when the following conditions are met:

1. Full payment, in-kind, is made by the non-Federal source; and
2. The accommodation or other benefit furnished is comparable in value to that offered to, or purchased by, other similarly situated individuals attending the meeting or similar function. The invitation letter from the non-Federal source must contain language to this effect when an organization offers in-kind payment in excess of the maximum prescribed government rates. (See FTR [304-5.4](#).)

7.4.1.8 Common Carrier Accommodations (Other than Coach Class –

Business Class)

FTR Chapter [304](#) permits OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs to authorize an employee to accept such accommodations when the following conditions are met:

1. The non-Federal source makes full payment for such transportation services in advance of travel (In-kind); and
2. Transportation accommodations furnished are comparable in value to those offered to, or purchased by, other similarly situated attendees at the meeting.

Note: See Section 6.6.4 for additional information related to International Travel and acceptance of Business Class accommodations from a non-Federal Sponsor. **HHS Policy:** HHS does not allow for sponsor-paid common carrier accommodations outside those that would be authorized if paid by an agency's own appropriation(s) in accordance with the FTR and this Travel Manual.

7.4.1.9 Federal Grant and Contract Funds

Under limited circumstances, an OPDIV/STAFFDIV may authorize acceptance of travel and related expenses from a non-Federal source receiving Federal grants or contracts. Specifically, the employee must be performing authorized official duties for their OPDIV/STAFFDIV that is consistent with the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's mission. In addition, the non-Federal source must indicate in the "Letter of Invitation" that it is using either Federal grant or contract monies or funds obtained through a private entity to fund the particular travel and related expenses. Any acceptance of payment by a non-Federal source, using Federal grant or contract funds must undergo a thorough review and analysis before approval by the OPDIV/STAFFDIV. OPDIV/STAFFDIVs may elect to adopt a more restrictive policy related to the acceptance of grant and contract funds.

HHS Funds May Not Be Accepted

However, if the non-Federal source is using Federal grant or contract monies, they cannot be HHS funds. This includes when the negotiated grant or contract agreement included a clause for travel and related expenses.

7.4.1.10 Long-term Travel and Training

Under this Title 31 authority, acceptance of in-kind services from a non-Federal source for travel and related expenses to attend a meeting or similar function cannot be authorized for a single trip, with one purpose, for a period exceeding 13 lodging nights of per diem. If, due to exceptional circumstances, the non-Federal source is offering these services for a period of time that is 14 lodging nights of per diem or more, authorization for acceptance must come from the OPDIV/STAFFDIV STO or their designee. If the trip has multiple segments with multiple purposes, no single segment of the trip, for which the non-Federal source is offering in-kind services, can

exceed 13 lodging nights. If any segments exceeds 13 lodging nights, the trip will require approval of the STO or their designee.

In addition, Title 31 Authority may not be used to fund training of a Federal employee.

7.4.1.11 After-the-Fact Authorization of HHS-348 Non-Federal Sponsored Travel

In accordance with FTR [304-3.13](#)(a), under 31 U.S.C. 1353, OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs may accept payment of additional travel expenses from a non-Federal source when there is approval for acceptance for some travel expenses, from the non-Federal source, prior to departing on travel.

If the agency has approved the acceptance of some travel expenses and the sponsoring organization decides to pay for additional travel expenses while the traveler is in travel status, the traveler can accept those additional expenses:

1. If the OPDIV/STAFFDIV has already authorized acceptance of payment, in-kind, for some travel expenses from the non-Federal source;
2. The additional travel expenses provided in-kind are comparable in value to those offered to or purchased by other similarly situated attendees; and
3. The agency did not decline to accept payment, in-kind, for those particular expenses in advance of travel.

Policy Example: The traveler has been approved for sponsored travel prior to departing on TDY and is authorized to accept airfare in-kind. While in travel status, the sponsor decides to pay for the traveler's lodging expense in-kind. Since the traveler is on an approved HHS-348, they can accept the lodging expense in-kind and notify the appropriate AO upon return so that adjustments may be made to the appropriate funding account.

HHS Policy: Contrary to FTR [304-3.13\(b\)](#), when the agency has not authorized acceptance of travel expenses, from a non-Federal source prior to the traveler's departure date, no travel expenses may be accepted from an outside organization after-the-fact. If the OPDIV/STAFFDIV did not authorize acceptance of any payment from a non-Federal source prior to the employee's travel, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV will not authorize acceptance after-the-fact. The employee is responsible for reimbursing the non-Federal Source or the vendor and may be subject to disciplinary actions.

If a traveler encounters a situation, where travel expenses were not authorized and a non-Federal sponsor has paid for a travel expense that was supposed to be paid for with appropriated dollars, such as a hotel room, without the traveler's knowledge and the vendor will not accept payment, the traveler must reimburse the sponsor for the expense. The traveler will be reimbursed the amount that the sponsor was paid the first time it occurs. The Traveler will not be reimbursed for subsequent similar actions and may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy and HHS Instruction 752 Discipline and Adverse Action.

7.4.2 42 U.S.C. 3506 Provisions – Advisory Services

7.4.2.1 Advisory Services

OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs may accept payment from non-Federal sources, organizations and individuals (or authorize an employee to receive such payments on its behalf) for in-kind services, or cash for reimbursable expenses, such as meals, taxis, etc., when the appropriate delegated official determines in advance that the travel is related to the employee's official duties and attendance is for the purpose of performing advisory services. Cash may not be accepted for the purchase of common carrier transportation as provided for in Section 4.1.3.1.

Advisory services have certain characteristics, which distinguish them from the general concept of a meeting. These assignments may be longer in duration; convey a sense of urgency or immediacy about their purpose; involve providing advice and technical assistance, or conducting technical or scientific training or research; and most typically for HHS, are sponsored by international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the World Health Organization (WHO), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and/or foreign governments, particularly third world countries.

In addition, the following rules must also be applied:

1. Travel expenses cannot be accepted if the non-Federal source is disqualified due to a conflict of interest. (See section 7.4.1.4, Conflict of Interest (COI) Analysis, above);
2. The acceptance of payment for per diem expenses cannot exceed the maximum rates under HHS policy (see section 7.4.1.7, Maximum Subsistence Allowance, above);

3. The acceptance of payment of travel expenses cannot be authorized for a spouse or member of the family to accompany the employee on travel; and
4. The acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source for any additional expenses after-the-fact is prohibited.

Under 42 U.S.C. 3506, travelers may accept payment in the form of in-kind services without reporting the fact whenever the monetary value is nominal (under \$15) and the service is offered more as a courtesy than an offer to defray, in whole or in part, the expenses of the trip. An example would be the acceptance of a ride from a meeting place back to a hotel in which the employee is staying.

It is HHS policy that under this authority, an employee may accept cash directly from the sponsoring organization for per diem related and miscellaneous expenses. However, an employee may not accept cash directly for common carrier transportation (e.g., airfare).

7.4.2.2 Common Carrier Accommodations (Other than Coach Class – Business Class)

Common carrier accommodations requirements are the same as in Section 7.4.1.8, Common Carrier Accommodations (Other than Coach Class – Business Class).

7.4.3 5 U.S.C. 7342 Provisions:

7.4.3.1 Payment of Travel Expenses by Foreign Governments and International Organizations

When a foreign government or international organization offers to pay an employee's travel expenses as either in-kind services, or cash for reimbursable expenses, such as meals, taxis, etc., for either official or private travel, the provisions of Chapter 6, International Travel, of this manual apply.

Article I, Section 9, of the Constitution (known as the "Emoluments Clause") prohibits, absent the consent of Congress, any person who holds an "office of profit or trust" in the United States Government from accepting any present, emolument, office, or title from a foreign government. In addition, the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act, 5 U.S.C. 7342, bars the receipt by an employee and an employee's spouse of any gift of more than minimal value (a figure, currently \$335, which was effective January 1, 2008 for the period 2008 through 2011, and which is adjusted every three years) from a foreign government, any subunit of a foreign government (such as a national, state, local, or municipal authority, including a public university), or any international or multinational organization whose membership is composed of any unit of a foreign government.

Congress has provided an exception to both the Emoluments Clause and the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act, which permits the acceptance of payments for travel

where both destinations (i.e., departure and arrival points) take place OCONUS. The authority to accept gifts of travel and per diem from a foreign government under the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act is for acceptance by an individual (and spouse and dependents), not an agency. Congress has consented for an agency to accept gifts of travel from a foreign government pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1353 and for this Department under 42 U.S.C. 3506 under the same rules, conditions, and restrictions as it may accept payment for travel from any other non-Federal source.

7.4.3.2 Common Carrier Accommodations (Other than Coach Class)

Common carrier accommodations requirements are the same as Section 7.4.1.8, Common Carrier Accommodations (Other than Coach Class – Business Class).

7.5 Authorization Procedures

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV official with delegated authority must authorize or approve the acceptance of services in-kind from non-Federal sources.

7.5.1 Authorization Form

The HHS Form 348, “Request for Approval to Accept Payment of Travel Expenses from a Non-Federal Source,” may be used to request approval for payment of travel and subsistence expenses from non-Federal sources. This form may be found on the internet at http://intranet.hhs.gov/hr/ohr/forms/hhs_forms.html. A separate form must be used for the spouse when he/she seeks authorization to accompany the employee on a trip. The request must be supported by a written invitation from the non-Federal source, which identifies those travel services to be paid in-kind. The form is also used by the traveler to report to the AO at the conclusion of the trip, as required in Section 7.6 below. An employee should check his/her OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy regarding the use of the HHS Form 348 in conjunction with the ETS.

7.5.2 Authorization Procedures

An original and three copies of the HHS-348 Form, if used by the employee’s OPDIV/STAFFDIV, must be prepared and forwarded (as soon as possible, but not later than 15 days before scheduled departure) through regular administrative channels to the Recommending Official (RO) and the AO. The RO may be the traveler’s DEC, depending on the OPDIV/STAFFDIV. An employee should check with his/her OPDIV/STAFFDIV as to who are the appropriate RO(s) and AO(s). The HHS-348 Form for the employee must reference spousal travel, if applicable. Additional copies and supporting documentation may be prepared to fulfill the needs of a particular organization.

The RO(s) and/or the AO(s) must follow the criteria established above for determining whether:

1. The non-Federal source is disqualified due to a conflict of interest under FTR [304-5.3](#);

2. A spouse is permitted to accompany the traveler;
3. To approve acceptance of payment, in-kind, in excess of per diem rates;
To approve acceptance of Other than Coach-Class common carrier accommodations; and
4. To approve additional expenses paid by the non-Federal source after-the-fact.

AOs will also ensure that the HHS-348 Form identifies the estimated amount of in-kind services the non-Federal source has agreed to reimburse the Government.

If acceptance is authorized, the AO will sign and date the original HHS-348 Form and initial all the copies. The original and two copies will be returned to the RO. The AO will retain one copy. If acceptance is not authorized, the delegated approving official will promptly notify the requesting office. The approved form must be attached to the Travel Authorization in the ETS.

When foreign travel is involved, the provisions of Chapter 6, International Travel, of this manual apply.

7.5.3 Actual Expense

Reimbursable sponsored travel may only be allowed under exceptional circumstances with the approval of the employee's STO. In the event that the non-Federal source offers to pay more than the lodging per diem rate, and subsequently does not pay the Federal government in full, the agency is only permitted to allow and pay expenses that do not exceed the lodging per diem rate. Similarly, if the non-Federal source offers to pay Other than Coach Class - Business Class common carrier expenses and subsequently fails to do so, the agency is only permitted to allow common carrier expenses that do not exceed contract City Pair (coach) fare for the same trip.

In such circumstances, this will result in the traveler being required to reimburse the Federal government for those expenses that exceed the standard per diem rate (not actual expense) travel allowances as defined by GSA. In addition, should a sponsor not pay the Federal government in full for an accompanying spouse, the traveler is also responsible for full reimbursement to the Government for any expenses not reimbursed by the sponsor.

7.5.3.1 Non-Payment of Travel Expenses

Reimbursable sponsored travel may be allowed under exceptional circumstances with the approval of the employee's STO or their designee. AOs must be aware that in the event that a non-Federal organization does not pay the promised amounts for the aforementioned lodgings-plus per diem (not actual expense) travel allowances, then payment of those travel expenses must come from the agency's travel budget.

7.6 Non-Governmental Travel Reports

Each traveler (employee and/or accompanying spouse, if applicable) will be required to complete a certification at the end of each trip for which acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source was authorized. The certification can be made by completing item 10 of the authorizing HHS-348 Form, and will show the estimated value of the in-kind services received and the actual amount of reimbursement in-kind by the non-Federal source.

The traveler will also be responsible for ensuring the following additional data is provided on the HHS-348 Form or the report for each trip:

1. The name of the employee and/or spouse, if applicable;
2. The position or title of the employee;
3. The name of the sponsor making the payment;
4. The nature of the meeting or similar function;
5. The amount and method of payment;
6. The nature of the expenses; and
7. The place and date of the travel.

One copy of the HHS-348 Form, or a stand-alone report if the HHS 348 is not used, will be forwarded to the AO. The AO will retain it for at least one year to provide the capability of meeting semi-annual reporting requirements for travel expenses paid under the authority of 31 U.S.C. 1353 for the reporting periods ending March 31 and September 30 of each year.

The original HHS-348 Form and/or report will be forwarded to the appropriate fiscal office, with the travel voucher, travel order, and a copy of the invitation letter for proper accounting recordation. A voucher must be submitted even if all expenses are paid in-kind and no money was reimbursed directly to the traveler. One copy may be retained by the approving office; another copy is for the traveler's records.

8. Travel and Transportation Expenses Connected with the Death of Employees under Certain Circumstances

This chapter provides supplemental guidance and references to FTR Part [303](#) for HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIVs regarding agency requirements for payment of expenses connected with the death of civilian employees. For officers of the Commissioned Corps, please see [JFTR Chapter 5 Part R](#).

The employee's supervisor, once notified, must contact their OHR and Travel Office to coordinate the necessary resources to ensure that all applicable benefits and entitlements are provided to the employee's estate.

8.1 General

OPDIV/STAFFDIVs must pay expenses incurred as specified in the FTR that are related to an employee's death (regardless of cause) when, at the time of death, the employee was:

1. Conducting official TDY travel, including when death occurs while on leave or on a non-workday; or
2. Performing official duties while stationed OCONUS, including when death occurs while on leave or on a non-workday; or
3. Reassigned away from his/her home of record under a mandatory mobility agreement, such as an assignment under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA).

Note that some limited expenses may be paid related to the death of an immediate family member who was residing with the employee OCONUS (see FTR Chapter [303, Subpart E](#)).

8.2 Allowances

The FTR is very carefully worded as to the allowances an agency must authorize versus the allowances an agency may authorize. Some allowances pertain to items 1 - 3 above, while other allowances only pertain to employees (and their immediate families) who are stationed OCONUS. Some allowances may be subject to time limits. OPDIV/STAFFDIVs must provide assistance in arranging for preparation and transportation of the employee's remains.

8.2.1 Expenses that Must be Reimbursed

Allowable expenses that must be reimbursed include:

1. Preparation and transportation of the employee's remains, including costs for embalming or cremation and a casket or container suitable for shipment to place of burial;
2. Mortuary and transportation services when an immediate family member, residing with the employee, dies while the employee is stationed OCONUS, as authorized under the guidelines and conditions set forth in FTR [303-70.400](#), -.401, and -.403;
3. Transportation costs to return the deceased employee's baggage to the official duty station or residence, excluding insurance or reimbursement for loss of or damage to the baggage;
4. Transportation of immediate family members, baggage, and household goods as defined in the FTR, only when the employee dies at or while in transit to or from the official duty station OCONUS; and
5. Continuation of relocation expenses for an employee's immediate family, if the employee dies while in transit to the new duty station within CONUS, provided the immediate family is included on the relocation travel order and the family chooses to continue the relocation. Relocation expenses that must be authorized are referenced in FTR [303-70.305](#). Under FTR 303-70.305, certain expenses entitle reimbursement based upon continuation to the new station, return to the old official station, or continuation to an alternate destination selected by the immediate family.

8.2.2 Expenses that May be Reimbursed

Some of the allowable expenses that may be reimbursed include:

1. Transportation of the employee's remains to an alternate destination, provided the allowable expenses do not exceed the cost of transportation to the official duty station; and/or
2. Travel expenses for no more than two persons to escort the remains of a deceased

employee to:

- i. The home or official duty station of the deceased; or
- ii. Any other place deemed appropriate by the head of HHS, if the allowable expenses do not exceed the cost of transportation to the employee's official duty station.

When an employee is injured and subsequently dies from those injuries sustained while performing official duty or conducting official travel, under the provisions outlined in Section 8.1, death-related benefits are payable under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act, 5 U.S.C. 8134.

Federal Travel Regulation Guideline:

- FTR Part 303-70, Agency Requirements for Payment of Expenses Connected with the Death of Certain Employees.
- FTR Chapter 303 Subpart A - General Policies
- FTR Chapter 303 Subpart B - General Procedures
- FTR Chapter 303 Subpart C - Allowances for Preparation and Transportation of Remains
- FTR Chapter 303 Subpart D - Transportation of Immediate Family Members, Baggage, and Household Goods
- FTR Chapter 303 Subpart E - Preparation and Transportation Expenses for Remains of Immediate Family Members
- FTR Chapter 303 Subpart F - Policies and Procedures for Payment of Expenses
- FTR Chapter 303 Subpart G - Escort of Remains

8.3 Supplemental HHS Policies

The delegated responsible official must provide reasonable assistance in arranging for preparation and transportation of the remains of the decedent when death occurs during travel status or at an official duty station OCONUS. In addition, a designated official will provide necessary assistance for the return of the decedent's immediate family and household goods to the official duty station, when the decedent's official station was OCONUS.

The OPDIV/STAFFDIVs are responsible for establishing a delegation of authority level to authorize and approve these FTR allowances and for establishing internal procedures to ensure compliance with all FTR requirements. In this regard, all efforts must be made to use the modes of travel and transportation services that are most advantageous to the Government.

Note: Under [FTR 301-70](#), Subpart F, Policies, and Procedures for Payment of Expenses, receipts are required for all reimbursement claims. The agency may make payment directly to the person performing the service (who will submit an invoice) or reimburse the person who made the original payment. HHS officials who authorize and approve expenses under these guidelines should coordinate with their servicing travel, procurement, transportation, and financial payment offices to determine the proper administrative processes to follow.

9. Travel and Transportation Expenses under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA)

9.1 Purpose

This chapter provides policy and procedural guidance regarding the travel and transportation expenses that can be authorized and paid from agency appropriations under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) of 1970 and Title VI of the Civil Service Reform Act. These two Acts authorize the temporary assignment of employees between Federal agencies and State, local, and Indian Tribal governments,¹⁵ institutions of higher education and other eligible organizations.¹⁶ Assignments may be made by detail or appointment.

9.2 Coverage under the IPA

The following personnel are covered under the guidelines provided in this chapter:

1. All appointed Federal civilian employees of HHS who are detailed or assigned to work in an organization or governmental agency outside of HHS under an approved IPA agreement with that outside entity; and
2. Employees of governmental agencies and organizations outside HHS who are appointed or detailed to work within HHS under an approved IPA agreement, and to whom the OPDIV/STAFFDIV pays for, or reimburses, approved travel and per diem allowances directly to the assignee during the course of the agreement, per the FTR Parts 301-304.

Excluded from coverage under the two Acts are the following:

1. Members of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps;
2. Special Purpose IPA Agreements per HHS Instruction [334-1](#);
3. Individuals who perform work for HHS or any of its OPDIV/STAFFDIVs under a personal services contract, or who are employees of an organization that is under contract to provide goods and/or services to HHS or any of its OPDIV/STAFFDIVs;
4. Federal, State, or local government employees serving under non-career, excepted service, non-competitive, time limited, temporary, or term appointments;

¹⁵ Indians as defined in Section 4(c) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (P.L. 93-638) by virtue of the section entitled "Personnel Aspects" are now allowed to participate in the IPA program.

¹⁶ Other eligible organizations means: 1) A National, Regional, State-wide, area-wide, or metropolitan organization representing member State or local governments; 2) An association of State or local public officials; 3) A nonprofit organization which has as one of its principle functions the offering of professional advisory, research, education, or developmental services or related services; and 4) A Federally-funded research and development center.

5. Elected Federal, State, or local government officials;
6. Students employed in research graduate or teacher assistant and similar temporary positions;
7. Individuals assigned to HHS in any of its OPDIV/STAFFDIVs by other governments or organizations whose travel and per diem allowances are paid by their regular employers;
8. Individuals assigned to HHS in any of its OPDIV/STAFFDIVs by other governments or organizations whose travel and per diem allowances are paid to the assignee's regular employer by the OPDIV/STAFFDIV to which they are assigned; and
9. Individuals who have not signed an IPA agreement.

9.3 General Provisions

The IPA provides for temporary exchanges of personnel between the Federal Government and state or local governments, institutions of higher education, Indian tribes, or tribal organizations, and any other eligible organization. Each such exchange is carried out under the provisions of a specific agreement that states the purpose and duration of the exchange, the places, hours, and conditions of work, and the methods of financing the individual's pay and allowances.

9.3.1 Travel Approval

Representatives of both the Federal Government and the other government or entity participating in a personnel exchange under the IPA must sign an agreement that sets forth explicitly the travel and transportation arrangements of the exchange. Travel and transportation arrangements must be approved by the official who has authority to approve travel allowances (in advance of travel, unless exceptional circumstances occur) and reimbursements of travel expenses. If that official is different from the one who is negotiating the IPA agreement for HHS, the latter must secure the approval of the official(s) authorized to approve travel or relocation allowances. Failure to secure approval from the appropriate travel AO will result in the assignee not being reimbursed for expenses incurred.

9.3.2 Service Agreements

The employee must sign a service agreement for one (1) year or the length of the assignment, whichever is shorter, to be eligible for payment of per diem at the assignment location or limited relocation expenses. This service agreement must be incorporated into a written IPA Agreement (such as an [Optional Form \(OF\) 69](#), Assignment Agreement, or agency equivalent) or must be documented via a separate Employment Agreement (such as an [HHS-355](#)) in accordance with each OPDIV/STAFFDIV's personnel practices. The employee will be responsible for repaying any expenses if he or she fails to complete the service agreement, unless the reason for failing to complete the agreement is beyond his/her control and acceptable to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV. In addition, management of the HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIV may waive the requirement to pay back expenses if the waiver is considered justified, in accordance with OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy.

9.3.3 Travel Authorization and Voucher Mechanism

When an individual is assigned to HHS by a non-Federal government or organization, all travel and transportation expenses, in the form of either a limited relocation allowance or a temporary per diem allowance, must be processed through the appropriate travel authorization and travel voucher mechanisms in accordance with this manual and the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's procedures for accounting for such travel expenses.

9.4 Allowances

Persons who are assigned away from their places of regular employment under the terms of an IPA agreement may be authorized and reimbursed for travel or limited relocation expenses under the IPA, as provided in 5 U.S.C. 3375. When an OPDIV/STAFFDIV authorizes travel or relocation allowances under an IPA agreement, it is the responsibility of the AO to select between the reimbursement of a per diem allowance at the assignment site (see Section 9.4.3) or the limited allowable relocation expenses (see Section 9.4.4). The AO may not pay both types of allowances. In making a determination, consideration should be given to the cost to the Government, as well as the duration of the assignment. For example, a per diem allowance would usually be authorized for short-term assignments, because it is more cost-beneficial to the Government.

For any assignment over 30 days where a per diem allowance is authorized, that allowance shall be reduced in accordance with the guidance in Section 5.1.3.4, Reduced Per Diem. When properly authorized, the length of an IPA assignment may be extended at the current TDY site. In such instances, the per diem allowance for the extended period must remain at the same reduced (percentage) rate that was in effect at the end of the previous assignment period. However, a cost comparison should be done if the length of the extension increases the length of the IPA assignment enough that a change in the per diem reduction may be warranted. For example, an assignment of 90 days, which is extended to over a year, should be reviewed to determine if the reduced per diem should be adjusted in accordance with guidance in Section 5.1.3.4.

In addition, once a per diem allowance has been negotiated, the agreement may not be changed to authorize limited relocation allowances. Furthermore, IPAs that authorize payment of limited relocation expenses may not be modified to include additional benefits/expenses (e.g., per diem).

9.4.1 Return Trips Home

If an employee is on a long-term assignment, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV may authorize a return trip home provided the criteria outlined below are met.

For assignments that are less than 30 days:

1. Employees will not be authorized a return trip home at Government expense.
2. Should the employee decide to return home any other time, see Section 5.2.3.4, Voluntary Return to Home or Official Station without Travel Order.

For assignments that are greater than 30 days:

1. An employee may return home not to exceed two (2) times per month at the Government's expense in consultation with the AO.
2. Should the employee decide to return home any other time, see Section

5.2.3.4, Voluntary Return to Home or Official Station without Travel Order.

An OPDIV/STAFFDIV may choose to implement this policy in a more restrictive manner within its own OPDIV/STAFFDIV.

9.4.2 Temporary Duty Travel Away from the IPA Assignment Location

Travel orders shall be issued to authorize travel expenses, including a per diem allowance, for official TDY assignments away from the designated post of duty. Such travel must be approved by the designated travel AO. On occasion, an employee may continue to receive lodging entitlements under an IPA assignment concurrent with authorized TDY travel away from the IPA assignment location. However, the employee cannot receive a M&IE allowance under both the IPA assignment and TDY concurrently.

Note: If both the assignee's regular place of employment and the IPA official duty station are within the same city/town, these IPA travel allowances do not apply. Refer to Section 4.3, Authorization of a Per Diem Allowance at the Official Station or within the Local Travel Area.

9.4.3 Per Diem Allowance at Assignment Location

Under an IPA agreement that does not provide for payment of limited relocation expenses, the TDY travel expenses listed below may be authorized, in accordance with the FTR provisions related to TDY travel. The following allowances only apply to expenses incurred by the employee; there is no authority to pay for any expenses incurred by the employee's immediate family.

1. Travel of the employee, including a per diem allowance, to and from the place of assignment, under FTR Part [301-10](#), Transportation Expenses, and [301-11](#), Per Diem Expenses.
2. A per diem allowance for the employee while at the place of assignment, under FTR Part [301-11](#), Per Diem Expenses. If the HHS official who negotiates the IPA agreement is not the travel AO, the negotiating official must consult the appropriate travel AO to determine the amount of the per diem allowance, if any. The travel AO is responsible for establishing the per diem allowance, and once the allowance has been set, it must be specified in the agreement, as well as on an approved travel order.

9.4.4 Limited Relocation Allowances

In some situations, where it is more economical or otherwise more advantageous to the Federal Government, IPA assignees may be authorized to move their immediate families and household goods to the point of their IPA assignment at the expense of the Federal Government.

When the terms of an IPA agreement provide that the employee will be entitled to relocation allowances, HHS may agree to pay the following expenses in accordance with the applicable

FTR provisions in [302-3](#), Relocation Allowances, and Chapter 12, Relocation Allowances, of this manual:

1. Travel and transportation expenses of the employee to and from the assignment location;
2. Travel and transportation expenses of the employee's immediate family to and from the assignment location;
3. Transportation and temporary storage expenses of the employee's household goods and personal effects;
4. Temporary quarters subsistence expenses at the time the assignment commences and at the time the assignment is completed;
5. A miscellaneous expense allowance (for items such as disconnecting and connecting appliances, equipment, and utilities, cutting and fitting transported rugs, etc.). This expense may only be authorized when shipment of household goods and personal effects is authorized under item 3 above, or when storage of such items is authorized under item 6 below; and
6. Non-temporary storage of the employee's household goods and personal effects when the employee is assigned to an isolated location.

Note: Once an OPDIV/STAFFDIV decides to offer limited relocation allowances in line with FTR [302-3](#), it must authorize payment for, and reimburse the individual for, the full costs incurred associated with any authorized service(s) as described above. In projecting the estimated obligations, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV may not cap or limit the amount to be reimbursed.

Other relocation allowances listed under FTR Part [302-3](#), but not listed above, are not allowed. For example, an agency cannot pay expenses of selling or purchasing a residence, property management services, house-hunting trips, relocation income tax allowance, or transportation of privately owned motor vehicles. In addition, a temporary change of station, under FTR Part 302-3, Subpart E, may not be authorized.

References

- The Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970, 5 U.S.C 3371 – 3375 (Examination, selection, and placement assignments to and from States)
- 5 CFR 334 (Revised Intergovernmental Personnel Act, 5/29/97)
- HHS Human Capital Accountability System Policy, June 2, 2006
- Personnel Aspects of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, Public Law 93-638 Handbook (HHS, 10/10/2000)
- HHS Instruction 334-1 Temporary Assignments of Personnel Under the IPA, 3/28/08

9.5 Travel and Transportation Cost Comparison: Reduced Per Diem Allowance/ Limited Relocation Allowances versus Repeated TDY Trips to the HHS Work Site

If an OPDIV/STAFFDIV determines that the assignee is not going to be physically situated at the HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIV work site and neither limited relocation allowances nor a reduced per diem allowance is going to be authorized, then the “Comparison of Costs: Per Diem Allowance versus Relocation Allowance” worksheet must be properly completed. Guidelines for this requirement are in Section 9.5.1 below. A sample “Intergovernmental Personnel Act Travel and Transportation Cost Comparison Worksheet” is provided at the end of this chapter.

9.5.1 Comparison of Costs: Per Diem Allowance versus Relocation Allowance

If an OPDIV/STAFFDIV determines that the assignee will be physically stationed at the HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIV work site, the following cost comparison should be done to determine whether an IPA assignment should be authorized as:

1. A TDY assignment (per diem allowance); or
2. A change in duty station (limited relocation allowance(s)).

Both the length of the assignment as well as the costs must be considered.

For IPA assignments of relatively short duration (e.g., four months) payment of a per diem allowance may be more advantageous to the Government. For IPA assignments for extended periods (e.g., six months), it usually is less costly as well as more advantageous to the Government to authorize the applicable limited relocation allowances.

Consideration must be given to the estimated costs for each of the two alternatives. The method and amount of reimbursement will be based on this cost comparison.

If limited relocation is determined to be the least expensive method:

1. The applicable relocation allowances may be authorized; or
2. If it is not feasible for the employee to move immediate family and/or household goods, per diem may be authorized for a specified amount, which should not exceed the estimated costs of relocating.

If a TDY is determined to be the least expensive method:

1. The applicable per diem allowances may be authorized; or
2. If the employee elects to move the immediate family and household goods, relocation allowances may be authorized for a specified amount, which should not exceed the estimated costs of per diem payments.

Travel Example: An employee of the California State Department of Education is to be assigned to the HHS San Francisco Regional Office for a one-year period. The employee resides in San Diego with his/her spouse and two children.

<u>Relocation Expenses</u>	
Mileage between San Diego and San Francisco	\$ 100
Travel per diem for employee and immediate family [assume the trip takes over 12 hours]	\$ 250
Transportation of household goods	\$ 4,500
Miscellaneous expense allowance	\$ 1,000
Estimated costs to return to San Diego (total of above)	\$ 5,850
Total estimated costs to relocate:	\$ 11,700
<u>Temporary Duty Expenses:</u>	
Round trip air fare, San Diego - San Francisco	\$ 200
Travel per diem for employee (round trip)	\$ 150
Per diem at assignment location for employee <i>reduced per diem rate applies</i>	\$16,000
Total estimated costs for TDY reimbursement	\$ 16,350

Travel Example Continued: Based on the results of the cost comparison, relocation allowances should be authorized. If it is not feasible for the employee to move the immediate family, the employee may elect to be paid a per diem allowance. Under such circumstances, a monetary limitation (“cap”) should be established; for example, based upon the calculations above, the per diem authorized at the maximum rate would not exceed \$11,700 (the estimated cost of relocation) so that amount would be the cap on reimbursement. In establishing a monetary limitation, the AO must include in the calculation the proper amount of any costs for transportation associated with periodic trips home to the assignee’s residence (non-Federal person) or official duty station (Federal employee). Regardless of which cost comparison is made, if an option with a higher cost estimate is selected, a monetary limitation is to be placed on that estimate that does not exceed the lowest cost estimate. If later, the actual expenses incurred exceed the capped amount by up to 10 percent, approval for the increase must be obtained from the OPDIV/STAFFDIV STO (or their designee). Actual expenses incurred that exceed the capped amount in excess of 10 percent are to be borne by the employee.

Note: An OPDIV/STAFFDIV should not pay a per diem allowance for an assignment expected to last more than one year, or for an indefinite period. The payment of per diem for a period of more than one year is taxable to the employee (although an income tax reimbursement allowance applies).

9.6 Travel Orders

A travel order is the official authorization to perform travel at Government expense and must be prepared for all assignments where travel and per diem allowances are paid directly to the individual on the IPA assignment. This includes both limited relocation allowances and TDY per diem allowances.

In addition to authorizing the travel, a travel order specifies the employee's entitlement to reimbursement for the allowable expenses. It should be prepared as soon as the assignment agreement is completed. Authorization for travel related to an IPA, must be given by an official who has been delegated the authority to approve such travel. Caution is required in the preparation of travel orders to ensure that they properly reflect the approval to incur expenses in accordance with the FTR. Travel orders must indicate that travel and transportation expenses are authorized in accordance with the IPA and the Service Agreement. The length of the assignment, the duty reporting date, the estimated expense, per diem allowances to be paid, and any applicable cap of reimbursement also must be included. When the assignment agreement provides for the payment of relocation allowance, a change of station travel order must be initiated, listing the allowances to be paid.

The provisions above apply only travel related to formal negotiated IPA assignments. See Section 9.4.2, Temporary Duty Travel Away from the IPA Assignment Location, for information on TDY travel during an IPA assignment.

Note: An employee who performs official travel or incurs change of station expenses without a travel order, or who departs earlier than necessary to carry out the purpose of travel, does so at the risk of not being reimbursed for expenses incurred.

9.7 Claims for Allowances and Reimbursements

Individuals assigned to HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIVs under IPA agreements, which provide that HHS will pay travel expenses and allowances, should submit their claims for such allowances and reimbursements on a travel voucher, in the same manner as prescribed for permanent HHS employees. If an employee is drawing station per diem allowances, they should submit the travel vouchers at the end of each month, a minimum of every 30 days, or in accordance with the OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy. Individuals claiming relocation allowances should submit their vouchers within five (5) workdays after the expense has been incurred and paid.

Note that a copy of the IPA agreement should accompany the voucher when submitted for reimbursement.

As stated in Section 9.5, the following worksheet is to be completed to provide the necessary cost comparisons for payment of per diem, limited relocation expenses or multiple return trips home.

Intergovernmental Personnel Act Travel and Transportation Cost Comparison Worksheet

This worksheet is to be completed when a determination is made that the assignee is not going to be physically situated at the HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIV work site during the length of the assignment.

Length of Assignment

Note: If the length of the assignment is six (6) months or less, compare the costs of Option 1 versus Option 3. If the length of the assignment is greater than six (6) months, compare the costs of Option 1, Option 2, and Option 3.

OPTION 1: Reduced Per Diem Allowance (This estimate represents what it would cost to pay a reduced per diem allowance had the assignee been physically situated at the HHS work site.)

- A. Total Cost of Lodging: An OPDIV/STAFFDIV'S established contractual agreement with an apartment rental (e.g., monthly rate)
\$
- B. Total Cost of M&IE: A reduced allowance based on the guidelines in Section 5.1.3.4
\$
- C. Total Cost of Return Travel: Airfare and ground transportation (once every two months)
\$
- TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS OPTION 1: \$

OPTION 2: Limited Relocation Allowances (This estimate represents what it would cost to pay limited relocation allowances.)

- A. Travel and transportation expenses of the employee to the assignment location
\$
- B. Travel and transportation of the employee's immediate family to the assignment location \$
- C. Transportation and temporary storage of expenses of the employee's household goods and personal effects \$
- D. Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expenses \$
- E. Miscellaneous Expense Allowance \$
- F. Non-Temporary storage of the employee's household goods and personal effects (if applicable) \$
- TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS OPTION 2: \$

OPTION 3: Repeated TDY Trips to the HHS Work Site (This represents what it would cost to allow the employee to make repeated TDY trips to the HHS work site and return home.)

Number of trips anticipated:
Total cost of airfare: \$
Total cost of lodging: \$
Total cost of M&IE: \$
Total cost of ground transportation: \$
Total cost of miscellaneous allowances: \$

TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS OPTION 3: \$

Regardless of which cost comparison is made, if an option with a higher cost estimate is selected, a monetary limitation (“cap”) is to be placed on that estimate that does not exceed the lowest cost estimate. If later, the actual expenses incurred exceed the capped amount by up to 10 percent, approval for the increase must be obtained from the OPDIV/STAFFDIV STO (or their designee). Actual expenses incurred that exceed the capped amount in excess of 10 percent are to be borne by the employee.

Justification:

_____	Approved	_____	Date
_____	Disapproved	_____	Date

EXAMPLE:Length of Assignment 6 Months

OPTION 1: Reduced Per Diem Allowance (This estimate represents what it would cost to pay a reduced per diem allowance had the assignee been physically situated at the HHS work site.)

- A. Total Cost of Lodging: An OPDIV/STAFFDIV'S established contractual agreement with an apartment rental (e.g., monthly rate)

\$15,000

- B. Total Cost of M&IE: A reduced allowance based on the guidelines in Section 5.1.3.4

\$6,300

- C. Total Cost of Return Travel: Airfare and ground transportation (once every two months)

\$1,950TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS OPTION 1: \$23,250

OPTION 2: Limited Relocation Allowances (This estimate represents what it would cost to pay limited relocation allowances.)

- A. Travel and transportation expenses of the employee to the assignment location \$800

- B. Travel and transportation of the employee's immediate family to the assignment location \$1,200

- C. Transportation and temporary storage of expenses of the employee's household goods and personal effects \$2,500

- D. Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expenses \$2,310

- E. Miscellaneous Expense Allowance \$500

- F. Non-Temporary storage of the employee's household goods and personal effects (if applicable) \$1,100

TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS OPTION 2: \$8,410

OPTION 3: Repeated TDY Trips to the HHS Work Site (This represents what it would cost to allow the employee to make repeated TDY trips to the HHS work site and return home.)

Number of trips anticipated: 18Total cost of airfare: \$9,000Total cost of lodging: \$9,774Total cost of M&IE: \$5,922Total cost of ground transportation: \$2,700Total cost of miscellaneous allowances: \$1,620TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS OPTION 3: \$29,016

Regardless of which cost comparison is made, if an option with a higher cost estimate is selected, a monetary limitation (“cap”) is to be placed on that estimate that does not exceed the lowest cost estimate. If later, the actual expenses incurred exceed the capped amount by up to 10%, approval for the increase must be obtained from the OPDIV/STAFFDIV STO (or their designee). Actual expenses incurred that exceed the capped amount in excess of 10% are to be borne by the employee.

Justification:

_____	Approved	_____	Date
_____	Disapproved	_____	Date

Note: Based upon the sample, if Option 1 or Option 3 is selected, appropriate justification and explanation for the increased costs must be provided to the AO.

10. Government Contractor-issued Travel Charge Card including Travel and Transportation Legislative Requirements

This chapter provides supplemental guidance to HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIV' policies concerning implementation of specific GSA regulations stemming from various Legislative Acts and OMB requirements related to the use of the Government Travel Charge Card Program. This chapter applies to all HHS civilian employees, as defined in 5 U.S.C. 5701(2) and in the [FTR 301-1](#).

10.1 General

The Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-264) was signed into law on October 19, 1998. One of its chief purposes is to reduce Federal travel costs and to streamline Federal travel processes. Among its provisions, the Act requires employees to use Government travel charge cards for payment of official travel expenses. It provides for a late payment fee to be paid to employees when an agency fails to reimburse them for approved expenses within 30 days after submission of a proper voucher. It gives agencies the authority to collect undisputed, delinquent travel charge card debts through salary offset. The Act authorizes GSA to approve a limited number of agency pilot programs for cutting travel and relocation administrative expenses. It requires agencies to audit transportation bills related to the shipment of Household Goods for accuracy prior to payment, instead of after payment. Finally, the Act authorizes the payment of income reimbursement allowances to employees when their reimbursement for travel expenses becomes taxable after one year of continuous duty at a TDY location.

The [OMB Circular 123, Appendix B](#), effective January 15, 2009, establishes new travel charge card requirements to reduce the risk of fraud, misuse, and late payments. It mandates that agencies perform credit worthiness assessments of all new travel charge card applicants prior to issuing a card. It requires implementation of split disbursement and salary offset for travel charge card holders. It identifies new reporting requirements related to the travel charge card, and requires agencies to maintain policies that ensure administrative and/or disciplinary actions are initiated against cardholders who fail to use the charge card properly or fail to make timely payments.

10.2 Mandatory Use of Government Contractor-Issued Travel Charge Card

Employees must use the travel charge card, an IBA or CBA, for all official travel expenses, including cash advances through an ATM machine if they travel five (5) or more times a year unless they have an exemption under FTR [301-52.2](#) or an OPDIV/STAFFDIV approved exemption under FTR [301-51.3](#). All employees must apply for a travel charge card to perform official travel. If an employee has an IBA, they should not use the CBA unless authorized by the AO and the Lead A/OPC. If the IBA is suspended or closed due to delinquency, they may not use the CBA unless authorized by the AO and the Lead A/OPC. See Section 10.3.3, HHS Travel Charge Card “Zero Tolerance Policy” for information on the proper use of the travel charge card.

Note that it is HHS policy that the travel charge card may not be used for local travel expenses unless one of the conditions outlined in Section 10.2.8 below is met. Employees must pay bills for use of the travel charge card in accordance with the terms of the cardholder’s agreement they sign with the agency. Employees who do not adhere to these mandatory travel charge card usage policies may be subject to disciplinary action and/or the cancellation of their charge card privileges.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 301-51, Subpart A, Paying Travel Expenses B General
- FTR Part 301-70, Subpart H, Internal Policies and Procedures Relating to Mandatory Use of the Government Contractor-Issued Travel Charge Card for Official Travel

10.2.1 Granting Exemptions in HHS

The FTR grants authority to the head of a Federal agency or his/her designee to exempt any payment, person, type, class of payments, or type or class of agency personnel from the mandatory use of the travel charge card, if the exemption is determined to be necessary in the interest of the agency. Exemptions must be in writing. In HHS, the ASA will grant Department-wide exemptions for specific types or classes of payments or agency personnel.

Heads of OPDIV/STAFFDIVs or their designees may grant additional exemptions only for individual payments or persons in their organizations. The following information must be included in a written exemption memorandum:

1. Letterhead should specify the name of the issuing HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIV;
2. “Date:” should reflect the date that the exemption is issued;
3. “To:” should name the employee receiving the exemption;
4. “From:” should be the title of the manager granting the exemption;
5. “Subject:” should be “Exemption from Mandatory Travel Charge Card Use;”

6. The body of the memo should include a description of what the exemption is for, its duration, and reason for granting it; and
7. Name and signature should reflect the “Exemption Authorizing Official.”

Exemptions should only be granted under exceptional or unusual circumstances when it is determined to be necessary in the interest of the Agency.

Within OPDIV/STAFFDIVs, the authority to grant mandatory travel charge card exemptions on an individual case basis should be consistent with other travel authority delegations. HHS officials who grant exemptions will retain the original written exemption in their travel administrative files for the life of the exemption. Whenever the exemption terminates its duration (e.g., the limit is a single trip) or is canceled, it must be retained an additional six (6) years and three (3) months for audit purposes. Exemption memoranda should be maintained in an “exemption” travel file with separate “current” and “inactive” folders, in which memoranda are filed alphabetically by the employee’s last name. If a long-term or indefinite exemption is canceled, mark “canceled” on the document, initial and date, and move it from the “current” to the “inactive” folder.

Note: If an OPDIV/STAFFDIV uses a Government contractor-issued CBA, for certain types or classes of travel payments (e.g., airline tickets), such payments meet mandatory travel charge card use requirements and should not be listed as an exemption.

10.2.1.1 Notification to GSA of Exemptions

HHS officials with exemption authority will provide written notification, within 30 days after granting new exemptions, directly to the Administrator of General Services (Attention: MTT), 1800 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20405, at the following levels:

- The ASA will provide written notification of Department-wide exemptions to GSA on behalf of all HHS components.
- OPDIV/STAFFDIV officials are responsible for providing written notifications to GSA for any individual exemptions they grant in their own OPDIV/STAFFDIVs; a copy should not be sent to the ASA.

10.2.2 Department-wide Exemptions

In addition to the Government-wide exemptions specified in the FTR, the former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Finance (DASF) granted the exemptions listed below to HHS civilian employees, under delegated authority, and each of the exemptions remains in effect. The Exemptions for Agency Employees are for the following types of personnel:

1. Members of national advisory councils and advisory committees;
2. Temporary employees, whose term of appointment are less than 120 days;
3. Intermittent or temporary consultants and experts, paid on a daily when-actually-employed (WAE) basis, serving less than one year; and
4. Special Government Employees (SGEs) (e.g., scientist and researchers from private industry and academia) who serve as second level review officials of grant applications.

Note that HHS has adopted the GSA Government-wide exemption for mandating application for the travel charge card, including its definition of infrequent travelers. HHS management may exercise its discretion in appropriate cases to require infrequent travelers to apply for that charge card or permit them to retain cards issued to them previously.

The Exemptions for Types or Classes of Payments are:

1. Telephone calls (when a Government calling card is not available);
2. Purchases costing less than \$10; and
3. Relocation allowances for en route travel and house hunting trips.

10.2.3 Use of Travel Charge Card for Official Travel Where Exemptions Have Been Granted

Employees who have a Government travel charge card may use the card for types or classes of official travel payments that have been given an exemption from mandatory travel charge card use. Use of the travel charge card where such a type/class of payments exemption has been given is discretionary.

10.2.4 Credit Worthiness

Effective January 22, 2007, pursuant to Section 846 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2006 (P.L. 109-115) as referenced in the OMB Circular A-123 Appendix B, all new applicants for an individual travel charge card must use the contractor form that requires the applicant to initial their agreement/refusal for a credit score check prior to issuance of a travel charge card. Examples of acceptable types of credit scores include a Fair Isaac Corporation (FICO) score, a Beacon score, etc. If a traveler does not want to authorize the credit score check, they may have to use the paper application form instead of the online application provided by the contractor bank. Any individual with a FICO score below 660, or who refuses to permit a credit score check will be issued a restricted travel charge card. A restricted travel charge card will have a lower credit limit than the HHS standard credit limit and will not have any ATM withdrawal capability. Lead (Level 3) A/OPCs may temporarily increase limits and/or ATM capability.

Neither the contractor bank nor HHS will see any of the individual's credit file data. An individual, issued a restricted travel charge card due to a FICO score below 660, may contact the credit bureau if they believe that there is an error. There will be no fee charged by the contractor bank for the credit score check.

10.2.5 Refusal to Apply for and/or Use the Government Travel Charge Card

Employees who meet the definition of frequent travelers and refuse to apply for and/or use the travel charge card for official travel, or have had their travel charge cards canceled for misuse or abuse, will not be authorized a cash or direct deposit travel advance, unless they otherwise are covered by an exemption.

10.2.6 Responsibility to Pay Travel Charge Card Bills in Accordance with Cardholder Agreement

Employees are responsible for reading and adhering to the policies and procedures specified in the cardholder agreement they sign in order to obtain a Government travel charge card. Under the cardholder agreement, the travel charge card bill is due and payable in full when delivered at the employee's billing address.

The employee is liable to the travel charge card bank for full reimbursement of all charges authorized by the employee, independent of any agreement or program for reimbursement that may exist between the employee and the HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIV.

Under FTR [301-52.24](#), employees must pay amounts owed to the travel charge card bank in accordance with the cardholder agreement, even if the employee has not yet been reimbursed for those expenses appearing on the billing statement.

10.2.6.1 Disputed Charges

The cardholder agreement informs employees about how to handle disputed charges on a travel charge card bill. The employee should follow these procedures by submitting a signed "Cardholder Statement of Questioned Item" form to the bank within 60 days of the statement date on which the original transaction appears.

Once the form is received, the bank will issue a temporary credit to the employee's account while the dispute is being researched.

While the bank is conducting this investigation, the cardholder does not need to pay the amount of the disputed charge and it will not be considered past due.

10.2.7 Improper Use of the Government Travel Charge Card

The travel charge card must only be used for official transportation and travel related expenses. Employees must not use the travel charge card to make personal purchases or ATM withdrawals for personal use.

The Department has issued several policy memos regarding the use and misuse of the

Government travel charge card. The OMB Circular No. 123, Appendix B, mandates agencies to maintain policies that ensure administrative and/or disciplinary actions are initiated against cardholders who fail to use the charge card properly or fail to make timely payments. Administrative and/or disciplinary actions may include memorandum of caution/counseling, official reprimand, short-term suspension from duty without pay, long-term suspension, reassignment, or downgrade, and termination of employment.

10.2.8 Use of Government Travel Charge Card for Local Travel

It is HHS policy that the travel charge card may only be used for official travel and related expenses connected with TDY travel or relocation. The travel charge card may not be used for expenses within the defined local travel area unless:

1. A travel order has been issued consistent with the limited exception described in Section 4.3.2.2;
2. Travel is performed for training under GETA (see Section 4.3.2.3);
3. An exception is authorized by the ASA as per Section 4.3.2.4; or
4. The employee is authorized to rent a car for a local travel area site visit or similar purpose, in which case the travel charge card must be used for renting the car and gasoline expenses. See Section 4.1.9.2, Rental Vehicles, for additional information on the use of rental cars.

10.2.9 Internal Controls over Government Travel Charge Card

Heads of OPDIV/STAFFDIVs or their designees are responsible for establishing appropriate management controls over the travel charge card program to ensure compliance with FTR requirements, HHS policy guidance contained in this Chapter, and the HHS task order with the card-issuing bank. They are also responsible for providing guidance to their managers on disciplinary issues, when employees violate mandatory travel charge card usage policies. Each OPDIV/STAFFDIV must establish and follow their Government Travel charge card Program Zero Tolerance and Disciplinary Policy.

As part of this internal control system, each OPDIV/STAFFDIV will establish a network of employees designated as A/OPCs and issue supplemental procedural guidelines to handle internal administration of the travel charge card program within their organization.

10.3 Government Contractor-Issued Travel Charge Card Regulations

10.3.1 Purpose

This section provides the policies and procedures governing the use of the HHS travel charge card program. GSA developed the Government travel charge card program to procure transportation services and pay for per diem and other allowable travel related expenses incurred during official travel. The goal of the program is to reduce HHS' cash requirements by diminishing the need for travel advances and improving internal controls, cash management, and administrative procedures.

10.3.2 HHS Travel Charge Card Policy and Related Regulations

The following subsections list the various regulations and policies related to the use of the Government travel charge card program.

10.3.2.1 The Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998, P.L. 105-264, 112 Stat. 2350

The Travel and Transportation Reform Act (TTRA) of 1998 requires HHS to reimburse employees within 30 calendar days after employees submit a proper voucher to their travel AOs. Employees are held accountable for paying the travel charge card in accordance with the terms and conditions of their cardholder agreement.

10.3.2.2 FTR Amendment 90

This amendment implements the requirements of the TTRA including mandating the use of the travel charge card, collection of amounts owed, and the reimbursement of travel expenses.

10.3.2.3 Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), 41 CFR Parts 301-51, 301-52, 301-54, 301-70, 301-71, and 301-76

The FTR requires the mandatory use of the travel charge card by employees who meet the HHS requirements for issuance of the card. The use of the travel charge card is limited to expenses incurred in conjunction with official travel.

10.3.2.4 GSA SmartPay2 Contract

The GSA SmartPay program is the largest charge card program in the world serving more than 350 federal agencies. The use of the charge card program provides benefits for HHS such as detailed transaction data, the improved ability to monitor transaction details, travel insurance coverage, and tax recovery, and it eliminates the need and administrative burden to for offices to keep and track petty cash on hand.

10.3.2.5 Human Resources Manual (HRM), Instruction 752: Discipline and Adverse Actions, dated March 20, 2009

Instruction 752 is established under the authority of regulations issued by the Office of Personnel Management found at Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 752, Discipline and Adverse Actions. The Instruction clarifies roles and responsibilities for managers when addressing employee misconduct in the workplace. It also establishes guidance and criteria to ensure that corrective action is consistent with good management practices when travel charge cards are used incorrectly.

10.3.2.6 Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, 5 CFR Parts 2635

Public service is a public trust. Each employee has a responsibility to the U.S. Government and its citizens to place loyalty to the Constitution, laws, and ethical principles above private gain. To ensure that every citizen can have complete confidence in the integrity of the Federal Government, each employee shall respect and adhere to the principles of ethical conduct set forth in this regulation, as well as the implementing standards contained in this part and in supplemental agency regulations, when utilizing their Government-issued travel charge card.

10.3.2.7 Prompt Payment, 5 CFR Part 1315 RIN 0348-AB47

The Prompt Payment rule ensures that federal agencies pay vendors in a timely manner. Prompt Payment assesses late interest penalties against agencies that pay vendors after a payment due date. This rate was established under the Contract Disputes Act and is referred to as the "Renegotiation Board Interest Rate," the "Contract Disputes Act Interest Rate," or the "Prompt Payment Act Interest Rate."

10.3.2.8 Pay Administration; Collection by Offset From Indebted Government Employees, 5 CFR Part 550 RIN 3206-AH63

The Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 (section 31001 of Public Law 104-134, April 26, 1996) (DCIA) made changes to maximize the collection of delinquent debts owed to the Government, while minimizing the costs of debt collection by consolidating related functions and using interagency teams.

10.3.3 HHS Travel Charge Card “Zero Tolerance Policy”

This section sets forth the HHS Zero Tolerance Policy for any inappropriate charges and delinquencies. HHS’ Zero Tolerance Policy strictly prohibits the misuses itemized below for the travel charge card.

The Government contractor-issued travel charge card may only be used for official travel related expenses. Prohibited card uses include:

1. Unauthorized charges not associated with official travel, such as personal and family member use of the card.
2. Additional prohibited activities as listed in Sections 10.2.7 and 10.2.8 above.
3. Charges not related to official TDY travel including:
 - a. Use of the card in the vicinity of the official station or residence, unless used in connection with official travel on an approved travel authorization (see Section 4.3.2.1); and
 - b. Use of the card for cash withdrawals from an automated teller machine, unless used in connection with official travel.
4. Shared use of the travel charge card with another employee for official travel purposes.
5. Allowing the account to become delinquent (an account is delinquent after the due date on the statement).
6. Failure to use the travel charge card while on travel unless exempted.
7. Failure to pay accounts with sufficient funds (inadequate funds in the bank account to cover payment).
8. Failure to properly use Government voucher reimbursement, using the ETS, to repay travel expenses.
9. Excessive cash advances, or cash advances not commensurate with official travel.

Several factors contribute to the misuse of travel charge cards, including issuing travel charge cards to employees who do not travel and the inadequate review of travel charge card expenses. An initial review of all cardholders should be made to ensure that the proper individuals have these cards. Accounts may be closed or placed in a user generated suspension status (de-activated) by the A/OPC for employees who no longer meet the criteria for having a travel charge card.

The underlying objective of the HHS Zero Tolerance Policy is to eliminate misuse and abuse in the travel charge card program so that it does not become necessary to impose

disciplinary procedures on any HHS employee. Proper use of the travel charge card reduces the need to cancel travel charge card privileges, eliminates the administrative burden of taking action against employees, lessens the stress for all involved, and preserves the reputation of HHS and its employees to achieve its mission and goals with integrity.

The Government contractor-issued travel charge card will give employees financial flexibility and convenience while traveling on official Government business. Other advantages of the travel charge card include no-cost travel, accident and lost baggage insurance, direct purchase of common carrier tickets, and the opportunity to reserve lodging and rental cars when authorized in advance by OPDIV/STAFFDIV management.

The spending limits issued on travel charge cards should be in line with the actual needs of each cardholder. A department-wide default limit per billing cycle is set for most OPDIV/STAFFDIV travel charge cards. An OPDIV/STAFFDIV must adhere to Departmental policy and guidance, but may choose to implement it in a more restrictive manner within its own OPDIV/STAFFDIV. Please see the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's Travel Charge Card Policy or Travel Policy Manual for additional information. This limit will be on all new cards unless OPDIV/STAFFDIV management can justify a higher amount.

Possession and use of the travel charge card does not relieve the employee from observing rules and regulations governing official travel, including the use of Government City Pair contract carriers, American Flag or Open Skies carriers, Government car rental agreements, Government approved lodging facilities (FedRooms), or the use of the TMC.

Improper, fraudulent, abusive, or negligent use of a Government travel charge card is prohibited. Appropriate OPDIV/STAFFDIV personnel, with the advice of the Human Resources Personnel Office, may impose appropriate corrective actions, including "removal in certain cases, for employees¹⁷ [*sic*] who are negligent or engage in misuse, abuse, or fraud with respect to the Government travel charge card." Appropriate OPDIV/STAFFDIV personnel may impose, but are not limited to, the following administrative and/or disciplinary actions for delinquencies, misuse, and/or abuse:

1. Issue a letter of counseling to the employee;
2. Deactivate, suspend, or cancel employee accounts; and
3. Impose additional disciplinary actions deemed appropriate by the Agency.

The circumstances of each individual case should be considered when determining the appropriate type of corrective or disciplinary/adverse action, if any that may be imposed. Generally, a progression of increasingly severe penalties is appropriate from minor instances of misuse/abuse to cases that are more serious. In some instances, the infraction may warrant the most severe penalty for first offenses. Consult the HRM, "Instruction 752: Disciplinary and Adverse Actions" for further guidance, which is available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ohr/manual>. No HHS official has the authority to override the contractor bank's corporate policy regarding the suspension or cancellation of employee accounts.

¹⁷ Improper use of the travel charge card may result in the removal of an employee from service.

10.3.4 Responsibilities

The offices and individuals listed below have direct responsibilities for monitoring the use of the travel charge card program.

10.3.4.1 Assistant Secretary for Administration (ASA) and the HHS Travel Office

The ASA and the HHS Travel Office issue and interpret Departmental policy and procedures on the use of the travel charge card. They also perform the following functions:

1. Serve as the liaison to the contractor bank and GSA, with the assistance of the contracting officer, on issues dealing with the program;
2. Promote standardization, centralization, and automation of the program throughout HHS;
3. Establish department-wide operating limits for card usage, food, cash, and other expenses;
4. Review on a semi-annual basis all MCCs available on travel charge cards, and restrict, if necessary, any MCC not appropriate for use during official travel FTR [301-51.6](#);
5. Minimize the establishment of CBAs;
6. Monitor OPDIV/STAFFDIV's compliance in the use of the travel charge card;
7. Implement appropriate risk management efforts in accordance with OMB Circular A-123 to include data mining analysis;
8. Promote and maximize travel charge card refunds;
9. Provide training to A/OPCs on HHS' Travel Charge Card Program in accordance with the OMB Circular A-123; and
10. Submit reports, as appropriate, to the OMB on HHS' travel charge card performance as covered in the HHS Travel Charge Card Management Plan.

10.3.4.2 Office of Human Resources (OHR)

OHR is responsible for developing the personnel policies and disciplinary procedures for HHS. Specific excerpts related to travel charge card misuse are addressed in the Human Resources Manual, [Instruction 752](#): Discipline and Adverse Actions, dated March 20, 2009 and subsequent revisions. Travel charge card

delinquencies and misuses are examples of serious employee misconduct. OHR, through its servicing of personnel offices, will determine the appropriate disciplinary action for the travel charge card misuse or delinquency made by employees. Penalties will be assessed by OPDIV/STAFFDIV management, depending on the circumstances, but can include written reprimand, suspension, or removal from the Government.

10.3.4.3 OPDIV/STAFFDIV Heads or their Designee

OPDIV/STAFFDIV heads will establish internal procedures to promote the use of the travel charge card and to monitor fraud, waste, and abuse on the travel charge card. OPDIV/STAFFDIVs must ensure their employees receive training and information on how the travel charge card program operates, proper use of the travel charge card, safeguards to the travel charge card, and conveyance of the HHS Zero Tolerance Policy.

OPDIV/STAFFDIVs will conduct their program in accordance with the FTR, the GSA SmartPay2 contract, and OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B, by taking advantage of services, technology, and refunds offered by the contractor bank. OPDIV/STAFFDIV heads or their designees will:

1. Designate employee(s) and alternate(s) to act as A/OPCs. These individuals will administer the travel charge card program for their OPDIV/STAFFDIV or appropriate operating unit(s).
2. Determine which employees are required to apply for, use a travel charge card, and sign the certification block on the Employee Acknowledgment Statement. (OPDIV/STAFFDIV heads or their designee may delegate the signature authority to the employee's immediate supervisor.)
3. Establish procedures to classify and reevaluate travelers within appropriate travel charge card limits. (The card limits should be issued based on the frequency and/or duration of travel.)
4. Document the reason for granting employees higher limits. (OPDIV/STAFFDIVs are generally prohibited from increasing an employee's travel charge card limit to accommodate a traveler who has failed to pay their travel charge card in full and/or on time.)
5. Ensure A/OPCs, AOs, and cardholders are trained and recertified as required, adequately staffed, and aware of their program responsibilities. Specifically, ensure that:
 - a. A/OPCs are recertified every year; and
 - b. Travelers are recertified every three (3) years.
6. Establish a reporting process to ensure that the results of the monitoring

activity performed by A/OPCs are transmitted to a central point in the OPDIV/STAFFDIV in order to enhance the effectiveness of central oversight of the travel charge card program, and to expedite the development and reporting of trends and statistics. In addition, ensure that all examination and referral activity related to travel charge card misuse is documented, and to include the disciplinary actions that were taken.

7. Establish an administrative review process to provide due process to employees during collection of delinquent travel charge card balances via salary offset.

10.3.4.4 Agency¹⁸/Organization (A/OPC) Program Coordinators

A/OPCs will ensure all cardholders have completed travel charge card training requirements before card issuance. They should regularly utilize the online reporting capabilities provided by the contractor bank to monitor for potential travel charge card misuse and delinquency trends. To increase HHS' retention of travel charge card rebates for timely payment, A/OPCs are responsible for monitoring the monthly delinquency reports provided by the contractor for employees who are in a pre-suspension status. These reports must be forwarded to supervisors for appropriate action, including counseling, disciplinary action, and salary offset in conjunction with the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's policies and procedures.

Lead (Level 3) A/OPCs will also perform the following functions:

1. Verify applicant's completion of required travel charge card training requirements and assist with the completion of the card application. Note that:
 - a. Employees must receive travel charge card training prior to receiving the travel charge card, and recertify every three (3) years. In addition, A/OPCs must maintain a file of Certificate of Completion of training for all cardholders. This file may be requested by the HHS Travel Office for auditing purposes.
 - b. A/OPCs must receive travel charge card training and recertify every year, and a file of Certificate of Completion of training for all A/OPCs must be maintained by the Lead A/OPC. This file may be requested by the HHS Travel Office for auditing purposes.
2. Advise applicants of creditworthiness and the issuance of a Standard or Restricted card.
3. Monitor the use of CBAs. The use of a CBA results in significant administrative costs to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV. A CBA will be used only to pay for common carrier (e.g., airfare expenses) and related transaction

fees for either:

- a. Employees not issued a travel charge card; or
 - b. All employees in the OPDIV/STAFFDIV according to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy.
4. Provide to the contractor bank a listing of the names of the coordinator(s) and alternate(s), their mailing addresses and telephone numbers. A/OPCs will also provide this information to the HHS Travel Office.
 5. Provide eligible employees requesting a travel charge card with a copy of the Departmental and OPDIV/STAFFDIV specific guidance on the use of the travel charge card and training requirements.
 6. Ensure completeness of the Employee Acknowledgment Statement and maintain a central file of these signed documents, along with a copy of the application for all current cardholders.
 7. Complete sections designated for OPDIV/STAFFDIV information and authorization on the employee card account application, if applicable.
 8. Forward the original copy of the application to the contractor bank, if applicable.
 9. Monitor the monthly charges including attempted charges, actual charges, and delinquency reports to identify employees who:
 - a. Have left HHS;
 - b. Have violated the HHS Zero Tolerance Policy;
 - c. Have had additional administrative restrictions placed on their accounts; and/or
 - d. Are in an inactive traveler status and are using the travel charge card inappropriately.
 10. Notify the appropriate manager(s), employee's immediate supervisor, or the employee, in accordance with established OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy and procedures of possible misuse or delinquencies of 60 days or more. For consistent notification procedures within HHS, OPDIV/STAFFDIVs may use the "Inappropriate Use, Unauthorized Use and Delinquent Memorandum" for warning employees of potential travel charge card misuse and delinquency
 11. Submit quarterly reports of travel charge card misuse/abuse and the actions that were taken to the HHS Travel Office to meet OMB requirements as provided for in the Travel Charge Card Management

Plan. Reports are due the end of the first business week following the end of the quarter.

12. Notify the contractor bank of any mission-related extenuating circumstances for which an employee's delinquent account should not be suspended.
13. Notify the contractor bank when an employee transfers between offices within HHS. Ensure that the transferring employee understands their responsibility to pay their proper travel charge card charges in full and on time. Ensure that the appropriate official signs an exit clearance or other form to document the close out of the card or transfers the card, in accordance with OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy, when an employee transfers within HHS.
14. Cut the card in half when notified that an employee's card has been cancelled because of inappropriate use or delinquency; or when an employee leaves, retires, or transfers to another Government agency.
15. If applicable, reactivate travel charge cards when employees are authorized for travel where necessary.

A/OPCs and the GSA Contracting Officer have the authority to suspend, cancel, or void accounts under their purview, and must maintain documentation of the reason for the suspension, cancellation, or voiding of the account. In the event of notification of potential fraud, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV Level 3 (Lead) A/OPC must notify the OIG and/or the contractor bank.

10.3.4.5 Cardholder's Immediate Supervisor¹⁹

The cardholder's immediate supervisor will perform the following actions:

1. Authorize cash advances in amounts in accordance with Section 3.3, Travel Advances. Cash advances should be reduced by the amount of expenses that will be charged directly to the travel charge card or to the travel voucher claim. The Supervisor must notify the A/OPC if the advance authorized is greater than 60 percent, in accordance with Section 3.3.2.1, Calculating Allowable Advance.
2. Notify the employee of any questionable or inappropriate charges and/or delinquencies and give the employee the opportunity to explain such an action. A record shall be maintained of the notification and the explanation received from the employee. All questionable charges should be reported to the A/OPC.

¹⁹ Some duties assigned to the employee's immediate supervisor may be handled by the OPDIV/STAFFDIV lead A/OPC, depending on an OPDIV/STAFFDIV's policies and procedures.

3. Contact the OPDIV/STAFFDIV servicing Human Resources Personnel Office for a determination of the appropriate disciplinary action if an explanation is inadequate to support a questionable charge. At the discretion of the OPDIV/STAFFDIV, the card may be suspended. The cardholder's immediate supervisor must maintain documentation of referrals to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's servicing Human Resources Personnel Office and document the resolution of the incident.
4. Suspend the travel charge card if there is a pattern of inappropriate use or insufficient explanation for repeated delinquencies or suspected abuse/misuse.
5. Provide the employee's A/OPC with the travel charge card for cancellation when it has been suspended because of inappropriate use or delinquency.
6. Notify the A/OPC when an employee is transferring between offices within HHS.
7. Retrieve the travel charge card from the employee and return it to the A/OPC for cancellation when an employee leaves, retires, or transfers to another Government agency.
8. Ensure that the departing employee understands his/her responsibility to pay their proper travel charge card charges in full and on time. The supervisor will ensure that the appropriate official signs an exit clearance or other form to document close out and closure of the card or transfers the card, in accordance with OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy, when an employee transfers within HHS.

When initiating administrative or disciplinary actions for card misuse/abuse and for instances when account delinquency is discovered, supervisors may perform the following actions in accordance with OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy:

1. Initiate verbal counseling and warning;
2. Initiate written warning and consult personnel (i.e., letter of counseling/reprimand);
3. Suspend or revoke charge card privileges;
4. Include misuse or delinquency occurrence in employee performance evaluations; and/or
5. Initiate suspension or terminate employment.

Recommended Disciplinary Action Process²⁰

The HHS Travel Office recommends the following disciplinary process, if an OPDIV/STAFFDIV does not currently have a disciplinary process in place.

1. The supervisor of an employee who is delinquent in payment or appears to have abused the use of the travel charge card discusses the situation with the employee and requests a written statement explaining the misuse.
2. Upon receipt of the employee's statement, the supervisor, and/or manager contacts the OPDIV/STAFFDIV servicing Human Resources Personnel Office for advice in making the determination as to what action is appropriate, including consideration of formal disciplinary action.
3. The supervisor, in conjunction with senior management, makes the final determination on appropriate action. Discipline must be based on the HHS Zero Tolerance Policy and HHS Instruction 752.
4. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV servicing Human Resources Personnel Office will draft, prepare, or review any disciplinary or adverse action.
5. The supervisor meets with the employee to provide the disciplinary action. Specifically, the supervisor will discuss the reason for the action and explain the grievance and/or appeal rights.
6. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV servicing Human Resources Personnel Office processes the personnel action, as necessary.

10.3.4.6 Employees

Employees will complete all training requirements prior to applying for or issuance of a new Government travel charge card, and will complete refresher training every three (3) years in accordance with HHS policy and OMB Circular A-123. Employees who are issued a travel charge card assume the responsibility of using the card for official travel purposes and paying their charges in a timely manner.

Use of the travel charge card does not relieve the employee of the responsibility to engage in prudent travel practices and to observe rules and regulations governing travel as set forth in the FTR, the HHS Travel Manual, the HHS Zero Tolerance Policy, and OPDIV/STAFFDIV specific policies and procedures. Cardholders are personally responsible for all items billed to the card, unless the card was reported lost or stolen, or the charges were disputed directly with the contractor bank.

Employees shall pay the contractor bank in accordance with the contractor bank payment terms. These responsibilities are explained in the Cardholder Agreement

²⁰ Please check the appropriate OPDIV/STAFFDIV Travel Charge Card and Travel Manual for additional guidance on the Disciplinary Action Process.

that each employee signs during the application process. Furthermore, employees are not relieved of their obligation to pay the travel charge card bill in those rare instances when the OPDIV/STAFFDIV has not reimbursed the traveler within the 30 days after receipt of a timely submitted voucher in accordance with [FTR 301-52.24](#).

In addition, employees must:

1. Apply for a travel charge card if expected to travel more than five (5) times a year.
2. Complete the GSA on line “Travel Charge Card Training,” or his/her OPDIV/STAFFDIV’s in house travel charge card training program for cardholders and attach a certificate of completion to the application, where applicable, or provide to the A/OPC.
3. Complete Travel Charge Card refresher training every three (3) years.
4. Comply with and periodically review the card issuer agreement and all HHS and OPDIV/STAFFDIV guidance.
5. Use the travel charge card for all travel expenses associated with TDY travel unless an exemption applies.
6. Use the travel charge card only for authorized official Government travel expenses and be aware of what constitutes misuse.
7. Keep the travel charge card secure at all times, and do not allow others to use the card.
8. Report lost or stolen travel charge cards immediately to the contractor bank and to the appropriate A/OPC.
9. Submit proper reimbursement vouchers within five (5) working days following completion of the trip.
10. Pay travel charge card bills on time (regardless of voucher reimbursement status).
11. Take personal responsibility by following up with travel preparers, travel approving officials, Office of Finance or similar office, and the contractor bank as appropriate to ensure timely travel voucher reimbursement, as well as proper split-disbursement postings.
12. Document instances where the system did not support the traveler’s efforts to obtain travel reimbursement in a timely manner. Examples of this would be if the ETS was not available for an extended period because of system issues such as year-end closing or if the traveler experienced excessive delays with document approvals, etc.

It is the traveler's responsibility to produce documentation showing that the traveler fully participated in the process, followed OPDIV/STAFFDIV policies concerning timely reporting of expenses, and followed up in writing repeatedly in an attempt to obtain reimbursement. If the traveler has followed OPDIV/STAFFDIV procedures and they are not reimbursed due to systematic issues or other issues beyond the control of the traveler, delays in payment will not be considered misuse or abuse. This does not relieve the cardholder from paying the travel charge card in accordance with the cardholder agreement.

13. Review and be familiar with what are allowable and unallowable travel charge card charges.
14. Review at least yearly the HHS Do's and Don'ts Handbook and the OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B.
15. Respond to A/OPC inquiries about travel charge card issues within one week.

10.3.5 Travel Planning

10.3.5.1 Travel Charge Card Issuance

Employees must apply for and use the travel charge card, an IBA or CBA, for all official travel expenses, unless he/she has an OPDIV/STAFFDIV approved exemption under FTR [301-51-1](#).

10.3.5.2 Use of the Travel Charge Card

The travel charge card will be used whenever and wherever possible for airline and other common carrier transportation services, hotel/motel, restaurant, automobile rental, gasoline and other expenses incurred incident to official travel. Travelers should note the following guidelines as well:

1. Airline tickets should not be charged more than three days in advance of the trip, unless otherwise specified per their OPDIV/STAFFDIV ticket issuance policy. This will minimize the situation where employees receive their monthly billing statements for tickets prior to receiving their reimbursement for the entire trip.
2. Employees who acquire common carrier transportation with their travel charge card and either lose the ticket, or fail to use all or part of the ticket, are responsible for obtaining a credit for the unused ticket or reporting a loss to the carrier. Failure to obtain a credit from the carrier will result in the employee being financially liable for the entire amount of the ticket. Employees should not submit the unused ticket charged to the individually billed travel charge card account to an OPDIV/STAFFDIV payment office with the travel voucher. The unused ticket shall be returned to the TMC, or the employee must follow other procedures prescribed by the employee's OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy.
3. Payment of an advance room deposit when required by the lodging facility is allowed under [FTR 301-71.301](#). However, an advance room deposit cannot be used to circumvent the policies for travel related to conferences. See Section 1.4, Attendance at Conferences, Administrative Meetings, and Other Events.
4. The travel charge card cannot be used to procure official travel and transportation services from commercial travel offices that are not under contract with the Government to provide such services to Government travelers such as Orbitz, Travelocity, etc., in accordance with Section 3.4.1.
5. HHS prohibits the use of the travel charge card to obtain contract City Pair fares on a common carrier for a member of the employee's family who is not on Government authorized travel while accompanying the employee.

6. HHS prohibits the use of the travel charge card to obtain contract City Pair fares for personal side trips taken in conjunction with official travel. Travelers should refer to their OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy for procedures related to travel by an indirect route for personal reasons including leave in conjunction with TDY.
7. HHS restricts most MCCs that offer services and/or products that are non-travel related expenses. As a precautionary measure, for those merchants who are misclassified within the travel charge card program, employees are prohibited from use of their travel charge card to procure the following:
 - a. Book and Magazine Subscriptions;
 - b. Membership Fees;
 - c. Training and Conference Fees;
 - d. Higher Education Expenses;
 - e. Theme Parks;
 - f. Management Consulting Services;
 - g. Automobile Purchases; Car Repairs & Services;
 - h. Clothing, Lingerie, Outerwear, Shoes & Furniture;
 - i. Hair Services, Cosmetics, Tattoos, & Massages;
 - j. Emergency Medical Services;
 - k. Office Supplies;
 - l. Computers, Televisions, or Digital Equipment; and
 - m. Any service or product obtained for personal, family, or household purposes.
8. HHS prohibits the use of the travel charge card to purchase fuel and procure minor maintenance services on GSA fleet or OPDIV/STAFFDIV-owned vehicles. Use of the HHS fleet card is the appropriate payment method for purchases incurred while operating Government-owned vehicles.

10.3.5.3 Exceptions to the Use of the Travel Charge Card

GSA has exempted the following official travel expenses and/or classes of employees from the mandatory use of the travel charge card:

1. Expenses incurred at a vendor that does not accept the Government travel

- charge card;
2. Laundry/dry cleaning;
 3. Parking;
 4. Local transportation systems;
 5. Taxi;
 6. Tips;
 7. Meals (when use of the card is impractical, for example, group meals or when the travel charge card is not accepted);
 8. Phone calls (when a Government calling card is available for use in accordance with Departmental and OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy);
 9. Employees who travel five times or less per year, although an OPDIV/STAFFDIV may issue travel charge cards to such employees, at its discretion;
 10. New OPDIV/STAFFDIV employees who must travel before receiving their travel charge card;
 11. When an employee has an application pending for the travel charge card;
 12. When individuals are traveling on invitational travel orders on behalf of another Government Agency or another OPDIV/STAFFDIV; and
 13. Relocation allowances except for en-route travel and house hunting trips. See Chapter 12, Relocation Allowances, for additional information.

10.3.5.4 Cash Advances

An employee may use the travel charge card to obtain cash advances for exempted expenses described in Section 10.3.5.3 above if authorized in advance by his/her supervisor. These cash advances are limited to 60 percent of the M&IE rate for the TDY location and other cash expenses in accordance with Section 3.3.2.1, Calculating Allowable Advance.

Travel advances should be withdrawn not more than two (2) business days prior to the trip. HHS will reimburse travelers for service fees incurred for ATM cash advances. Cash obtained from the ATM in amounts greater than required for the travel duration are considered excessive cash advances and are subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the employee's OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy. Actual use of the travel charge card may be verified from the reports available to HHS and the OPDIV/STAFFDIV from the contractor bank and the HHS Travel Office.

10.3.5.5 Travel Voucher Reimbursement

An employee must prepare and submit a travel voucher, together with any required receipts and documentation, to their AO within five (5) working days after completion of a trip or period of travel, or every 30 days if on continuous travel status, in accordance with Section 3.2.2. Within seven (7) working days of the receipt of the travel voucher, the OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs' finance or paying office will notify employees of any error that would prevent timely payment, and the reasons why the voucher is not proper.

If employees are not reimbursed within 30-calendar days after submitting what is deemed as a proper voucher to their designated AO, the employees will receive a late payment fee in addition to the amount due. Late payment fees are calculated using the prevailing Prompt Payment Act Interest Rate beginning the 31st day after submission of a proper travel voucher and ending on the date on which the payment is made, or a flat fee of not less than the prompt payment amount.

10.3.5.6 Split Disbursement

In accordance with OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B, HHS mandates the use of split disbursement for all Government travel charge cardholders. Split disbursement divides a travel voucher reimbursement between the Government travel charge card vendor and the traveler.

When used correctly for the direct payment of common carrier, lodging, rental car and other authorized miscellaneous expense transactions charged directly to the card, split disbursement reduces the cardholder's burden in making personal payments and assists in reducing delinquencies by directly reimbursing the contractor bank.

Example: Traveler is due \$300 in official travel reimbursement and elects to send the contractor bank a split-disbursement to pay the \$200 charged on the traveler's card for hotel, meals, and rental car expenses. The remaining \$100 reimbursement is sent to the traveler's designated financial institution account.

10.3.6 Travel Charge Card Internal Controls

10.3.6.1 Cumulative Use of Travel Charge Card Reports

The Departmental Coordinator and/or the Lead A/OPC's will use cumulative travel charge card activity reports for the purposes of determining whether or not employees meet program eligibility criteria, the level of participation, and for establishing budget estimates for travel.

10.3.6.2 Travel Charge Card Operations during Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Services including National Special Security Events (NSSE) and Similar Situations

Employees, designated as members of an emergency response team or continuity of operation plans (COOP), are exempt from deactivation and cancellation requirements due to inactivity. OPDIVs/STAFFDIVs should forward a listing to their A/OPC or Departmental Coordinator to ensure the members are placed in the appropriate credit limits for emergency designated personnel. In addition, HHS, in conjunction with the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), may issue HHS travel charge cards to local and state first responders in accordance with guidelines developed by the HHS Travel Office. See Chapter 11 of this manual for additional information.

10.3.6.3 Deactivation and Reactivation

The Departmental Coordinator will work with the contractor bank to perform semi-annual deactivation of cards that remain inactive during a six-month period. A/OPCs should deactivate cards upon notification from the employee's immediate supervisor of travel charge card ineligibility.

An infrequent traveler should contact his/her OPDIV/STAFFDIV A/OPC or contractor bank to determine the status of his/her travel charge card for subsequent travel. An employee with a deactivated travel charge card will need to contact his/her A/OPC or OPDIV/STAFFDIV travel coordinator at least 72 hours (three (3) working days) prior to travel commencement to have his/her travel charge card reactivated.

10.3.6.4 Collection of Delinquent Payments from Employee Pay

In accordance with their cardholder agreement, employees are obligated to pay the undisputed balance within 30 days of the billing statement date. Individual card account balances that are delinquent, and that are not disputed amounts, will be eligible for the HHS travel charge card salary offset program.

Before amounts are offset from an employee's pay, HHS must provide the employee with:

1. Written notice of the amount and the intention to collect the delinquent

amount from the employee's disposable pay (i.e., salary payment);

2. The opportunity to inspect records regarding the claim;
3. The opportunity to make a written agreement with the contractor bank to repay the delinquent amount; and
4. The opportunity for review, with HHS, of its decision to collect the amount in accordance with FTR 301-54.100.

The contractor bank may request collection assistance on accounts 61 or more days past due from the statement date. Upon written request from the contractor bank, 64 days past the statement date, the Payroll Services Division (PSD) will begin the Salary Offset process and provide due process notification to the delinquent employee, following the requirements contained in FTR 301-54.100.

A due process letter, which will be issued by the PSD, will be sent to the employee detailing his/her rights as a debtor. Following the notification of due process, the Defense Finance and Accounting Services (D-FAS) will collect from an employee's salary payment any undisputed amounts owed to the contractor bank. Administrative offset from the employee's salary payment may not exceed 15 percent of disposable pay unless the cardholder authorizes a higher amount. No offset of disputed debts will be made except pursuant to the garnishment regulations in 5 CFR Part 582.

HHS may offset an employee's final pay to recover delinquent amounts that are not disputed and are due to the contractor bank. Salary offset may apply to an exiting employee's final payment provided the due process requirements discussed above have been followed.

10.3.6.5 Suspension/Cancellation of Travel Charge Cards

The charge card contractor will suspend an account once an undisputed transaction remains unpaid for 61 days from the statement date in which the unpaid charges first appeared. The contractor will close an account once undisputed transactions remain unpaid for 91 days from the statement date in which the unpaid charges first appeared. An account may also be closed if it has been suspended twice during the preceding 12 months, and becomes delinquent a third time.

The contractor will not suspend any account for disputed charges. Upon payment of the undisputed principal amount, the contractor will automatically reinstate a suspended account. The automatic reinstatements are only allowed on suspended accounts less than 90 days from the statement date. The travel charge card contractor bank maintains a suspension/cancellation/reinstatement file on all accounts.

Employees who have lost their charge card privileges due to card cancellation by the contractor bank because of delinquency or use of the card for non-official purposes and need to perform official travel must charge their airfare to their OPDIV/STAFFDIV CBA. All other travel related costs must be paid by the

employee using a personal charge card or with personal funds. The employee will be reimbursed once a proper voucher, including receipts, is submitted.

10.3.6.6 Advances for Travelers with Cancelled Cards

A cancelled travel charge card account reflects unfavorable past performance. For this reason, employees with cancelled travel charge card accounts are considered high risk in the repayment of travel advances. In the case of extreme hardship, employees who have lost their charge card privileges may request written approval for a travel advance on a trip-by-trip basis from their OPDIV/STAFFDIV STO or their designee. Consideration of such requests will be made on a case-by-case basis, and approval should not be assumed.

A written record of all such approvals, as well as the basis for each approval, will be maintained by the approving office and a copy forwarded to the PD Administrative Payments Section for system processing. The OIG shall regularly review this record during program specific audits.

Employees are expected to comply with this policy by promptly resolving any outstanding balance on the travel charge card. The use of personal funds to finance all travel expenses (except transportation tickets) on official travel is authorized when an employee's travel charge card account has been cancelled. When personal funds are thus used, employees will be reimbursed for qualifying travel expenses by submitting a proper travel voucher.

10.3.7 Late Payment Fees If Traveler Not Reimbursed within 30 Days

If a traveler is not reimbursed by the agency within 30 days for expenses properly submitted, then the traveler may be entitled to late payment fees. Late payment fees consist of two elements:

1. A late payment fee calculated using the prevailing Prompt Payment Act Interest Rate beginning on the 31st day after the required payment date and ending on the date which payment is made; and
2. An amount equivalent to any late payment charge that the card contractor would have been able to charge the employee had the bill not been paid.

10.3.7.1 Calculation of Late Payment Fee Equivalent to Card Contractor Late Payment Charges

Under the current SmartPay2 contract, the contractor bank may impose a \$25 late fee on outstanding balances for accounts that meet cancellation criteria, when they are between 121 and 150 days from the statement date. An additional \$25 late fee will be charged when the statement is 151 to 180 days from the statement date. A final \$25 late fee will be charged when the statement is 181 to 209 days from the statement date.

210 days from the statement date, the contractor bank is required under regulations to charge off the account, refer it to a collection agency, and notify the credit bureaus; no additional late fees are imposed thereafter.

10.3.7.2 Late Payment Fees of Less than One Dollar

HHS will not pay late payment fees of less than one (1) dollar.

10.3.7.3 Finance Office Tax Reporting of Late Payment Fees

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires different tax reporting treatment for the two types of late payment fees for travel vouchers:

1. For a late payment fee calculated using the prevailing Prompt Payment Act Interest Rate beginning on the 31st day after the required payment date on which payment is made, the HHS Finance Offices will report this late payment fee as interest income on IRS Form 1099-INT, in accordance with guidelines issued by the IRS. Current IRS guidelines state that interest paid in the course of business should be reported only if the interest totals \$600 or more for the tax year. (Note that this amount may be subject to change.) Also, refer to the HHS Departmental Accounting Manual, Chapter 10-70, Filing and Reporting Form 1099 Information Returns with the Internal Revenue Service.
2. For an additional late payment fee equivalent to any late payment

(processing) charge that the card contractor would have been able to charge the employee had the bill not been paid, HHS finance offices will report this late payment fee as additional wages on Form W-2.

10.3.7.4 Collection of Undisputed, Delinquent Travel Charge Card Debts

In accordance with the OMB Circular 123, Appendix B, Federal agencies are required to initiate necessary action to collect undisputed, delinquent charge card debt from employees to pay the bank contractor.

HHS has authorized the use of a salary offset for the collection of undisputed, delinquent charge card amounts via direct deduction from an employee's payroll disbursement on behalf of the charge card vendor. The direct deduction may not exceed 15 percent of the employee's disposable pay. Per the Circular, salary offset is mandatory.

10.4 Income Tax Reimbursement Allowance for Long-Term TDY Travel

HHS employees (and spouses, if filing jointly) are eligible to receive an Income Tax Reimbursement Allowance (ITRA) if:

1. The employee is in a TDY travel status at one location for a period exceeding one year; and
2. The employee (and spouse, if filing jointly) incurs Federal, State, or local income taxes on amounts received as reimbursement for official travel expenses.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Interim Rule 7, Part 301-11, Subpart E-Income Tax Reimbursement Allowance (ITRA), Tax Years 1993 and 1994
- FTR Interim Rule 7, Part 301-11, Subpart F-Income Tax Reimbursement Allowance (ITRA), Tax Years 1995 and Thereafter
- Chapter 302-17.10, Claims for payment and supporting documentation and verification (Relocation Income Tax Allowances)

10.4.1 Documentation Required to Support ITRA Claims

Employees will submit their claims on a travel voucher in accordance with the HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIV's travel management system's procedures. They will provide standard documentation required to support an income tax allowance claim, as defined in FTR Chapter [302-17.10](#):

1. Certified Statement concerning income tax information being reported to HHS on this claim (see FTR 302-17.10 (a) for sample wording), signed by employee (and spouse, if filing jointly); and
2. Supporting Documentation (copies of W-2 and 1099 forms, and completed IRS Tax Return Form 1040 if the claim is for a past tax year).

10.4.2 Obligation of Funds for ITRA Claims

ITRA claims should be charged to the appropriation of the fiscal year in which the taxable TDY expenses associated with the ITRA were incurred, regardless of when the ITRA claim is vouchered or paid.

10.5 HHS Travel and Relocation Test Programs

The following guidelines pertain to requests to GSA for authority to conduct a travel or relocation test program:

1. For test programs within the OS, requests will be submitted to GSA under the signature of the ASA.
2. For test programs within the OPDIV/STAFFDIVs, requests will be submitted to GSA under the signature of the OPDIV/STAFFDIV Head or their designee. An advance draft copy will be submitted via memorandum to the HHS Travel Office, for review and comment prior to submission to GSA.
3. OPDIV/STAFFDIVs whose travel management system is administered by the PSC must obtain concurrence by the PSC's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) before forwarding their request to GSA. This is to ensure that the travel management system will be able to support the travel or relocation program changes being proposed.
4. OPDIV/STAFFDIVs will comply with labor-management requirements to obtain union concurrence if the pilot program will involve bargaining unit employees.

Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines

- FTR Part 300-80, Travel and Relocation Expense Test Programs

10.6 Payment Audits of Transportation Bills

HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIVs, which pay transportation bills, must establish and/or maintain an approved prepayment audit program or obtain a waiver of this requirement from GSA in accordance with GSA regulations. Transportation bills cover services for the movement of products, people, household goods, and any other objects, as well as activities directly related to or supporting that movement, such as storage, crating, or connecting appliances. They include express, courier, and small package shipments of objects.

Transportation audits entail a thorough review and validation of bills by examining the validity, propriety, and conformity of the charges with tariffs, quotations, agreements, or tenders, as appropriate. Audit procedures must prevent duplicate payments and only allow payment for authorized services when the bill is complete with required documentation.

OPDIV/STAFFDIVs, which perform prepayment audits, must audit all transportation bills and payments that are not covered by an approved waiver.

Exception: OPDIV/STAFFDIVs may use a statistical sampling technique to audit transportation bills at or below \$2,500. Prepayment audit documentation must be forwarded monthly to the GSA Audit Division, which will store it for three (3) years under the General Records Schedule 9, Travel and Transportation.

Under the Prompt Payment Act, OPDIV/STAFFDIVs must notify the transportation service provider of any billing errors and related adjustments it will make in payment via an electronic or written statement of difference within seven (7) days of receipt of a transportation bill. This notice must contain the information elements specified in the GSA regulation.

OPDIV/STAFFDIVs that have a waiver for some or all transportation bills must forward all paid, un-audited transportation bills, with required information annotated on the bills, to the GSA Audit Division for a post payment audit.

If the OPDIV/STAFFDIV conducts prepayment audits of its transportation bills, the Finance Office certifying officer is held liable for verifying transportation rates, freight classifications, and other information on the bill and for any overpayment made. If the OPDIV/STAFFDIV has a waiver from GSA and forwards bills for post payment audit to GSA Audit Division, the Finance Office certifying officer is not personally liable for verifying transportation rates, freight classifications, and other information on the bill or for any overpayment made.

Federal Management Regulation Guidelines:

- Federal Property Management Regulation, Part 101-41
- Federal Management Regulation Part 102-118, Subpart D, Prepayment Audits of Transportation Services
- Federal Management Regulation Part 102-118, Subpart E, Post payment Transportation Audits

The CFO for each HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIV that pays transportation bills is responsible for the development and implementation of a Prepayment Audit Program Plan that meets the requirements of the Federal Management Regulation, Subpart D, Prepayment Audits of Transportation Services, unless a waiver is being requested or has been granted. It is HHS policy that CFOs may establish a minimum dollar threshold for transportation bills subject to prepayment audit up to \$2,500. The initial Prepayment Audit Program Plan, and any future planned changes to approved Plans, should be submitted by the CFO to the DASF for review and submission to the GSA Audit Division for final approval.

The CFO for each HHS OPDIV/STAFFDIV that pays transportation bills is responsible for determining whether a waiver for some or all bills is justified and for submitting a written Request for Waiver through the DASF or the GSA Audit Division for approval. The Request for Waiver must meet the requirements of the Federal Management Regulation, Subpart D, Prepayment Audits of Transportation Services. It must identify the mode or modes of transportation to which the waiver will apply and provide a detailed explanation as to why a waiver should be granted, such as cost-effectiveness, Government efficiency, public interest, agency mission, or not feasible for the OPDIV/STAFFDIV to implement. GSA will provide a written response to the HHS request within 30 days of receipt. Waivers cannot exceed a two-year period. CFOs of OPDIV/STAFFDIVs must reapply with a new Request for Waiver every two years to document to the Department and GSA that conditions still warrant a waiver.

11. Travel – Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Services including National Special Security Events (NSSE) and similar situations

11.1 Purpose

This chapter describes the policy and procedural guidelines as they pertain to travel associated with the provision of disaster relief, and emergency response services during catastrophic and other similar situations. These situations require rapid mobilization of HHS resources to assist the American public or to support the needs of the U.S. Government.

Emergency response services necessary in the event of a disaster, natural or otherwise, or for a NSSE, often involve unique or extraordinary travel scenarios for Federal employees and those traveling on behalf of HHS. The policy guidance in this chapter is intended to address those scenarios that occur most often, but does not address every possible scenario. An example would be limited hotel room availability. This could be due to a large number of attendees at an event, or the result of a large number of lodging facilities being damaged or destroyed during a disaster.

Due to the fluid nature of response in the event of a disaster, NSSE, or other situation, please visit the HHS Travel Office website for the most recent updates to the Disaster and Emergency Response Services Policy.

11.2 General Provisions

11.2.1 Travel Authorization

11.2.1.1 Disaster Response

A travel authorization may or may not be prepared in advance due to the short turnaround time of the required response service. In the event that a travel authorization has not been completed, verbal or email authorization to travel will be accepted until a travel authorization can be generated in the ETS. In the event that the ETS is neither accessible nor available, or if the individual traveler is traveling on behalf of HHS (e.g., is an Invitational Traveler), a manual authorization may be used (see Form HHS 1). The OPDIV/STAFFDIV must advise the employee or individual selected to travel, not to incur any expenses until they have received the necessary verbal or written authorization from the appropriate AO.

If travel is in response to an international situation, the notification of foreign travel may be processed independently of the ETS by the OPDIV/STAFFDIV travel office and coordinated with the STO, OGA, State Department, and the HHS Travel Office for the proper approvals. Whether the traveler is authorized through the ETS or by verbal or written authorization, the NFT process including security briefings, passports, visas, etc. as defined in Section 6, International Travel, must be completed.

11.2.1.2 National Special Security Events

Individual authorizations will be created prior to a NSSE by the travel office utilizing the ETS and distributed to the appropriate parties. If travel is in response to an international event, the notification of foreign travel will be processed through the ETS.

11.2.2 Vouchers Submitted in a Timely Manner

A voucher in the ETS or a completed copy of the ASPR Travel Expense Report or similar OPDIV/STAFFDIV form, copies of all receipts for reimbursement, and a Foreign Trip Report for International Travel (see Section 6.2.8.2, Individual Reports) must be submitted within five (5) working days upon completion of a travel assignment. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary actions according to the appropriate OPDIV/STAFFDIV's table of penalties as discussed in Section 3.2.2.

If the funding source is through a mission assignment from FEMA or an interagency agreement and the required paperwork is not submitted in a timely manner, the result may be a delay in reimbursement or denial of claim for reimbursement due to a lapse in funding. In addition, the incurred cost may be transferred to the employee's program office if there is a lapse of funding from the mission assignment. Funds would then have to be obligated by the employee's program office out of current year funds.

Even in the event that a traveler does not submit a claim for reimbursement, a voucher must always be created, signed, and submitted for financial close out of the mission in accordance with Section 3.2, Travel Vouchers, and U.S.C Title 31: 3702, which allows an authorized representative to submit a claim against the Government to the official responsible for settling claims.

11.2.2.1 Travel Charge Card

Travelers should check with the OPDIV/STAFFDIV in charge of the response to the disaster or NSSE, to determine how charges should be handled if the traveler is deployed on behalf of another OPDIV/STAFFDIV. Charges to the traveler's OPDIV/STAFFDIV-issued IBA should not be made if the OPDIV/STAFFDIV office in charge of the response directs the traveler to use a CBA for airfare or lodging (if one is available). A traveler should consult with his/her home office for reimbursement of any charges related to his/her normal tour of duty responsibilities while deployed on behalf of another OPDIV/STAFFDIV.

11.2.3 International

11.2.3.1 Passports

If the traveler is responding to an international incident, an official (maroon) passport must be used unless the country of response requires a tourist (blue) passport to be used for security reasons. Travelers may travel with both an official and tourist passport but can only use one at a time. For additional information, see Section 6.2.4, Passports and Visas.

11.2.3.2 Visas

Visas will be obtained based upon the urgency and nature of the mission. The travel office will coordinate with the STO, OGA, State Department, the HHS Travel Office, and personnel on the ground to obtain clearance as expeditiously as possible. For additional information, see Section 6.2.4, Passports and Visas.

11.3 Travel Reimbursement Policy

11.3.1 Transportation Expenses

HHS travel AOs, as well as HHS travelers, will follow the provisions of the FTR (or JFTR if applicable) and the supplemental HHS policy guidelines found in this manual regarding authorizing, incurring, and approving transportation and travel related expenses for the response services in the case of a disaster, NSSE, or other situation.

Due to the nature and/or urgency of a response, travel AOs will select those modes of transportation and travel that are most advantageous to the Government, from a standpoint of providing the required services in a timely and safe manner. The travel must be approved by the appropriate OPDIV/STAFFDIV office and arranged by the OPDIV/STAFFDIV Travel Office and/or the TMC.

Any self-booking of airfare, lodging or additional travel services outside of the ETS and TMC will not be reimbursed without prior approval in accordance with Section 3.4.1, Mandatory Use of Government Travel Management Services for Reservations.

11.3.1.1 Rental Car or Van

Employees must obtain vehicles from rental agencies that have negotiated agreements with the DTMO, when they have rental cars available that meet mission requirements. The terms and conditions of the agreements and rates apply to all Federal employees on official travel and include unlimited free mileage, plus full loss/collision damage waiver (LDW/CDW) on the rental vehicle as long as the Government Administrative Rate Supplement (GARS) fee of \$5.00 per day is charged. Travelers will not be reimbursed for the purchase of additional insurance CONUS and OCONUS – Non-Foreign. Travelers are advised to examine FTR [301-10.451](#) guidelines when renting a car in a foreign country.

Reimbursement for Rental of Car or Van

Travelers will not be reimbursed for taking out insurance at a nonparticipating provider unless authorized in advance by the mission-authorizing official in accordance with FTR [301-10.451](#). Travelers will not be reimbursed for any additional charges above the car rental ceiling rate without prior approval. If a car is under the Government Car Rental Agreement, it may be shared among official Government employees who are responding to the mission.

Check with the rental agency to see if drop-off is permitted at a location other than the location of pick-up and what additional fees will be charged. Drop-off fees may not be reimbursed unless prior authorization is received

11.3.1.2 Charter Bus

Charter Bus service may be used to move large groups of personnel or teams from

one location to another. Such use must adhere to the GSA guidelines for commercial transportation. Charter buses can be procured through GSA's Schedule 48, Transportation, Delivery, and Relocation Solutions. See [SIN 411-1](#) under Schedule 48, which includes Vans, Motor Coaches, and Buses. Additional information is available on GSA's website at www.gsa.gov.

11.3.1.3 Common Carrier (Air)

Flights will be arranged from the airport that is most advantageous to the Government from both a cost and logistics perspective in order to accomplish the mission in a timely and safe manner. Travel reward programs will not be used to book flights due to the time, urgency, and volume of personnel traveling.

Disaster Response

Commercial flights may be used to move individuals from a given location to the mission site. All efforts will be made to use GSA contracted City Pair fares if they are available to support the timing of the mission. Air travel for disaster and emergency response services may be arranged through the TMC, outside of the ETS, by the response travel office, and the information will be distributed to the appropriate parties depending on the timing of the response services required. Each segment of the flight for mobilization and demobilization may be booked separately (one-way) if the length of the response is unknown.

NSSE

GSA contracted City Pair fares will be used for all NSSEs unless they are not available or use of a non-contract carrier service provides a significant cost savings to the Government in accordance with FTR [301-10.107](#) and Section 4.1.3.3, Government Liability for Authorizing Restricted, Non-Contract Fares for Common Carrier Transportation.

11.3.1.4 Chartered Aircraft

Chartered aircraft service will be used upon the approval of the ASA, in accordance with standard operating procedures, for emergency deployments. Justification needs to state the purpose, reason why commercial flights cannot be used, and number of people traveling, and include a cost analysis. Once approved and purchased, the chartered flight may not be changed unless it is approved by the ASA. All use of chartered aircraft is reported to GSA in accordance with [OMB Circular A-126](#). Travel Authorizations are required for all travel on chartered aircraft in accordance with Section 11.2.1 above.

Travel on Chartered Aircraft

During a disaster response, all deployed HHS Federal employees, GS-15 or below, that are responding to a mission may be authorized to travel by chartered aircraft. Each individual's name is needed for documentation for the charter request. All HHS

Senior Executive Staff must have written authorization, in advance, from the ASA. Any travel request for use of any unused seats by a federal employee from another department must be approved in advance by the ASA before they will be allowed to board.

All non-federal travelers, including contractors supporting a federal mission, must have advance written approval from the ASA before they will be allowed to board any Government leased and/or operated aircraft. Any request to board will be based on seat availability, mission urgency, and type of government personnel on board.

If an HHS employee is requesting to travel on a charter provided by another Federal Agency or Non-Federal Organization, a cost comparison must be prepared and prior written authorization must be received from the ASA.

11.3.2 Lodging at a Disaster Site or NSSE

11.3.2.1 Room Sharing

While not required under the FTR, the sharing of commercial lodging facilities may be requested and highly encouraged especially in areas where facilities are strictly limited. If a room is shared, it may be charged to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's Emergency CBA if the OPDIV/STAFFDIV has a CBA that is available and authorized for lodging.

If an Emergency CBA is not available, the charges may be placed on the employee's IBA or personal credit card for an infrequent traveler/Invitational Traveler. Reimbursement will be 50 percent if the room is shared with a government employee, provided the hotel is able to split the charges.

A separate IBA or personal credit card must be placed with the front desk upon arrival/ check-in for all incidental expenses. No incidental expenses shall be charged to the CBA. Regardless of the payment method, a lodging receipt must be provided with the completed voucher.

11.3.2.2 Non-Traditional Lodging

If adequate commercial facilities are not available, lodging may be provided at a local school, recreational center, hospital, church, commercial facility, Government facility, base camp, etc. In this case, the lodging portion of the per diem will not be reimbursed. If meals are provided by the facility, and paid for by the Government, the appropriate meals must be deducted from the per diem entitlement.

If an employee is deployed for a disaster within the HHS local travel area, as defined in Section 4.3, and is working 16 hours or more and the commute provides unsafe conditions (e.g., traffic, fatigue, etc.), lodging may be approved on a case-by-case basis by the ASA. Prior approval is needed otherwise no expenses will be reimbursed.

11.3.3 Communications Services

If official government communication devices (cell phone, blackberry, smart phone, etc.) are not provided, and an employee uses his/her personal cellular phone for voice or text to communicate with personnel in the field or operations, he/she may or may not be reimbursed based upon the funding source. Funds that are provided by other Federal agencies may not be able to be used for reimbursement of communication services.

If funds are available for reimbursement and an employee owned cell phone is used, the employee will only be reimbursed if:

1. The call was made outside of regular plan minutes (including text and data); and
2. The bill reflects the date, time, telephone number, and cost per minute of the business call. (If the call is within the plan minutes and shows as a cost of \$0.00, the cost of the call will not be reimbursed.)

Personal calls or calls back to the traveler's home office, if outside the scope of the mission, will not be reimbursed. Travelers should consult their home office for reimbursement of any charges related to normal tour of duty responsibilities.

11.3.4 Laundry

In emergency situations (e.g., natural disaster area, Presidential-declared emergency, etc.), laundry and dry cleaning requirements during TDY travel exceeding four consecutive nights may necessarily exceed the OPDIV's standard allowance (such as \$5 per night). If properly justified, the delegated travel official may authorize a higher daily allowance on the travel order or, if the additional costs were unexpected, the delegated travel official may approve the higher actual costs on the travel voucher.

In all cases (pre-approved or post-approved) where unusual circumstances necessitate the incurrence of unusual laundry/dry cleaning costs, the following requirements must be met:

1. The employee must incur a minimum of four consecutive nights lodging on official travel within CONUS; and
2. A justification for the higher laundry/dry cleaning allowance must be documented on the travel order (pre-authorized) or the approved travel voucher (post-approved).

11.4 Travel Reimbursement During Continuity of Operations Policy (COOP) Events

The following guidance applies in the event of the activation of the COOP or COOP exercises. Please consult the individual OPDIV/STAFFDIV for specific location and reimbursement questions, as there may be additional information in their COOP related to travel reimbursement.

11.4.1 Travel Arrangements

HHS personnel designated as essential for COOP will be responsible for making their own travel arrangements during an actual event or exercise. Where possible, the ETS and TMC should be used to make necessary travel arrangements, depending on what is needed for the COOP event.

11.4.1.1 From Official Station to an Offsite COOP Location

Reimbursement for travel will be based upon the location where the COOP duties are performed. If the COOP site is away from the traveler's official station and outside of the traveler's local travel area, he/she will be reimbursed mileage and may be authorized per diem. Per diem should be authorized in advance on the travel authorization. See Section 11.2.1.1, Disaster Response, for information regarding travel authorizations.

11.4.1.2 At Official Station

If the COOP location is the traveler's official station, per diem will not be authorized, in accordance with Section 4.3.

11.4.1.3 From Residence to COOP Location in the Local Travel Area

If a traveler departs from his/her residence and the COOP location is within the local travel area, reimbursement for per diem will not be authorized in accordance with Section 4.3. The traveler will be reimbursed for mileage with the appropriate deduction of his/her normal commuting distance in accordance with Section 4.3.3.2.

11.4.1.4 From Residence to COOP Location Outside the Local Travel Area

If the COOP destination is outside of the traveler's local travel area, he/she will be reimbursed mileage and may be authorized per diem. Per diem should be authorized in advance on the travel authorization. See Section 11.2.1.1, Disaster Response, for information regarding travel authorizations.

11.4.2 Vouchers

The vouchering process for reimbursement will remain the same as for local and TDY travel and in accordance with Section 11.2.2, Vouchers, above.

12. Relocation Allowances

12.1 Purpose

This chapter describes the scope and organization of the HHS policy for relocation allowances as defined in FTR [302](#). It addresses the separate requirements and entitlements that are specific and unique to relocation, which includes a Temporary Change of Station (TCS) and a Permanent Change of Station (PCS). It is intended to provide users a single authoritative reference to Department financial management policies and procedures for relocation. In addition, employees should consult HHS Instruction [572-1](#), Payment of Travel and/or Transportation Relocation Expenses for additional information regarding eligibility and Human Resources requirements. This chapter includes guidelines regarding travel and transportation expenses, shipping of household goods, temporary storage, and other allowances for individuals authorized to relocate on behalf of the Department.

Each OPDIV/STAFFDIV may determine on a case-by case basis, which allowances they will offer to pay as addressed in the Relocation Travel Authorization and Service Agreement.

12.2 Introduction

This section provides clarification on the categories of allowances (i.e., both mandatory and discretionary) as contained in FTR [Ch. 302](#), Relocation Allowances.

The discretionary items are identified in FTR [302-3.2](#) and [302-3.101](#) and this manual based on the applicable relocation scenario. Allowances that are not specifically addressed in either the FTR or this manual are left to the discretion of the OPDIV/STAFFDIV. It is the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's responsibility to ensure that employees are knowledgeable of any OPDIV/STAFFDIV specific policies related to their relocation. The GSA provides information on mandatory FTR provisions on their website at www.gsa.gov.

Certain international relocations are also subject to the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR), which are available at <http://aoprals.state.gov/>, and the Department of State FAM, which is available at www.state.gov/m/a/dir/regs/. These items should be addressed in the Relocation Travel Authorization and Service Agreement signed by the employee.

The HHS Travel Office received guidance from the NIH, FDA, IHS, and the Bureau of the Public Debt (BPD) Administrative Resource Center (ARC), Relocation Service Branch (RSB) in development of the relocation policy. Employees should always check with their OPDIV/STAFFDIV for specific policies related to Relocation. In addition, updates to this policy can be found at <http://www.hhs.gov/travel/policies>.

12.2.1 Commissioned Corps Officers

Travel policies and per diem rates for Commissioned Corps officers of the Public Health Service are governed by the JFTR. The PDTATAC issues the JFTR. The HHS Assistant Secretary for Health is the designated USPHS Principal to serve on the PDTATAC, chartered under the DTMO. Further information is available at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/travelreg.cfm>.

The OASH or its designee is responsible for developing and issuing travel and relocation policy for Corps officers, to supplement the Department of Defense's JFTR. Corps policies are published in separate documents that are not part of the HHS Travel Manual. Travel guidance for commissioned officers of the Public Health Service is found at <http://dcp.psc.gov/travel/contents.aspx>.

The entitlements for Relocation [Permanent Duty Travel (PDT)] for Commissioned Corps members are covered in Chapter 5 of the JFTR. The JFTR is located at [http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/perdiem/JFTR\(Ch1-10\).pdf](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/perdiem/JFTR(Ch1-10).pdf). The entitlements must be on the PCS orders issued to the Commissioned Corps member.

Any operational or travel concerns of the Corps should be directed to the Office of the Surgeon General.

12.3 Initial Relocation Process

It is integral that the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's human resource personnel be involved in the employee's initial relocation decisions. An OPDIV/STAFFDIV should plan for relocations as far in advance as possible, whether it is for new appointees (hires) or for a transferring employee. Relocation is a process; the decision to relocate, planning for the relocation, and any decisions granting waivers or deviations from standard policy should be made only after careful consideration is given to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's human resources and mission requirements, as well as budgetary position.

Prior to the hiring process, the vacancy announcement must specifically state whether relocation benefits will or will not be provided, unless a merit promotion transfer is applied. In this case, the Comptroller General has ruled that such an action is considered to be in the Government's interest and relocation expenses may be payable as long as it is not just for the convenience of the employee. If relocation benefits are not provided, human resources personnel should document a justification for that decision. If relocation benefits are provided, as soon as the candidate accepts the position, notification must be sent to the employee (and relocation service provider if applicable) to initiate the relocation process.

The relocation of a new appointee or transfer of a current employee, at the expense of the Government, should only occur when it is in the best interest of the Government and should not be undertaken for the individual's convenience. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV's travel AO is responsible for reviewing and ensuring compliance with existing travel regulations and corresponding policies.

12.4 General Provisions

12.4.1 Travel Authorization

A Relocation Travel Authorization (RTA) must be issued to a new appointee or transferring employee before they report to the first or new official station. An OPDIV/STAFFDIV may use the manual authorization Form [HHS 1](#). A travel authorization is not normally created in the ETS. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV must advise the employee or individual selected for appointment not to incur expenses for travel in anticipation of relocation until they have received the RTA and signed a Service Agreement (see Section 12.5.1. below) The RTA will indicate the specific relocation allowances authorized as outlined in this policy section and provide instructions on the Federal procedures for acquisition of the related travel and transportation services.

NOTE: In line with several provisions in [FTR 302](#), an employee may begin his/her move once he/she has an approved RTA and signed Service Agreement. If an employee does not have an approved Travel Authorization and signed Service Agreement, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV will not reimburse the employee for expenses incurred.

12.4.2 Applicable Provisions for Reimbursement

Because of successive changes to the statutes and the regulatory provisions governing relocation allowances and the extended period that employees retain eligibility for allowances, reimbursement will not be the same for all employees' claims. The regulatory provisions in effect on an employee's effective date of transfer or appointment shall be used for payment or reimbursement purposes as per [FTR 302-2.3](#).

12.4.2.1 Revised Relocation Regulations in the FTR

GSA issued new regulations for relocation in the Federal Register. The final rule combined two previous proposed rules. The new regulations were effective as of August 1, 2011. For updates to the Relocation policy, visit <http://www.hhs.gov/travel/policy/bulletins>.

12.4.3 Service Agreements

12.4.3.1 Transfers within the Continental United States (CONUS), Appointments, and Assignments of New Appointees and Student Trainees to Any Position within the United States

An employee transferring between official stations within CONUS will not be allowed to incur expenses until the employee has signed a service agreement agreeing to remain in the service of the Government for 12 months following the effective date of the transfer, unless separated for reasons beyond the employee's control and acceptable to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV. Such an agreement also is required from new appointees and student trainees appointed or assigned to any position within the United States as a condition of payment for travel, transportation, moving and/or storage of household goods, and allowances as provided in FTR 302-3.2. A signed agreement for 12 months

service is required for each permanent change of station.

In case of a violation of this agreement, including failure to complete the transfer, any funds expended by the Government for expenses authorized in this section shall be recoverable from the individual concerned as a debt due the Government.

12.4.3.2 Transfers, Appointments, and Separations Involving Posts of Duty OCONUS

An employee either transferred or appointed OCONUS, between posts located in separate countries or in separate areas of the United States OCONUS, will not be allowed to incur expenses until the employee has signed a service agreement agreeing to remain in the service of the Government for 12 months following the effective date of the transfer, unless separated for reasons beyond the employee's control and acceptable to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV. These expenses include:

1. Travel;
2. Transportation;
3. Moving;
4. Storage of household goods; and
5. Other allowances.

12.5 OPDIV/STAFFDIV Relocation Policy

The following sections list the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's roles and responsibilities regarding relocation under the FTR, as well as corresponding HHS policy on how OPDIV/STAFFDIVs should fulfill those roles and responsibilities, including authorizing those allowances under the FTR that are within the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's discretion.

12.5.1 Employee Eligibility Requirements

12.5.1.1 OPDIV/STAFFDIV Requirements for Determining Employee Eligibility

The HHS Travel Office is responsible for implementing Travel Policy for the Department (see Section 1.1.3 of this manual). An OPDIV/STAFFDIV must adhere to Department policy but may choose to implement the corresponding guidelines in a more restrictive manner (see Section 1.1.3.2). The STO or their designee for relocation will provide the traveler with instruction on the applicable policies and procedural guidance. The AO is responsible for reviewing the RTA and travel vouchers prior to approval in order to ensure compliance with the FTR, the HHS Travel Manual, OHR, and

OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV STO or their designee is responsible for authorizing relocation travel.

Factors such as cost effectiveness, labor market conditions, availability of local and qualified candidates, and difficulties in filling the position, as well as the position being designated mission critical must be reviewed to determine if the relocation is primarily for the benefit of the Government or for the employee.

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV needs to consider all options and determine which scenario is more advantageous to the Government: PCS, TCS, or long-term TDY. AOs must ensure their decisions are not arbitrary or capricious.²¹ These decisions need to be documented and kept on file in accordance with OPDIV/STAFFDIV Human Resources policies as described in Section 12.3, Initial Relocation Process.

An employee may obtain an advance, when authorized, for en route travel, house-hunting trip(s), temporary quarters, transportation, and storage of household goods at the commuted rate method, or personal shipment of a mobile home. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV should determine if a Government travel charge card should be used for en route travel or a house-hunting trip. Once this determination is made, employees with a Government travel charge card are encouraged to obtain advances using their travel charge card for these activities per [FTR §301-51.200](#) and Section 3.3 of the HHS Travel Manual. Direct deposit advances are more appropriate for temporary quarters subsistence expenses due to the need to make timely payments. The AO will provide direction to the traveler regarding specific travel advance situations and must include the approved request for the advance on the travel order.

Additional circumstances requiring a traveler to sign a service agreement, as defined in [FTR §302-2.12](#) through 2.14, are determined at the AO level. The AO is responsible for providing the traveler with guidance regarding their specific relocation scenario, coordinating the agreement, determining and authorizing the conditions, and incorporating the agreement into the TRA and Service Agreement.

Any individual authorized a PCS is required to sign a service agreement prior to undertaking the move. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV is responsible for monitoring the service agreement and initiating the collection or write-off of bad debt should the individual violate the service agreement ([FTR §302-2.14](#)).

²¹ A clear error of judgment; an action not based upon consideration of relevant factors and so is arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion or otherwise not in accordance with law or if it was taken without observance of procedure required by law. 5 USC. 706(2) (A) (1988). (The 'Lectric Law Library, 2011)

12.6 Relocation Allowance by Specific Type

This section describes the policies used to define reimbursement of relocation allowances for the various types of relocation benefits including those for transfer employees, new hires, temporary change of station, etc. It also provides tables taken from the FTR that outline these policies; these can be found on GSA's website at www.gsa.gov. Please check GSA's website for the most recent FTR updates to [Chapter 302 – Relocation Allowances](#).

12.6.1 Transfer Employees

The following policies define reimbursement of relocation allowances for transfer employees, as presented in Tables 11- 16 below. Please refer to the [FTR Part 302-3](#), Subpart B, for mandatory CONUS, OCONUS/Non-Foreign, and OCONUS/Foreign items.

1. When relocating a civilian employee using Government funds, the individual is required to sign a service agreement committing to one year of employment with the Government (the period may vary based on relocation circumstances). If this agreement is breached, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV has the right to collect the reimbursement. If circumstances causing the employee to leave were considered acceptable to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV (e.g., circumstances beyond employee control, termination of position, or critical health issue, etc.), the AO may choose to waive collection of the relocation expenses. Decisions are made by the OPDIV/STAFFDIV on a case-by-case basis.
2. The AO may recommend authorization of separate relocations for two employees that are immediate family members relocating to the same official station. This can be done when the employees are relocating on behalf of the Government and have different start dates, or in other circumstances when the AO determines that, separate relocations are necessary and in the best interest of the Government.
3. The AO will consider an employee's request to extend beginning separation travel and may choose to authorize the extension when circumstances are beyond the employee's control, reasonable to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV, and in the best interest of the Government. Separation travel occurs when an employee, who meets the criteria, leaves the employment of the Federal Government.

In accordance with the FTR, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV STO or their designee may approve an extension for separation travel, as defined in [FTR §302-3.315](#), not to exceed two (2) years from the effective date of separation or from the date of death, if the employee dies before separation.

The AO may provide instruction to the traveler on arranging his or her own relocation upon separation. Cost reimbursement will be based on the Government Bill of Lading (GBL) method; it will not exceed what it would have cost the government to arrange for the shipment. Transportation by employee and family members, if by air, must be arranged through the OPDIV/STAFFDIV contracted TMC and meet government requirements, as defined in [FTR §301-10.100](#).

Table 11 - Transfer within CONUS

Transfer Between Official Stations in the Continental United States (CONUS)	
Column 1 Relocation allowances that agency must pay or reimburse	Column 2 Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation & per diem for employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	(1) House-hunting per diem & transportation, employee & spouse only (Part 302-5 of the FTR)
(2) Miscellaneous moving expense (Part 302-16 of the FTR)	(2) Temporary quarters subsistence expense (TQSE) (Part 302-6 of the FTR)
(3) Sell or buy residence transactions or lease termination expenses (Part 302-11 of the FTR)	(3) Shipment of privately owned vehicle (POV) (Subpart B of Part 302-9 of the FTR)
(4) Transportation & temporary storage of household goods (Part 302-7 of the FTR)	(4) Use of a relocation services company
(5) Extended storage of household goods (Part 302-8 of the FTR) ²²	(5) Property management services (Part 302-15 of the FTR)
(6) Transportation of a mobile home or boat used as a primary residence in lieu of the transportation of household goods (Part 302-10 of the FTR)	(6) Home marketing incentives (Part 302-14 of the FTR)
(7) Relocation income tax allowance (RITA) (Part 302-17 of the FTR)	

Table 12 - Transfer CONUS to OCONUS

Transfer From CONUS to an Official Station Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS)	
Column 1 Relocation allowances that agency must pay or reimburse	Column 2 Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation & per diem for employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	(1) Temporary quarters subsistence expense (TQSE) is not authorized in a foreign area, however, you may be entitled to the following under the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) (Government Civilians-Foreign Areas): (a) A Foreign Transfer Allowance (FTA) for quarters occupied temporarily before departure from the 50 states or the District of Columbia for a official station in a foreign area incident to a permanent change of station and travel to first official station overseas (b) Temporary quarters subsistence allowance (TQSA)
(2) Miscellaneous expense allowance (Part 302-16 of the FTR)	(2) Property management services (Part 302-15 of the FTR)
(3) Transportation & temporary storage of household goods	(3) Shipment of a privately owned vehicle (Part 302-9 of the FTR)

22 Note to Column 1, Item 5: Only when assigned to a designated isolated official station in CONUS.

(Part 302-7 of the FTR)	
(4) Extended storage of household goods (Part 302-8 of the FTR)	(4) Use of relocation service companies when transfer is to Alaska or Hawaii (Part 302-12 of the FTR)
(5) Relocation income tax allowance (RITA) (Part 302-17 of the FTR) ²³	(5) Home marketing incentives when transfer is to Alaska or Hawaii (Part 302-15 of the FTR)

Table 13 - Transfer OCONUS to CONUS

Transfer From OCONUS Official Station to an Official Station in CONUS	
Column 1 Relocation allowances that agency must pay or reimburse	Column 2 Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation & per diem for employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	(1) Shipment of a privately owned vehicle (Part 302-9 of the FTR)
(2) Temporary quarters subsistence expense (TQSE) (Part 302-6 of the FTR) ²⁴	
(3) Miscellaneous expense allowance (Part 302-16 of the FTR)	
(4) Sell & buy residence transaction expenses or lease termination expenses (Part 302-11 of the FTR) ²⁵	
(5) Transportation & temporary storage of household goods (Part 302-7 of the FTR)	
(6) Extended storage of household goods only when assigned to a designated isolated official station in CONUS (Part 302-8 of the FTR)	
(7) Relocation income tax allowance (RITA) (Part 302-17 of the FTR)	

Table 14 - Transfer within OCONUS

Transfer Between OCONUS Official Stations	
Column 1 Relocation allowances that agency must pay or reimburse	Column 2 Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation & per diem for employee &	(1) Shipment of a privately owned vehicle

23 Note to Column 1, Item 5: Allowed when old and new official stations are located in the United States. Also allowed when instead of being returned to the former non-foreign area official station, an employee is transferred in the interest of the Government to a different non-foreign area official station than from the official station from which transferred when assigned to the foreign official station.

24 A TQSA under the DSSR may be authorized preceding final departure subsequent to the necessary vacating of residence quarters.

25 Allowed when old and new official stations are located in the United States. Also allowed when instead of being returned to the former non-foreign area official station, an employee is transferred in the interest of the Government to a different non-foreign area official station than from the official station from which transferred when assigned to the foreign official station.

immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	(POV) (Part 302-9 of the FTR)
(2) Temporary quarters subsistence expense (TQSE) (Part 302-6 of the FTR) ²⁶	(2) Property management services (Part 302-15 of the FTR)
(3) Transportation & temporary storage of household goods (Part 302-7 of the FTR)	
(4) Miscellaneous expense allowance (Part 302-16 of the FTR)	
(5) Extended storage of household goods (Part 302-8 of the FTR)	
(6) Relocation income tax allowance (RITA) (Part 302-17 of the FTR)	

Table 15 - Return from OCONUS for Separation

Return From OCONUS Official Station to Place of Actual Residence for Separation	
Column 1	Column 2
Relocation allowances that agency must pay or reimburse	Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation for employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	(1) Shipment of a privately owned vehicle (POV) (Part 302-9 of the FTR)
(2) Per diem for employee only (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	
(3) Transportation & temporary storage of household goods (Part 302-7 of the FTR)	

Table 16 - Last Move Home (SES Career Appointees)

Last Move Home for SES Career Appointees Upon Separation	
Column 1	Column 2
Relocation allowances that agency must pay or reimburse	Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation for employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	(1) Shipment of privately owned vehicle (POV) (Subpart B of Part 302-9 of the FTR)
(2) Per diem for employee only (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	
(3) Transportation & temporary storage of household goods (Part 302-7 of the FTR)	
(4) Transportation of a mobile home or boat used as a primary residence in lieu of the transportation of household goods (Part 302-10 of the FTR)	

12.6.2 Temporary Change of Station (TCS)

The following policies define reimbursement of relocation allowances, as presented in Table 17 below, for a TCS Please refer to the [FTR Part 302-3](#), Subpart B, for mandatory CONUS,

²⁶ Note to Column 1, Item 2: TQSA may be authorized under the DSSR.

OCONUS/Non-Foreign, and OCONUS/Foreign items, on the GSA website at www.gsa.gov.

1. The AO may choose to authorize a TCS for an employee who must relocate to fulfill a domestic assignment with a duration lasting between six and 30 months (2 and ½ years). The AO must perform a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether a TCS is more cost effective and advantageous to the Government than a PCS.

A TCS may be authorized if the employee receives a long-term assignment and it has been determined advantageous to the Government to relocate the employee temporarily instead of sending the employee on extended TDY. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV may have additional specifications that will be applied to this decision.

Expenses that may be authorized for reimbursement include:

1. Travel and subsistence expenses;
2. Storage of household goods;
3. Miscellaneous expenses;
4. Transportation of a POV; and
5. Relocation income tax allowance.

The AO may also choose to provide house-hunting trips and temporary quarters for the employee.

An employee assigned to training under the GETA, 5 U.S.C. § 4109, is not eligible for a TCS.

2. The AO will provide direction to the traveler in specific situations where reimbursements are not authorized for a TCS.
3. The AO will provide direction to the traveler to determine whether the request for extended storage is in the best interest of the OPDIV/STAFFDIV.

The AO official will determine which discretionary relocation allowances will be approved when an employee is permanently assigned to a TDY station based on the employee's needs and the FTR allowances [FTR 302-3.427](#).

Table 17 - Temporary Change of Station (TCS)

Temporary Change of Station (TCS)	
Column 1	Column 2
Relocation allowances that agency must pay or reimburse	Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation & per diem for employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	(1) House-hunting trip expenses (Part 302-5 of the FTR)
(2) Miscellaneous expense allowance (Part 302-16 of the FTR)	(2) Temporary quarters subsistence expense (TQSE) (Part 302-6 of the FTR)
(3) Transportation & temporary storage of household goods (Part 302-7 of the FTR)	
(4) Transportation of a mobile home or boat used as a primary residence in lieu of the transportation of household goods (Part 302-10 of the FTR)	
(5) Transportation of a privately owned vehicle (POV)(Subpart B of Part 302-9 of the FTR)	
(6) Relocation income tax allowance (RITA) (Part 302-17 of the FTR)	
(7) Property management services (Part 302-15 of the FTR)	

12.6.3 Temporary Relocation under the Government Employees Training Act (GETA)

Under GETA, employees are entitled to the following limited relocation allowances as outlined in Table 18 below.

Table 18 - Relocation under GETA²⁷

Assignment Under the Government Employees Training Act (5 U.S.C. 4109)
(1) Transportation of employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of this chapter).
(2) Per Diem for employee (Part 302-4 of this chapter).
(3) Movement of household goods & temporary storage (Part 302-7 of this chapter).

12.6.4 Overseas Tour Renewal Travel

Overseas tour renewal travel refers to travel of an employee and his/her immediate family returning to the employee's home in the continental U. S., Alaska, or Hawaii between overseas tours of duty. If the employee travels to another overseas location (instead of the U.S.), the employee will be reimbursed only if his/her residence is within that country in which the employee is taking leave, and then the employee will only be reimbursed for authorized travel and transportation expenses. The employee will have to pay any expense(s) above the authorized amount. The policies regarding reimbursement of expenses for overseas tour renewal travel are

²⁷ Note to Relocation under GETA: The allowances listed in Table 18 may be authorized in lieu of per diem or actual expense allowances. This is not considered a permanent change of station.

outlined in Table 19 below.

Table 19 - Tour Renewal Travel

Tour Renewal Agreement Travel	
Column 1	Column 2
Relocation allowances that agency must pay or reimburse	Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation for employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	
(2) Per diem for employee only (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	

12.6.5 New Appointees

The following policies define reimbursement of relocation allowances, as presented in Tables 20 and 21 below for new appointees. Please refer to the [FTR Part 302-3](#), Subpart A, for mandatory CONUS, OCONUS/Non-Foreign, and OCONUS/Foreign items on the GSA website at www.gsa.gov.

1. A new appointee is eligible for relocation allowances if the official announcement for the specific position posted by the OPDIV/STAFFDIV includes relocation allowances.
2. Once the AO determines whether a new appointee is eligible to receive reimbursement for a PCS, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV AO is responsible for counseling the new appointee regarding his or her entitlements, any additional allowances, or benefits that he/she may be eligible to receive, and coordinating the PCS for the individual. Benefits are based on the FTR, HHS Travel Manual, and OPDIV/STAFFDIV policies.

Table 20 - First Official Station CONUS

Assigned to First Official Station in the Continental United States (CONUS)	
Column 1 Relocation allowances that agency <u>must</u> pay or reimburse	Column 2 Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation of employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of the FTR)	(1) Shipment of privately owned vehicle (POV) (Subpart B of Part 302-9 of the FTR)
(2) Per diem for employee only (Part 302-4 of the FTR).	
(3) Transportation & temporary storage of household goods (Part 302-7 of the FTR)	
(4) Extended storage of household goods (Part 302-8 of the FTR) ²⁸	
(5) Transportation of a mobile home or boat used as a primary residence in lieu of the transportation of household goods (Part 302-10 of the FTR)	

Table 21 - First Official Station OCONUS

Assigned to First Official Station Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS)	
Column 1 Relocation allowances that agency <u>must</u> pay or reimburse	Column 2 Relocation allowances that agency has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse
(1) Transportation of employee & immediate family member(s) (Part 302-4 of this chapter)	(1) Shipment of privately owned vehicle (POV) (Part 302-9 of this chapter)
(2) Per diem employee only (Part 302-4)	(2) Temporary quarters subsistence expense (TQSE) is not authorized in a foreign area, however, you may be entitled to the following under the Department of State Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians-Foreign Areas) which is available from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, DC 20402 (a) Foreign Transfer Allowance (FTA) (Subsistence Expense) for quarters occupied temporarily before departure from the 50 states or the District of Columbia for a official station in a foreign area incident to a permanent change of station and travel to first official station overseas (b) Temporary quarters subsistence allowance (TQSA) when a transfer is authorized to a foreign area (c) The miscellaneous expense portion of the FTA is authorized incident to first official station travel to a foreign area.
(3) Transportation & temporary storage of household goods (Part 302-7 of this chapter)	(3) Use of relocation service companies only when transfer is to Alaska or Hawaii (Part 302-12 of this chapter)

28 Note to Column 1, Item 4: Only when assigned to a designated isolated official station in CONUS.

(4) Extended storage of household goods (Part 302-8 of this chapter)	(4) Home marketing incentives only when transfer is to a non-foreign OCONUS area (Part 302-15 of this chapter)
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12.7 Entitlements and Allowances

12.7.1 Allowances for Subsistence and Transportation

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV is responsible for counseling the traveler on entitlements and additional discretionary allowances in accordance with the FTR, the HHS Travel Manual, and OPDIV/STAFFDIV policies. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV will prepare the RTA, listing all applicable allowances and submit it to the AO for signature approval.

An OPDIV/STAFFDIV should determine the employee's mode of travel based on factors such as travel time, mileage, per diem, and other costs. If an employee is not driving a POV, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV should provide alternate transportation for the employee and family, and possibly allow shipment of a POV(s).

The number of authorized en route travel days and per diem is determined by considering the actual number of days required to travel, not to exceed the number of days allowed based on the distance required to travel. When calculating the number of authorized en route travel days, while driving, up to 300 miles traveled qualifies for one day of en route travel. Mileage in excess of 300 miles may qualify the traveler for additional travel days based on the most direct route at a minimum of 300 miles per day. The estimated miles should be divided by 300, rounding up at the half point mark (150 miles), to determine the number of allowable days for en route travel reimbursement. Any exceptions require specific OPDIV/STAFFDIV approval. See the example below provided in Table 22:

Table 22 - En Route Travel Calculations while Driving

Miles Traveled	Calculation	# of days of en route travel
400 actual miles traveled	$400/300 = 1 \frac{1}{3}$	1 day
500 actual miles traveled	$500/300 = 1 \frac{2}{3}$	2 days

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV will reimburse the traveler for mileage driven for each authorized POV based on the distance for the most direct route obtained from the Rand McNally website or similar resource. Travelers may be reimbursed for actual mileage with up to a 10 percent variance. Standard highway mileage guides include resources such as Rand McNally, which can be found at <http://www.randmcnally.com/>, Google maps, MapQuest, or similar services. The current mileage rate for en route travel can be found on GSA's website at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/105054>.

When the traveler is delayed due to circumstances beyond their control (e.g., severe weather, physical handicap, or other reasons acceptable to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV) the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's AO may grant an exception and authorize additional reimbursement for the extra days.

In a scenario where an additional POV is requested, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's AO must authorize the expense on the RTA prior to the departure date. An additional POV cannot be added after the relocation has begun. Factors such as family size, cost of shipping the POV, and the availability of additional drivers should be taken into consideration by the OPDIV/STAFFDIV.

12.7.2 Allowance for House-Hunting Trip Expenses

The house-hunting trip (HHT) is a discretionary allowance, which may be authorized by the AO for transferring employees and/or spouses. Immediate family members, other than the spouse, are never entitled to receive reimbursement for a HHT. New appointees, employees relocating under GETA, and employees returning from an overseas assignment for the purpose of separation are not eligible to receive a HHT. A HHT should be authorized on a case-by-case basis, after weighing the benefits of a HHT against a temporary quarters subsistence allowance.

The following guidelines pertain to HHT requests:

1. The HHT should be made available and individual decisions to authorize a HHT should be based on the best interest of the Government. The HHT will be granted to allow the employee and/or spouse time to look for a residence at the new domestic official station. The employee and spouse may take separate HHTs if authorized by the OPDIV/STAFFDIV. The total duration of the HHT, whether taken together or separately, may not exceed 10 calendar days; calendar days must be consecutive. The AO will determine the duration of the HHT based on the traveler's request. The cost of the trips may not exceed the constructed cost of what it would have cost if the HHT had been taken together. The employee's HHT must be completed prior to reporting to the new official station. The purpose of the HHT is to facilitate and accelerate the employee's move to a permanent residence, thereby lowering the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's overall PCS cost.
2. The HHT request must be included on the RTA, and the AO must authorize the request before HHT travel can begin.
3. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV, in accordance with its policy, may reimburse the employee by providing a fixed amount or actual expense per diem reimbursement method for a HHT. An OPDIV/STAFFDIV may provide both fixed amount and actual reimbursement methods. If an OPDIV/STAFFDIV offers both, the employee may choose the method of reimbursement.

The fixed amount reimbursement method simplifies the budgeting process and requires no receipts. It allows the employee to have immediate access to funds and reduces administration issues. The fixed house-hunting allowance will need to be calculated in accordance with [FTR 302-5.13](#) for each relocation based on whether both the employee and spouse will be taking the trip and the locality rate. In addition, under the fixed method, the employee is reimbursed their actual transportation costs.

4. The AO will advise the traveler regarding which mode of transportation (e.g., POV, flight, rail, etc.) is most advantageous to the Government for the HHT.

12.7.3 Allowance for Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expenses (TQSE)

The temporary quarters allowance is discretionary and may be offered to transferring employees and/or immediate family member(s) during the relocation process. New appointees, employees relocating under GETA, and employees returning from an overseas assignment for the purpose of separation are not eligible to receive temporary quarters.

The following guidelines pertain to TQSE:

1. The AO may authorize temporary quarters for an employee and their immediate family member(s) when it is determined to be in the best interest of the Government, the old and new duty stations are 50 miles or more apart, and it is justified in connection with an employee's transfer to a new official station.

Temporary quarters is lodging obtained for the purpose of temporary occupancy from private or commercial sources such as rental of a furnished or unfurnished apartment on a month-to-month basis or extended-stay hotel. Long-term lodging is available under the GSA Schedule 48 – Long-term Lodging at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21816>. Additional information on Long-term Lodging is available at <http://www.hhs.gov/travel/policies>.

The purpose of temporary quarters is to allow an employee time to find a residence at the new official station, and/or for the immediate family member(s) to obtain accommodations when the old residence is sold prior to the family relocating to the new duty station. Temporary quarters may be authorized at the old and new official stations at the same time, if necessary.

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV should administer the allowance in order to minimize or avoid other relocation expenses such as a HHT.

2. The AO will advise the employee on temporary quarters by evaluating the needs of the employee and immediate family member(s), ensuring the distance between the old and new duty station is 50 miles or greater, and determining that temporary quarters is in the interest of the Government, prior to authorizing the request.
3. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV may reimburse the employee by offering the option of either a fixed amount as calculated in [FTR 302.6-201](#) or actual TQSE per OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy. If an OPDIV/STAFFDIV offers both options, the employee may choose the method of reimbursement.
4. The AO will advise the employee on the acceptable duration for temporary quarters and authorize the amount on the travel order. The duration of temporary quarters should be determined in conjunction with the HHT. In a scenario where an extension or interruption of temporary quarters is required, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV AO will determine a solution that is in the best interest of the Government.

The circumstances leading to the request for an extension or interruption of temporary quarters must be determined reasonable and beyond the control of the employee. Upon an

employee's request for an extension or interruption of temporary quarters, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV AO will ensure that the request is in accordance with the FTR [302-6.305](#), the HHS Travel Manual, and OPDIV/STAFFDIV Policy. If the request is deemed appropriate, the RTA will be amended to include the extension or authorized interruption and approved by the AO. If the request is deemed inappropriate, the employee may be liable to repay the Government for any reimbursement claimed related to the extension or interruption.

12.7.4 Transportation and Temporary Storage of Household Goods (HHG) and Professional Books, Papers, and Equipment (PBP&E)

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV or relocation service provider is responsible for administering the HHG program. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV or relocation service provider may authorize additional expenses related to transportation of HHG (e.g., special crating, shuttle services, etc). When the additional services exceed the original obligation amount, the employee must obtain authorization from the AO official to amend the RTA prior to incurring the additional expense.

The AO will advise employees in certain professional disciplines that they may be eligible for shipment of professional books, papers, and equipment (PBP&E) with their HHG. The AO must conclude that shipment of PBP&E is necessary, meets the requirements within the FTR, is processed as an administrative expense, and is in the best interest of the Government. The AO may want to consider a separate shipment for PBP&E when the shipment exceeds 18,000 lbs. However, if the weight of any PBP&E causes the lot to exceed 18,000 pounds, the PBP&E may be transported to the new duty station as an administrative expense of the OPDIV/STAFFDIV. Authorization for such shipment is granted solely at the discretion of the OPDIV/STAFFDIV and subject to its policies governing such shipments. An OPDIV/STAFFDIV should require that the carrier provide separate inventory lists for PBP&E to enable clear accountability.

In accordance with FTR [302-7.9](#), the initial period for storage of HHG in CONUS is 60 days. It may be extended up to an additional 90 days, not to exceed 150 days of storage. To obtain an extension for temporary storage, or storage in transit (SIT), the employee must provide a written request for the extension and obtain authorization from the AO prior to the initial 60-day expiration date. Extensions will not be granted after that date. Extension durations are subject to [FTR 302-7.9](#) limitations.

For shipments with an OCONUS origination or destination, the initial period of storage of HHS is 90 days, and may be extended for an additional 90 days not to exceed 180 days of storage. Extension requirements are the same as for CONUS.

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV will collect any excess costs or charges for transportation and/or storage of HHG from the employee.

The employee will process the claim with the carrier under the provisions of the [GSA Standard Tender of Service](#), which serves as the base document for the transportation of Freight shipments for Federal civilian agencies. If the claim is not resolved, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV is responsible for advising the employee on the Government's liability for any loss or damage claims under 31 U.S.C. 3721-3723.

An OPDIV/STAFFDIV should only use GSA Scheduled carriers that are part of the Centralized Household Goods Traffic Management Program (CHAMP). A list of carriers can be found at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21193>. Carriers are required to ensure that international HHG shipments by water are made on ships registered under the laws of the United States, whenever such ships are available. HHG invoices are subject to prepayment audit, and specific auditing requirements by GSA.

12.7.5 Allowances for Extended Storage of Household Goods (HHG)

OPDIV/STAFFDIVs need to establish a process for deciding what types of assignments and which locations warrant extended storage (non-temporary storage) of HHG under the guidelines of the [FTR 302-8.1](#). The OPDIV/STAFFDIV's AO will authorize extended storage for HHG based on the FTR, the HHS Travel Manual, OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy, and other regulations. Extended storage of HHG may be authorized in lieu of shipment when:

1. The employee is assigned to an isolated duty station within CONUS;
2. The employee is assigned to an overseas official station where the agency limits the amount of HHG the employee may transport to that location;
3. The employee is assigned to an OCONUS official station and the agency determines extended storage is in the public interest or cost effective to do so; or
4. It is necessary for a TCS.

Extended storage of HHG is not permitted for a career SES employee eligible for last move home benefits.

The AO needs to determine if requests for extended storage (non-temporary) are appropriate based on the [FTR 302-8](#), and tour length.

Both temporary and extended storage may be authorized, particularly on international relocations where the employee could place HHG into extended storage. However, the HHG being shipped may require temporary storage while awaiting placement on a vessel as it can take a few months waiting for country clearances for the shipments to be obtained from the host country for shipment to the foreign location.

Procedures for the payment of third-party invoices for extended storage of HHG will be determined by the OPDIV/STAFFDIV based upon the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's payment process. Prompt Payment Act guidelines apply.

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV's AO will determine whether a location meets the criteria to be considered an isolated official station, and will determine whether reasonable conditions exist for allowing extended storage at Government expense.

The AO will instruct the employee as to whether extended storage is being authorized. The HHG program administrator will work with the employee to determine the duration and location of extended storage. The authorization must indicate the duration of the extended storage. Any

extension requires approval by the OPDIV/STAFFDIV.

12.7.6 Allowances for Transportation and Emergency Storage of a Privately Owned Vehicle (POV)

The AO may authorize transportation of a POV. The AO must determine if the shipment of the vehicle is most advantageous to the Government by performing a cost-benefit analysis. The AO will advise the employee accordingly based upon the results of that analysis.

Emergency storage of a POV may be recommended by the AO in the case of a natural disaster, that is, circumstances beyond the traveler's control that require immediate evacuation of the employee and their immediate family, or any other similar scenario where such action is determined reasonable and in the best interest of the Government. The HHG program administrator will work with the AO and carrier to determine the duration and location of emergency storage. The AO may authorize the transportation of a replacement POV if the circumstances warrant such an action per the provisions outlined in [FTR 302-9.172](#).

The AO will advise the employee as to whether, given a change in the circumstances at the new duty post, the transportation of a POV is in the best interest of the Government. The AO will apply the provisions in [FTR 302-9.170](#), all corresponding cost factors, and any special circumstances that pertain to the relocation scenario when making this decision.

The AO will determine whether the transportation of a POV, as opposed to driving the POV to the new duty station, is in the best interest of the Government. The AO will apply the provisions in the [FTR 302-9.504](#) and all corresponding cost factors and any special circumstances that pertain to the relocation scenario when making this decision.

12.7.7 Allowances for Transportation of Mobile Homes and Boats Used as a Primary Residence

The employee is entitled to transportation of a mobile home or boat in lieu of transportation of HHG if the employee certifies that the mobile home will be used as their primary residence at the new official station. If this determination is made, the employee cannot be reimbursed for shipment of HHG. Instead, the employee may be reimbursed for transportation of a mobile home, not to exceed the expense that the Government would have incurred for shipping 18,000 lbs. of HHG and 90-days of temporary storage.

The AO determines if such an action is in the best interest of the Government by following the provisions of [FTR 302-10.204](#) and [FTR 302-10 Subpart E](#). An OPDIV/STAFFDIV may want to arrange for a carrier to inspect the property and provide an estimate of costs. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV should also counsel the employee on the risks of moving a mobile home, including potential damages and extra costs associated with the move.

A travel advance may be authorized in conjunction with the transportation of a mobile home or boat used as a primary residence, but it must not exceed the estimated allowable amount described above.

12.7.8 Allowances for Expenses Incurred in Connection With Residence Transactions

The following list covers many of the normal expenses relating to the sale and purchase of real estate, which may be reimbursed to the employee. Note, however, that this list is not all inclusive of other expenses that may be reimbursed to the employee, in accordance with the [HUD-1 Settlement Statement](#), and how it itemizes expenses. Other expenses may be reimbursed depending on the validity of the particular expense for reimbursement.

Table 23 - Allowable Residence Transaction Expenses

Type of Expense	Old Station	New Station
Abstract	Yes	Yes
Advertising	Yes	No
Application fee (FHA and VA only)	Yes	Yes
Appraisal fee (determine market value of residence)	Yes	No
Appraisal fee (lender's)	No	Yes
Assumption fee (not in addition to origination fee)	No	Yes
Attorney's fee	Yes	Yes
Broker's commission	Yes	No
Construction charges	No	No
Cost of litigation	No	No
Credit report	No	Yes
Escrow agent's fee (not escrow deposits)	Yes	Yes
Hazard insurance	No	No
Inspection fees	Yes	Yes
Interest on loans	No	No
Lender's service fees except as specifically listed)	No	No
Loan discounts (points)	No	No
Inspection fees	Yes	Yes
Loan origination fee (not to exceed 1%)	No	Yes
Losses due to prices on market conditions	No	No
Mortgage insurance	No	No
Mortgage prepayment penalty (see FTR par. 302-6.2.D(1)(g))	Yes	No
Mortgage title insurance (lender's coverage)	No	Yes
Mortgage title insurance (owner's coverage)	Yes	No
Notary fees	Yes	Yes
Operating and maintenance costs	No	No
Pest inspection fee (no services performed)	Yes	Yes
Pest eradication services	No	No
Property taxes	No	No

Recording fees	Yes	Yes
Record title insurance	Yes	Yes
Repair costs	No	No
State, county, city, revenue stamps	Yes	No
Survey	Yes	Yes
Title insurance binder (instead of title search) and/or title insurance option	Yes	Yes
Transfer charges	Yes	Yes
Unexpired lease termination (see FTR par. 302-6.2.h)	Yes	No

Direct reimbursement of expenses is a mandatory entitlement for transferring employees; however, OPDIV/STAFFDIVs may include the option of using a relocation services company as covered in Section 12.7.9, Relocation Services Company.

An AO may authorize or approve a residence transaction expense allowance when an employee is performing a PCS in the interest of the Government, has signed a service agreement, and one of the following conditions is met:

1. The old and new official stations are located in the United States; or
2. The employee has completed an agreed upon tour of duty overseas and is returning to the United States to an official station that is at least 50 miles away from the employee’s last official station in the United States; or
3. When the employee has been permanently assigned to a temporary official station.

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV’s AO is responsible for ensuring that appropriate conditions in [FTR 302-11](#) have been met before authorizing a reimbursement for residence transactions.

Employees may be reimbursed for up to 10 percent of the value of a home sold and five percent of the value of a home purchased.

12.7.8.1 Employees Not Eligible for Residence Transactions

New appointees, employees returning to CONUS for separation, and employees assigned under the GETA (5 U.S.C. 4109) are not eligible to receive residence transaction expense allowances. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV’s AO is responsible for identifying those employees not qualified for residence transactions, according to [FTR 302-11.4](#).

12.7.8.2 Documentation

In order to be properly reimbursed, employees must document all residence transaction expenses. For a list of acceptable documentation for reimbursement of residence transaction expenses, see Section 12.8, Real Estate Instructions.

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV’s Financial Services provider, in conjunction with the OPDIV/STAFFDIV’s AO, will review and determine acceptability of documentation that

is submitted.

In order to receive reimbursement for residence transaction expenses, an employee is required to submit:

1. A copy of his/her financial documents that prove that only the employee, and/or a member(s) of the immediate family, made payments on the property;
2. A copy of his/her financial documents that prove that he/she and/or a member(s) of the immediate family received all proceeds from the sale of the property;
3. Documentation that is acceptable by OPDIV/STAFFDIV verifying any interest that the employee has in the property; and
4. Any additional documents that the OPDIV/STAFFDIV needs to verify payments.

12.7.8.3 Internal Controls

When paying allowances for expenses incurred in connection with residence transactions the following guidelines apply:

1. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV's STO, their designee, or the designated AO will authorize and approve residence transaction expenses.
2. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV's Financial Services provider, in conjunction with the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's STO, their designee or the designated AO, will review applications for reimbursement of residence transaction expenses.
3. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV's STO or their designee will authorize any extensions beyond the two-year limitation for completing sales, purchase, or lease transactions per [FTR 302-11.420](#) and [302-11.421](#).

Employees will submit documentation in accordance with Section 12.8, Real Estate Instructions, or on a form designated by the OPDIV/STAFFDIV. Employees must submit a claim with appropriate documentation to support their payment of the expenses claimed, which must include at a minimum:

1. The sales agreement;
2. The purchase agreement;
3. Property settlement documents;
4. Loan closing statements; and
5. Invoices or receipts for other bills paid.

If the employee uses the Guaranteed Home Sale (GHS) program, the vendor invoices must be supported by appropriate documentation. Employees are required to submit requests for reimbursement to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV Financial Services provider or to the Relocation Service Provider.

When transferring between OPDIV/STAFFDIVs or agencies, employees must submit travel claims to the hiring agency in the locality of the old official station for review and approval of the claim, unless the hiring agency review and approval functions are performed elsewhere as provided in FTR [302-11.405](#). The OPDIV/STAFFDIV must follow guidelines set in [FTR 302-11.406](#), the HHS Travel Manual and OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy.

12.7.8.4 Claims Administration

To administer an employee's claim the AO must:

1. Review the employee's claim to determine whether the expenses claimed are reasonable in amount and customarily paid by the buyer/seller in the locality where the property is located;
2. Disallow any portion of the employee's claim that is inflated or is higher than normal for similar services in the locality;
3. Execute final administrative approval of payment of a claim by an appropriate OPDIV/STAFFDIV AO; and
4. Return disapproved applications to the employee with a memorandum of explanation.

The AO must determine if:

1. The aggregate amount of expenses claimed in connection with a sale or purchase of a residence is within the prescribed limitation for either;
2. All conditions and requirements under which allowances may be paid have been met; and
3. The expenses themselves are authorized as reimbursable.

AOs must note that when following guidelines set forth in [FTR 302-11.406](#), caution must be taken not to authorize expenses listed in [FTR 302-11.202](#) or [302-11.304](#). In addition, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV must follow guidelines set by the FTR for claims payment under [FTR 302-11.200](#) and [302 Relocation Allowances Subchapter E](#).

12.7.9 Relocation Services Company

It is in the best interest of the employee and OPDIV/STAFFDIV to market the residence as soon as possible upon learning of an employee's relocation. An employee should look at using a

relocation services company with aggressive marketing. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV should encourage the employee to continue marketing their residence to maximize the benefit to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV and the employee – leading to an amended value sale as opposed to an appraised value sale, in other words, GHS.

In addition to the GHS, varieties of Buyer Value Option (BVO) programs are available. Before deciding on a BVO program, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV needs to consider the program structure and the resulting tax consequences. The benefits of a BVO for the transferring employee include equity access, tax protection, access to experienced real estate experts for home sale at the old and new official station, integrated mortgage finance assistance, and expedited settlement into the new location. OPDIV/STAFFDIV benefits include increasing the productivity at the new official station in a shorter timeframe, improving transferee satisfaction, reducing administrative burden, and eliminating the tax gross-up on the home sale portion of the relocation. To control cost, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV may consider establishing a home value cap based on requirements set by [FTR 302-12.111](#).

All employees that qualify should be considered eligible for the program. A relocation services company should provide all home sale services and other services available, as needed (e.g., rental assistance and property management). Ultimately, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's AO will determine whether an employee may use a relocation services company and what services will be offered.

12.7.10 Home Marketing Incentive Payments

OPDIV/STAFFDIVs may offer a Home Marketing Incentive payment to encourage the employee to participate in the GHS program and aggressively market their home. The Home Marketing Incentive is an option available as a discretionary item.

The Home Marketing Incentive should only be considered if it is likely to reduce the overall relocation costs. Items to consider in establishing a Home Marketing Incentive plan include mandatory marketing periods, list price guidelines, closing requirements, and residence value caps. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV's AO may authorize a home marketing incentive payment if the property qualifies for the home sale program and the employee agrees to actively marketing their residence. If the Home Incentive program is used, employees should be encouraged to market their residence as soon as possible. Note that the Home Marketing Incentive must comply with the limitations of [FTR 302-14.6](#).

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV's AO will determine whether a home marketing incentive payment is authorized, based on the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's policy.

12.7.11 Allowance for Property Management Services

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV may authorize payment for property management when it results in an overall cost savings, or relieves the employee of the cost of maintaining a residence while stationed at a remote or foreign duty station or other circumstances acceptable to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV.

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV's AO determines whether payment for property management services is

advantageous and cost effective to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV. The OPDIV/STAFFDIV should do a cost comparison to determine whether the property management service is more cost effective than selling the employee's residence.

In the case where an employee requests to change from a property management service to selling of his/her residence, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV is responsible for reviewing the reasons for such a request, and making a decision based on costs and particular circumstances. The employee would have to provide justification for such a request.

To determine if an offset is warranted, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV should research the cost incurred for property management and estimate the cost of sale for the residence in question.

12.7.12 Allowance for Miscellaneous Expenses (MEA)

The OPDIV/STAFFDIV must allow \$650 to a transferring employee relocating without family and \$1,300 to an employee traveling with family per [FTR 302-16.102](#) for miscellaneous expenses without supporting documentation of the expenses.

For amounts in excess of the \$650 for an employee, or \$1,300 for a family, the OPDIV/STAFFDIV will need to determine if the expenses fall within the guidelines in [FTR 302-16.1](#) and [FTR 302-16.103](#). The authorization of the excess amount is subject to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV's AO approval.

Payment requests will be reviewed and processed based on the FTR guidelines. The flat MEA is generally processed along with the en route travel voucher. If the amount is in excess, additional supporting documentation review will be required (e.g., bills or receipts to support costs in excess of flat rates).

12.7.12.1 Allowable Miscellaneous Expenses

Miscellaneous expenses are costs associated with:

1. Discontinuing a residence at the old official station; and/or
2. Establishing a residence at a new official station.

Allowable expenses include, but are not limited to, those listed in Table 24 below:

Table 24 - Allowable Miscellaneous Expenses

General Expenses	Fees/Deposits	Losses
Appliances	For disconnecting/connecting appliances, equipment, utilities (except for mobile homes see §302-10.200), conversion of appliances for operation on available utilities	
Rugs, draperies, and curtains	For cutting and fitting such items, moved from one residence quarters to another	
Utilities (See §302-10.200 for mobile homes)	Deposits or fees not offset by eventual refunds	
Medical, dental, and food locker contracts		Forfeiture losses not transferable or refundable
Private Institutional care contracts (such as that provided for handicapped or invalid dependents only)		Forfeiture losses not transferable or refundable
Privately-owned automobiles	Registration, Driver's license, and use taxes imposed when bringing into certain jurisdictions	
Transportations of pets	Only costs associated with dogs, cats and other house pets are included. Other animals (horses, fish, birds, various rodents, etc.) are excluded because of their size, exotic nature, or restrictions on shipping, host country restrictions, and special handling difficulties. Costs are limited to transportation and handling costs, required to meet the more stringent rules of air carriers, not included are inoculations, examinations, boarding quarantine, or other costs in the moving process	

12.8 Real Estate Instructions

The real estate voucher claim is used to reimburse employees for expenses incurred in connection with residence transactions. Employees should check with their OPDIV/STAFFDIV or their relocation services provider for the correct form to be used.

12.8.1 Required Items

In the event that an employee purchases a residence as part of a new appointment or transfer, the checklist(s) provided below should be used to ensure that all applicable required documents are submitted for each of the following circumstance(s).

12.8.1.1 Real Estate Purchase

The following checklist is for expenses related to the purchase of a new residence.

- Purchase contract.
- Settlement statement (HUD-1) with all signatures (unless the State does not require signatures). If a HUD-1 is not available, submit proof from the bank or settlement agent that the transaction occurred.
 - *Note: All names listed on the HUD-1 must be included on the travel order or the reimbursement will be pro-rated.
- If any costs were paid outside of closing (POC), please provide proof of payment for each expense. If the POC is included on the HUD-1, they will be notated with P.O.C. (B*).
- If the expense for "Owner's Title Insurance" is listed in the Borrower's column, please contact the settlement agent to verify that all three of the following requirements are met in order to be reimbursed for this expense:
 1. The expense is customarily paid for by the buyer.
 2. The expense does not exceed the charges normally paid in the locality.
 3. The expense was a pre-requisite to financing – OR – it was a pre-requisite for the transfer of the property – OR – the cost of the owner's title insurance policy is inseparable from the cost of the other insurance, which is a pre-requisite.
- If an expense for a property inspection or environmental test is listed on the Borrower's column, please contact the settlement agent to prove that either Federal, State, or local law, or the lender, required the expense.
 - *Note: If proof is not submitted for the owner's title insurance, property inspections, or environmental testing, it will not be reimbursed on the current voucher. If later, proof can be provided, a supplemental voucher will be prepared.

12.8.1.2 Real Estate Sale

The following checklist is for expenses related to the sale of an existing residence.

- Sales contract.
- Settlement statement (HUD-1) with all signatures (unless the State does not require signatures). If a HUD-1 is not available, submit proof from the bank or settlement agent that the transaction occurred.
 - *Note: All names listed on the HUD-1 must be included on the travel order or the reimbursement will be pro-rated.
- If any costs were paid outside of closing (POC), please provide proof of payment for each

expense. If the POC is included on the HUD-1, they will be notated with P.O.C. (S*).

If the expense for "Owner's Title Insurance" is listed in the Seller's column, please contact the settlement agent to prove all three of the following requirements in order to be reimbursed for this expense:

1. The expense is customarily paid for by the seller.
2. The expense does not exceed the charges normally paid in the locality.
3. The expense was a pre-requisite to financing – OR – it was a pre-requisite for the transfer of the property – OR – the cost of the owner's title insurance policy is inseparable from the cost of the other insurance, which is a pre-requisite.

*Note: If proof is not submitted for the owner's title insurance, it will not be reimbursed on the current voucher. If later, proof can be provided, a supplemental voucher will be prepared.

12.8.1.3 Lease breaking

The following checklist is for expenses related to the breaking of a lease.

Receipts or proof of payment for all lease-breaking expenses.

Lease agreement.

*Note: All names listed on the lease agreement must be included on the travel order or the reimbursement will be pro-rated.

12.9 Submitting Expenses

Once all of the required items have been gathered, please submit the voucher packet to the contact provided by the OPDIV/STAFFDIV or relocation services company.

12.10 Reimbursable Expenses for Real Estate Purchase & Sale:

The following excerpt taken from FTR [302-11.200](#) includes commonly reimbursable expenses provided they are customarily paid by the seller of a residence at the old official station or by the purchaser of a residence at the new official station:

- a) Your broker's fee or real estate commission that you pay in the sale of your residence at the last official station, not to exceed the rates that are generally charged in the locality of your old official station;
- b) The customary cost for an appraisal;
- c) The costs of newspaper, bulletin board, multiple-listing services, and other advertising for sale of the residence at your old official station that is not included in the broker's fee or the real estate agent's commission;
- d) The cost of a title insurance policy, costs of preparing conveyances, other instruments, and contracts and related notary fees and recording fees; cost of making surveys, preparing drawings or plats when required for legal or financing purposes; and similar expenses incurred for selling your residence to the extent such costs:
 - (1) Have not been included in other residence transaction fees (i.e., brokers' fees or real estate agent fees);
 - (2) Do not exceed the charges, for such expenses that are normally charged in the locality of your residence;
 - (3) Are usually furnished by the seller;
- e) The costs of searching title, preparing abstracts, and the legal fees for a title opinion to the extent such costs:
 - (1) Have not been included in other related transaction costs (i.e., broker's fees or real estate agency fees); and
 - (2) Do not exceed the charges, for such expenses, that are customarily charged in the locality of your residence.
- f) The following "other" miscellaneous expenses in connection with the sale and/or purchase of your residence, provided they are normally paid by the seller or the purchaser in the locality of the residence, to the extent that they do not exceed specifically stated limitations, or if not specifically stated, the amounts customarily paid in the locality of the residence:
 - (1) FHA or VA fees for the loan application;
 - (2) Loan origination fees and similar charges such as loan assumption fees, loan transfer fees or other similar charges not to exceed 1 percent of the loan amount without itemization of the lender's administrative charges (unless requirements in §302-11.201 are met), if the charges are assessed in lieu of a loan origination fee and reflects charges for services similar to those covered by a loan origination fee;
 - (3) Cost of preparing credit reports;
 - (4) Mortgage and transfer taxes;
 - (5) State revenue stamps;

- (6) Other fees and charges similar in nature to those listed in paragraphs (f)(1) through (f)(5) of this section, unless specifically prohibited in §302-11.202;
- (7) Charge for prepayment of a mortgage or other security instrument in connection with the sale of the residence at the old official station to the extent the terms in the mortgage or other security instrument provide for this charge. This prepayment penalty is also reimbursable when the mortgage or other security instrument does not specifically provide for prepayment, provided this penalty is customarily charged by the lender, but in that case the reimbursement may not exceed 3 months' interest on the loan balance;
- (8) Mortgage title insurance policy, paid by you, on a residence you purchased for the protection of, and required by, the lender;
- (9) Owner's title insurance policy, provided it is a prerequisite to financing or the transfer of the property; or if the cost of the owner's title insurance policy is inseparable from the cost of other insurance which is a prerequisite;
- (10) Expenses in connection with construction of a residence, which are comparable to expenses that are reimbursable in connection with the purchase of an existing residence;
- (11) Expenses in connection with environmental testing and property inspection fees when required by Federal, State, or local law; or by the lender as a precondition to sale or purchase; and
- (12) Other expenses of sale and purchase made for required services that are customarily paid by the seller of a residence at the old official station or if customarily paid by the purchaser of a residence at the new official station.

13. Glossary

The Glossary includes terms related to Temporary Duty Travel, Relocation, the Travel Charge Card Program, and Travel for Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Services including National Special Security Events (NSSE) and similar situations. Not all terms in the Glossary are used in the HHS Travel manual but come from the related regulations including the FTR.

Term

Abuse of Government Travel Charge Card (See also Misuse of Government Travel Charge Card)

Definition

Use of a Government travel charge card to buy authorized items, but at terms (e.g., price, quantity) that are excessive, is for a questionable Government need, or both. Examples of such transactions would include multiple ATM withdrawals on same day, purchasing unrelated travel expenses (e.g., purchases of computer and electronic equipment, or paying for express mailing services at a conference or hotel).

Account Deactivation

A method by which an OPDIV/STAFFDIV can prevent the cardholder's ability to make transactions on the account, temporarily, without canceling the account. While the account is deactivated, any transaction that the cardholder attempts will be declined at the point of sale (POS). The Agency can deactivate and reactivate an account through the travel charge card vendor's Electronic Access System (EAS) or by calling the charge card vendor. The charge card vendor's A/OPC guide or EAS will provide guidance to the Agency on the deactivation and reactivation process.

Actual Expense (Allowance) AEA

The FTR definition is "Payment of authorized actual expenses incurred, up to the limit prescribed by the Administrator of GSA or agency, as appropriate. Entitlement to reimbursement is contingent upon entitlement to per diem, and is subject to the same definitions and rules governing per diem."

Under an AEA, a traveler is reimbursed what they actually spend, up to the maximum amount allowed by GSA. The amount authorized may be reimbursed up to 300 percent of the GSA maximum for the TDY Location. A traveler must itemize all expenses, including meals, to be reimbursed under actual expenses.

Administrative Meeting

A meeting held for purposes of consultation, education, or discussion of issues relating to the development, implementation, or management of the Department's internal programs and operations. An administrative

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
	<p>meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. May include attendees who are not all HHS attendees; 2. Is usually held at an HHS facility but may be held at another government facility, or private facility; 3. May involve attendee travel costs e.g., per diem entitlements; and 4. Is not scientific in nature.
	<p>The Government Accountability Office describes a meeting as a gathering that discusses “business matters internal to an agency or other topics that have little relevance outside of the agency.” B-300826 at page 6. Examples of these are daylong quarterly supervisors meetings discussing general/business management topics, suggestions, issues, and problems of the agency. Corps of Engineers—Use of Appropriated Funds to Pay for Meals, B-249795 (May 12, 1993). According to GAO, meetings that have these characteristics do not constitute formal conferences. See B-300826 at page 6.</p>
<i>Agency/Organization Program Coordinator (A/OPC)</i>	<p>Agency-designated coordinator, including alternates, who administer the Government travel charge card program.</p>
<i>Attendance</i>	<p>Being present during all or any part of a conference, administrative meeting, or other event.</p>
<i>Authorization (Travel charge card)</i>	<p>The process of verifying, at the POS, that a purchase is allowable given the requirements, prohibitions, and controls established by the agency for the card.</p>
<i>Authorized Point of Origin</i>	<p>The previous official station for a transferring employee. For a new appointee or student trainee, it is the place of actual residence.</p>
<i>Authorizing Official/Approving Official (AO) (Approver)</i>	<p>Person with delegated authority to approve travel authorizations and travel vouchers. This person should be aware of how the authorized travel will support the Agency’s mission, and should be knowledgeable of the employee’s travel plans and the Agency’s travel policies and procedures.</p> <p>The Official must understand that by authorizing or approving the travel that he/she is instructing the Funds Certifier to commit funds on behalf of the Government. (This Official cannot both approve travel and certify funds for the same travel document. See definition of</p>

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>Automated Teller Machine (ATM)</i>	Funds Certifier.)
<i>Automated Teller Machine (ATM) Advance</i>	An electronic device that allows cash withdrawals (advances) from participating banks. A cash withdrawal at an ATM using the contractor bank issued Government travel charge card, which is used to cover anticipated out-of-pocket incidental travel expenses, such as ground transportation, or occasional meals, and that generally cannot be purchased with the travel charge card.
<i>Automated Teller Machine (ATM) Services</i>	Government contractor-provided services that allow cash withdrawals from participating ATMs to be charged to a Government contractor bank issued charge card.
<i>Billing Error</i>	Transaction appearing on a cardholder's account as questionable charge, duplicate billing, or unauthorized charge.
<i>Business Class</i>	A class of accommodation offered by common carrier service (air, rail, etc.) that is higher than Coach Class and lower than First Class, in both cost and amenities. This class of accommodation may be referred to as "Business, Business Elite, Business First, World Business, Connoisseur, or Envoy, etc." depending on the common carrier.
<i>Cancellation</i>	Permanent termination of Government travel charge card privileges after the travel charge account is 126 calendar days past due based upon the closing date of the statement.
<i>Cardholder</i>	The legal agent (employee) using the Government travel charge card to buy goods and services in support of official travel and Government business. The cardholder holds the primary responsibility for the card's proper use and payment.
<i>Cardholder Statement</i>	A statement, listing all transactions during the billing period, which is sent to each cardholder.
<i>Cash Advance</i>	Monies obtained from a Government contractor-issued travel charge card, via an ATM, or bank teller. Cash advances must be obtained in limited amounts commensurate with actual travel. The standard amount is 60 percent of the M&IE for the TDY location.
<i>Centrally Billed Account (CBA)</i>	A card or account established by the travel charge card vendor at the request of the HHS accounting office. This may be a card or cardless account. Payments are made directly to the charge card vendor by the HHS office responsible for the reconciliation of the account. A CBA

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>City Pair Program (CPP)</i>	<p>may be used to pay for airfare, rail, TMC, and ETS vendor fees. CBAs are not used for other common carrier methods or lodging unless an exception has been granted by the HHS Travel Office.</p> <p>The airline City Pair Program provides discounted air transportation services for Federal travelers Government-wide. CPP fares are unrestricted; some of the benefits offered under the CPP include no advance purchase requirement, no minimum length of stay, and fully refundable tickets with no airline cancellation of change fees.</p>
<i>Civilian Board Of Contract Appeals (CBCA)</i>	<p>The CBCA was established by Section 847 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 to hear claims by Federal employees under Title 31 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 3702 for reimbursement of expenses incurred while on official TDY travel or in connection with relocation to a new official station.</p>
<i>Coach Class</i>	<p>The basic class of accommodation by common carrier (air, rail, etc.) that is normally the lowest fare offered regardless of terminology used. For reference purposes only, this class may also be referred to as “Tourist Class,” “Economy class,” or as “Single class” when the common carrier offers only one class of accommodations to all travelers.</p>
<i>Commissioned Officer</i>	<p>Members of the Commissioned Corps are appointed under 42 U.S.C 204. See Section 1.2.2 for travel policy for Commissioned Officers.</p>
<i>Commuted Rate</i>	<p>A rate used to calculate a defined amount to be paid for the transportation and temporary storage of an employee’s household goods. It includes the cost of line-haul transportation, packing/unpacking, local hauling charges, crating/uncrating and other accessorial charges, and costs of temporary storage within applicable weight limits for storage, including handling in/out charges. The commuted rate cannot exceed the lowest cost carrier under the GBL method, cannot be used intrastate (inside the state), and may not fully reimburse the employee’s out-of-pocket expenses.</p>
<i>Conference</i>	<p>A prearranged scientific, medical, or professional meeting, convention, seminar, or symposium that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="756 1818 1377 1885">1. Is usually held for consultation, education, or discussion of scientific, medical, human

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
	<p>services, public health issues or other related events;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. May include attendees who are not all HHS attendees; 3. Is usually not held at a space that is owned, leased, or shared by HHS; and 4. May involve attendee travel costs e.g., per diem entitlements.
	<p>The Government Accountability Office has stated that a formal conference “typically involves topical matters of interest to, and the participation of, multiple agencies and/or nongovernmental participants.” National Institutes of Health—Food at Government-Sponsored Conferences, B-300826 at page 2 (March 3, 2005). Indicia of a formal conference are registration, a published substantive agenda, and scheduled speakers or discussion panels. See B-300826 at page 6.</p>
<i>Constructed Cost</i>	<p>The sum of transportation expenses the employee would reasonably have incurred for round-trip travel between the official station and the alternate location, plus per diem calculated for the appropriate en route travel time.</p>
<i>Consultant</i>	<p>A person who can provide valuable and pertinent advice generally drawn from a high degree of broad administrative, professional, or technical knowledge or experience. When an agency requires public advisory participation, a consultant also may be a person who is affected by a particular program and can provide useful views from personal experience (See 5 CFR 304.102). Section 1.7 provides travel policy guidance for Consultants.</p>
<i>Continental United States (CONUS)</i>	<p>The 48 contiguous States and the District of Columbia.</p>
<i>Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)</i>	<p>The continuous performance of essential Government functions and operations in the event of an emergency or disaster.</p>
<i>Contract Carriers</i>	<p>U.S. certificated air carriers, which are under contract with the Government to furnish Federal employees and other persons authorized to travel at Government expense, with passenger transportation service under the CPP. This also includes GSA’s scheduled airline passenger service between selected U.S. cities/airports and between selected U.S. and international cities/airports at reduced fares.</p>

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>Contract Fares [YCA], [_CA]</i>	Contract Fares are offered under the airline CPP. Travelers are required to use the contact fare per FTR 301-10.105 and 106 unless an exception is authorized. Contract fares include the YCA Fare, which is the guaranteed GSA economy class Airline City Pair fare. The _CA is the limited capacity, GSA economy class Airline City Pair fare. The first letter of the three-letter fare basis code will vary by airline (e.g., QCA, LCA, etc.). The difference between the YCA and _CA is that there are a limited number of seats on the lower _CA Airline City Pair rate.
<i>Contractor</i>	A person whose services are procured by a formal contract. See Section 1.7 for travel policy regarding contractors.
<i>Cost Comparison(for Relocation)</i>	The preparation of a cost estimate of either alternate travel modes or HHG shipping methods, for a self-move under the GBL, to determine which is most advantageous to the Government. This is done prior to preparing the Relocation Travel Authorization. This information should be attached to the travel document or typed in the comments section of the travel document to be retained for auditing purposes.
<i>Data mining</i>	An automated process used to scan databases to detect patterns, trends, and/or anomalies for use in risk management or other areas of analysis.
<i>Delinquency/delinquent account</i>	A Government travel charge card account balance that is unpaid or more than 61 days past the statement date based upon the closing date of the statement.
<i>Dependent</i>	An immediate family member of the employee.
<i>Disaster</i>	Usually, an unexpected occurrence, man-made or natural, that causes loss of life, health, property, or livelihood, inflicting widespread destruction and distress and/or having long-term, adverse effects on Agency operations.
<i>Discretionary Allowances</i>	Allowances over which agencies have discretionary authority to pay or reimburse to employees when authorized. Allowances must be authorized in advance on the relocation order.
<i>Disposable Pay</i>	The part of a salary payment that remains after the deduction of any amount required by law is withheld. Required deductions do not include discretionary deductions such as health insurance, savings bonds, charitable contributions, etc. Deductions may be made from basic, special, and incentive salary payments.

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>Dispute</i>	A written challenge of an unresolved or disputed transaction on the cardholder's billing statement. Cardholders must assert a dispute, or a billing error, in writing within 60 days of date of the statement reflecting the transaction in question in order not to be liable for payment of the transaction in question.
<i>Domestic Partner</i>	An adult in a domestic partnership with an employee of the same-sex.
<i>Domestic Partnership</i>	<p>A committed relationship between two adults of the same sex, in which they:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are each other's sole domestic partner and intend to remain so indefinitely; 2. Maintain a common residence, and intend to continue to do so (or would maintain a common residence but for an assignment abroad or other employment-related, financial, or similar obstacle); 3. Are at least 18 years of age and mentally competent to consent to contract; 4. Share responsibility for a significant measure of each other's financial obligations; 5. Are not married or joined in a civil union to anyone else; 6. Are not a domestic partner of anyone else; 7. Are not related in a way that, if there of opposite sex, would prohibit legal marriage in the U.S. jurisdiction in which the domestic partnership was formed; 8. Are willing to certify, if required by the agency, that they understand that willful falsification of any documentation required to establish that an individual is in a domestic partnership may lead to disciplinary action and the recovery of the cost of benefits received related to such falsification, as well as constitute a criminal violation under 18 U.S.C. 1001, and that the method for securing such certification, if required, shall be determined by the agency; and 9. Are willing promptly to disclose, if required by the agency, any dissolution or material change in the status of the domestic partnership.

Note to definition of "Domestic partnership": The definition of "Domestic partnership" requires that the partners "share responsibility for a significant measure of each other's financial obligations." This

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
	<p>criterion requires only that there be financial interdependence between the partners and should not be interpreted to exclude partnerships in which one partner stays at home while the other is the primary breadwinner.</p>
<i>Due Process</i>	<p>The legal process to which an agency must adhere prior to the collection or salary offset on any undisputed delinquent amount on behalf of the Government contractor travel charge card vendor.</p>
<i>Electronic Access System (EAS)</i>	<p>The Government travel charge card vendor's internet-based system,²⁹ which provides a variety of reports related to the travel charge card program. The reports assist in the effective management of the travel charge card program.</p>
<i>Emergency Deployment Employee</i>	<p>Immediate humanitarian support and relief.</p> <p>An individual employed by an agency, regardless of status or rank; an individual employed intermittently in Government service as an expert or consultant and paid on a daily when-actually-employed (WAE) basis; or an individual serving without pay or at \$1 a year (also referred to as an "invitational traveler").</p> <p>Employees include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appointed officers or employees of HHS, under 5 U.S.C. 5707; 2. Special government employees under 18 U.S.C. 202; 3. Experts or consultants appointed under authority of 5 U.S.C. 3109; 4. Any individual appointed under Title 42 excepted service authority; or 5. A commissioned officer appointed under Title 42.
<i>En Route Travel</i>	<p>Travel between an employee's old and new official stations.</p>
<i>Entitlements</i>	<p>Costs associated with relocation that agencies must pay or reimburse employees if relocation is authorized.</p>
<i>Entry Level (For Purposes of Pre-Employment Interview)</i>	<p>Any grade of employee lower than a General Schedule Grade 9 (GS-9), unless allowed by statute.</p>
<i>Excessive Advance</i>	<p>Cash advances obtained in amounts greater than anticipated out-of-pocket travel expenses such as for ground transportation or occasional meals.</p>

²⁹ The current system, at the time the manual was updated, is provided by JPMC and is called Payment Net.
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<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>Expert (Subject Matter Expert [SME])</i>	A person who is specially qualified by education and experience to perform difficult and challenging tasks in a particular field beyond the usual range of achievement of competent persons in that field. An expert is regarded by other persons in the field as an authority or practitioner of unusual competence and skill in a professional, scientific, technical, or other activity. (See 5 CFR 304.102.) Section 1.7 provides travel policy regarding experts.
<i>Extended Storage</i>	The storage of household goods while an employee is assigned to an official station or post of duty to which they are not authorized to take, or unable to use the household goods, or is authorized in the public interest or cost effective to do so. This is also referred to as non-temporary storage.
<i>Extended TDY(See Also Long-term TDY)</i>	Temporary Duty Travel that lasts between 14 nights and 29 nights.
<i>Extra Fare Train Service</i>	A train that operates at an increased fare due to the extra performance of the train (i.e., at faster speed or fewer stops, such as the Acela).
<i>Federal Advisory Committee Consultant</i>	An individual appointed under the Federal Advisory Committee Act who is paid through the HHS payroll system for his/her time served. For members of those councils and committees having legislative authority for payment of actual travel and subsistence expenses, please reference Section 1.7, Travel of Consultants, Experts, and Invitational Travelers.
<i>Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Approved Accommodation</i>	Any place of public lodging that is listed on the national master list of approved accommodations, which is compiled, periodically updated, and published in the Federal Register by FEMA. The list is also available on the U.S. Fire Administration's Internet (http://www.usfa.fema.gov/hotel/index.htm).
<i>First Class</i>	The highest class of accommodation offered by the common carrier in terms of cost and amenities. This is generally termed "First Class" by airlines and reservation systems.
<i>Foreign Air Carrier</i>	An air carrier who is not holding a certificate issued by the United States Government under 49 U.S.C. 41102.
<i>Frequent Traveler</i>	An employee who travels five or more times per fiscal year and is thereby mandated to apply for and use a Government contractor bank-issued travel charge card.
<i>Full Coach Fare</i>	The price of a coach fare available to the public on a scheduled air carrier between the day that the travel was

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>Funds Certifier/Certifier</i>	planned and the day the travel occurred. Person with delegated authority to certify that the organization has funding available for the purpose of the proposed travel.
<i>Gateway City</i>	A city that serves as a departure or arrival point for international flights. 2. A city that serves as an airline's entry or departure point to or from a country.
<i>Government Aircraft</i>	An aircraft that is operated for the exclusive use of an executive agency and is a: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Federal aircraft, which an executive agency owns (i.e., holds title to) or borrows for any length of time under a bailment or equivalent loan agreement (See 41 CFR 102-33.20 for definition of all terms related to Federal aircraft); or 2. Commercial aircraft hired as commercial aviation services (CAS), which an executive agency: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Leases or lease-purchases with the intent to take title; b. Charters or rents; or c. Hires as part of a full-service contract or inter-service support agreement (ISSA).
<i>Government Bill of Lading (GBL)</i>	This is used for the procurement of commercial transportation (moving) services.
<i>Government Contractor Bank-Issued Travel Charge Card</i>	A Government contractor-issued charge card used by authorized individuals to pay for official travel and transportation-related expenses for which the contractor bills the employee.
<i>Government Employees Training Act (GETA)</i>	Provides Federal agencies general authority for employee training.
<i>Government Transportation Request (GTR) [Standard Form (SF) 1169]</i>	A government document used to procure common carrier transportation services. The document obligates the Government to pay for transportation services provided.
<i>Government-Furnished Automobile</i>	An automobile (or "light truck", as defined in 41 CFR 101-38 including vans and pickup trucks) that is: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Owned by an agency; 2. Assigned or dispatched to an agency from the GSA Interagency Fleet Management System; or

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
	3. Leased by the Government for a period of 60 days or longer from a commercial source.
<i>Government-Furnished Vehicle</i>	A government-furnished automobile or a government aircraft.
<i>Guaranteed Home Sale (GHS)</i>	Home sale based on upon the appraised or amended value. The employee has the benefit of a guaranteed offer (GO) for their home residence.
<i>Home Sale Programs: Amended Value Sale</i>	This occurs when the relocating employee receives a bona-fide offer from a qualified buyer. If the contract is acceptable, the Relocation Services Company signs the contract and amends its guaranteed offer to reflect the accepted contract price.
<i>Home Sale Programs: Amend-from-Zero Sale</i>	This occurs when the employee receives a bona-fide outside offer prior to the completion of the appraisal process. Since there is no guaranteed purchase offer, the relocation company amends from zero to match the outside offer. The value of the home is established by the buyer offer, not the appraised value or guaranteed offer from the relocation services company.
<i>Home Sale Programs: Appraised Value</i>	A contract of sale extended to a relocating employee from the relocation company to buy the employee's property based upon the average of a specific number of appraisals.
<i>Home Sale Programs: Buyer Value Option (BVO)</i>	This is a variation of the Amended Value transaction and can be structured in numerous ways.
<i>Home Sale Programs: Direct Reimbursement</i>	A program where the employer reimburses some or all home-sale expenses incurred by the employee.
<i>Household Goods (HHG)</i>	Property, unless specifically excluded, associated with the home and all personal affects belonging to an employee and immediate family members on the effective date of the employee's change of official station orders (the day the employee reports for duty at the new official station) that legally may be accepted and transported by a commercial HHG carrier.
<i>House-hunting Trip (HHT)</i>	A trip made by the employee and/or spouse to a new official station locality to find permanent living quarters to rent or purchase.
<i>Immediate Family</i>	Any of the following named members of the employee's household at the time they report for duty at the new permanent duty station or performs other authorized travel involving family members: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spouse; 2. Domestic Partner;

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>Individual Billed Account (IBA)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Children of the employee or employee's spouse who are unmarried and under 21 years of age or who, regardless of age, are physically or mentally incapable of self-support; 4. Dependent parent(s) of the employee; or 5. Dependent brother(s) and sister of the employee, who are unmarried, under 21 years of age, and dependent on the employee, or who, regardless of age, are physically or mentally incapable of self-support and dependent on the employee. <p>A Government contractor-issued travel charge card, which is used by a Government employee, to pay for official travel and transportation-related expenses for which the HHS employee is liable to pay.</p>
<i>Intermittent Consultant or Expert</i>	<p>Employment without a regularly scheduled tour of duty (5 CFR 340 Subpart D) for not more than 130 days in a service year. If an intermittent consultant or expert serves for all or any part of a day beyond 130 days in a service year, the appointment ceases to be intermittent and becomes temporary. Intermittent consultants are designated either "WAE" (when-actually-employed) or "WOC" (without compensation, or at one dollar per year). See Section 1.7 for travel policy for intermittent consultants.</p>
<i>Intermittent Employment</i>	<p>Employment without a regularly scheduled tour of duty. (See 5 CFR 340 Subpart D.)</p>
<i>International Travel (See OCONUS)</i>	<p>The terms "international travel" and "outside the United States," as used in this manual, are defined as meaning all travel on official duty time (except change of official stations) outside the 50 United States, Guam, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, and any other territory under U.S. jurisdiction. (The term foreign travel may also be used.)</p> <p>Trips to the former U.S. Trust Territories in the Pacific, which are now independent (the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, and the Marshall Islands), are considered international travel.</p> <p>Note: An HHS traveler stationed outside the United States who conducts official travel solely between foreign countries must follow U.S. Department of State regulations and guidance.</p>
<i>Interviewee</i>	<p>An individual who is being considered for employment by an agency. The individual may currently be a</p>

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>Invitational Travel</i>	government employee. 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 WAE basis, or individuals serving without pay or at \$1 a year, when acting in a capacity that is directly related to, or in connection with, official activities of the Government. Invitational travelers are not employees of HHS or another Federal agency. They are also not contractors or consultants as defined in this manual. Travel allowances authorized for invitational travelers are the same as those normally authorized for Federal employees, as defined in the FTR, in connection with TDY Travel.
<i>Invitational Traveler</i>	A person not appointed as a consultant/expert who is requested by the OPDIV/STAFFDIV to confer on Government business (see FTR 300-3.1).
<i>Limited Open Authorization</i>	A travel authorization allowing an employee to travel on official business without further authorization under certain specific conditions (e.g., travel to specific geographic area(s) for specific purpose(s), subject to trip cost ceilings; or for specific periods).
<i>Lodgings-Plus Per Diem System</i>	The method of computing per diem allowances for official travel in which the per diem allowance for each travel day is established on the basis of the actual amount the traveler pays for lodging, plus an allowance for M&IE, the total of which does not exceed the applicable maximum per diem rate for the location concerned.
<i>Long-term TDY (See Also Extended TDY)</i>	Temporary Duty Travel lasting 30 nights or longer.
<i>Meals & Incidental Expenses (M&IE) See Per Diem Allowance</i>	See definition for Per Diem Allowance below.
<i>Meeting or Similar Function</i>	As defined in title 31 U.S.C. 1353, this term refers to a conference, seminar, speaking engagement, symposium, training course, or similar event that takes place away from the employee's official station. The term does not include a meeting or other event that is required to carry out a statutory or regulatory function of HHS, such as an investigation, inspections, audits, site visits, negotiations, or litigation. It also does not include promotional vendor training or other meetings held for the primary purpose of marketing the products or

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>Merchant Category Code (MCC)</i>	services of the non-Federal source nor long-term TDY travel or training.
<i>Miscellaneous Expense</i>	A numerical identifier assigned by the bank for classification of products and services.
<i>Mission Assignment</i>	The cost associated with discontinuing the residence at the old official station and/or establishing a residence at the new official station. Miscellaneous expenses are related to expenses that are common to living quarters, furnishings, household appliances, and to other general types of costs inherent in relocation of a place of residence.
<i>Misuse of Government Contractor Bank-Issued Travel Charge Card (See Abuse of Government Contractor Bank-Issued Travel Charge Card)</i>	A work order issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) after a Presidentially-declared disaster to another Federal agency directing the completion of a specific task, and citing funding, other managerial controls, and guidance.
<i>National Special Security Event (NSSE)</i>	Use of the travel charge card in an unauthorized, illegal, or adverse manner. Examples of misuse include unauthorized cash advances, purchase of non-reimbursable personal expenditures, use of the travel charge card when not in an official travel status, becoming delinquent in payments to the travel charge card vendor, etc.
<i>Non-ATM Advance</i>	A significant domestic or international event, occurrence, contest, activity, or meeting, which by virtue of its profile and/or status represents an attractive target for terrorist attack. Examples include State funerals, political conventions, presidential inaugurations, public sporting events, state of the union address, etc.
<i>Non-Contract Fare Non-Federal Source</i>	An advance for travelers who do not have the contractor-issued Government contractor bank-issued travel charge card. The travel advance must not exceed 60 percent of the total, estimated M&IE, lodging, and other miscellaneous expenses authorized on the travel order.
	A fare offered by an airline that is not part of the CPP. Any person or entity other than the Government of the United States. The term includes any individual, private or commercial entity, nonprofit organization or association, international or multinational organization (irrespective of whether an agency holds membership in the organization or association), or foreign, State or local government (including the government of the

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>Non-Foreign Area Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS)</i>	District of Columbia). See FTR 304-2.1 . The States of Alaska and Hawaii, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands and the territories and possessions of the United States (excludes the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands).
<i>Object Class Code</i>	Object class codes are prescribed by the Office of Management and Budget and are used uniformly through the Government in submitting budget estimates and budget reports to OMB and Congress. The major object class codes are a numeric code structure and are extended by adding two digits, numeric/alpha, to further identify specific objects.
<i>Official Station</i>	An area defined by the Agency that includes the location where the employee regularly performs his or her duties, or an invitational traveler's home or regular place of business (see FTR 301-1.2). The area may be a mileage radius around a particular point, a geographic boundary, or any other definite domain, provided no part of the area is more than 50 miles from where the employee regularly performs his or her duties or from an invitational traveler's home or regular place of business. If the employee's work involves recurring travel or varies on a recurring basis, the location where the work activities of the employee's position of record are based is considered the regular place of work. Generally, the official station, for travel purposes, is the same that is listed on an employee's SF 50, "Notification of Personnel Action." However, this may not always be the case such as when the majority of an employee's time is spent away from the office because of teleworking or other flexible workplace arrangements.
<i>Open Skies Agreement</i>	A bilateral or multilateral air transport agreement to which the United States Government and the government of a foreign country are parties, and which the Department of Transportation has determined meets the requirements of the Fly America Act.
<i>Other Events</i>	Any meeting for any purpose attended by an HHS attendee that does not meet the criteria for a conference, or administrative meeting as defined in HHS Travel Manual. Examples include attendance at job recruiting fairs, manning the booth at Earth Day activities on behalf of the attendee's OPDIV/STAFFDIV, etc.

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>Other than Coach Class</i>	Any class of common carrier accommodations above Coach Class (e.g., First Class, Business Class, or Premium Class).
<i>Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS) (See International Travel)</i>	See Non-Foreign Area—The States of Alaska and Hawaii, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands and the territories and possessions of the United States (excludes the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands).
<i>Payment</i>	A monetary disbursement from a non-Federal source to a Federal agency for travel, subsistence, related expenses by check or other monetary instrument payable to the Federal agency (e.g., electronic funds transfer [EFT], money order, charge card, etc.) or payment in-kind. See FTR 304-2.1 .
<i>Payment In-Kind</i>	Transportation, food, lodging, or other travel-related services provided by a non-Federal source, instead of monetary payments, to the Federal agency for these services. Payment in-kind also includes waiver of any fees that a non-Federal source normally collects from meeting attendees (e.g., registration fees). See FTR 304-2.1 .
<i>Per Diem Allowance (Subsistence Allowance)</i>	<p>A daily payment allotted to the employee instead of reimbursement for actual expenses for lodging, meals, and related incidental expenses. The per diem allowance is separate from transportation expenses and other miscellaneous expenses.</p> <p>The per diem allowance covers all charges and services, where applicable. Lodging taxes in the United States, CONUS, and OCONUS (Non-Foreign) are excluded from the per diem allowance and are reimbursed as a miscellaneous expense. In foreign locations, lodging taxes are part of the per diem allowance and are not a miscellaneous expense. The per diem allowance covers the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Lodging:</u> Includes expenses, except lodging taxes in the U.S., for overnight sleeping facilities, baths, personal use of the room during daytime, telephone access fee, and service charges for fans, air conditioners, heaters and fires furnished in the room when such charges are not included in the room rate. Lodging does not include accommodations on airplanes, trains, buses, or ships. Such cost is included in the

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
	<p>transportation cost and is not considered a lodging expense.</p> <p>2. <u>Meals</u>: Expenses for breakfast, lunch, dinner and related tips and taxes (specifically excluded are alcoholic beverage and entertainment expenses, and any expenses incurred for other persons).</p> <p>3. <u>Incidental expenses</u>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, stewards or stewardesses and others on ships, and hotel servants in foreign countries; b. Transportation between places of lodging or business and places where meals are taken, if suitable meals cannot be obtained at the place of lodging; and c. Mailing costs associated with filing travel vouchers and payment of government-sponsored charge card billings.
<i>Permanent Change of Station (PCS)</i>	An assignment of a new appointee to an official station or the transfer of an employee from one official station to another on a permanent basis.
<i>Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Travel</i>	Travel and other relocation expenses involved in the permanent change of an employee's official station.
<i>Place of Public Accommodation</i>	<p>Any inn, hotel, or other establishment within a State that provides lodging to transient guests, excluding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An establishment owned by the Federal government; 2. An establishment treated as an apartment building by State or local law or regulation; or 3. An establishment containing not more than five (5) rooms for rent or hire that is also occupied as a residence by the proprietor of that establishment.
<i>Premium Class Accommodations</i>	Any class of service that is higher than Coach Class (i.e., First Class or Business Class).
<i>Premium-Other-Than-First Class Accommodations</i>	Any class of service between Coach Class and First Class and is commonly called "Business Class."
<i>Privately Owned Aircraft</i>	An aircraft owned or leased by an employee for personal use. It is not owned, leased, chartered, or rented by a government agency, nor is it rented or leased by an

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>Privately Owned Vehicle (POV)</i>	employee for use in carrying out official government business. Any vehicle such as an automobile, motorcycle, aircraft, or boat operated by an individual that is not owned or leased by a government agency, and is not commercially leased or rented by an employee under a government rental agreement for use in connection with official government business.
<i>Professional Books, Papers, and Equipment (PBP&E) Reduced Per Diem</i>	Items in the employee's possession that are needed by the employee in the performance of their official duty. A per diem rate that the agency has lowered when there are known reductions in lodging and meal costs, or when subsistence costs can be determined in advance and are lower than the prescribed per diem rate. Reduced per diem is usually authorized on long-term TDY.
<i>Prudent Person Rule</i>	An employee traveling on official business is expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a <u>prudent person</u> would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds. Excess costs, circuitous routes, delays, or luxury accommodations and services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business are not acceptable under this standard. Employees will be responsible for excess costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience.
<i>Recommending Official</i>	The Recommending Official grants authorization/approval for acceptance of in-kind payments from non-Federal sources, The Recommending Official may be the Deputy Ethics Counselor depending on the OPDIV/STAFFDIV. Check OPDIV/STAFFDIV policy to determine who has been assigned the Recommending Official role.
<i>Relocation Income Tax Allowance (RITA)</i>	This is authorized to reimburse eligible transferred employees for substantially all of the additional Federal, State, and local income taxes incurred by the employee, or by the employee and spouse if a joint tax return is filed, as a result of certain travel and transportation expense and relocation allowances which are furnished in kind, or for which reimbursement or an allowance is provided by the Government.
<i>Relocation Travel</i>	Travel and other relocation expenses involved in the temporary and permanent change of an employee's official station.

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>Relocation Travel Authorization(RTA) (Order)</i>	Written or electronic permission to travel on official business of the U.S. Government for the purpose of relocating to an official station or post.
<i>Residence</i>	The place from which an employee regularly commutes to work each day. Also defined as the place from which the employee commutes daily as referenced by the CBCA in cases B-197360, B-210660, etc. Similar terms include “home” and “place of abode.” The term residence is used when determining reimbursement for mileage when using a POV or determining travel by an indirect route for personal convenience.
<i>Restricted Fare</i>	An airline fare that is not part of the CPP, may not be fully refundable, and has one or more additional restrictions such as requiring a Saturday night stay, requiring purchase within 24-hours, etc. It may also include a cancellation or a change fee.
<i>Salary Offset</i>	An amount an agency deducts from an employee’s salary payment to pay a contractor bank for undisputed delinquent travel charge card balances incurred in connection with official Government travel.
<i>Senior Federal Official</i>	An individual who is: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paid according to the Executive Schedule established by 5 U.S.C. 53, Subchapter II, including Presidential appointees who are confirmed by the Senate; 2. Employed in the U.S. Government’s Senior Executive Service (SES) or an equivalent “senior” service; a civilian employee of the Executive Office of the President; 3. Appointed by the President to a position under Section 105(a)(2)(A), (B), or (C) of 3 U.S.C. or by the Vice President to a position under Section 106(a)(1)(A), (B), or (C) of 3 U.S.C; or 4. A contractor working under a contract with an executive agency, is paid at a rate equal to or more than the minimum rate for the SES, and has senior executive responsibilities. <p>The term Senior Federal official, as used in the FTR does not mean an active duty military officer.</p>
<i>Senior Travel Official (STO)</i>	A full time Federal employee at the SES level or equivalent and who, for purposes of serving as the STO, reports directly to the OPDIV/STAFFDIV Head on all matters of travel policy, programs, and practices.
<i>Sensitive Countries</i>	HHS/OGA has identified countries in this category as

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>Service Agreement</i>	those where internal political and/or social turmoil exists. Travel to countries designated as sensitive by OGA requires additional clearance and approval by the ASA, in consultation with OGA and Office of Security and Strategic Information (OSSI). The link to the current list of countries appears on www.globalhealth.gov .
<i>Special Conveyance</i>	A written agreement between the employee and his/her agency, signed by the employee and an agency representative, stating that the employee will remain in the service of the Government for a period of time as specified in FTR 302-2.13 , after the employee has have relocated.
<i>Special Needs (Also Employee With A Disability)</i>	Commercially rented or hired vehicles, other than a privately owned vehicle and those owned or under contract to an agency.
<i>Split Disbursement</i>	Physical characteristics of a traveler not necessarily defined under disability. Such physical characteristics could include, but are not limited to, the weight or height of the traveler.
<i>Subsistence Expenses (Per Diem Expenses)</i>	Split disbursement divides a travel voucher reimbursement between the Government travel charge card vendor and the traveler. OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B, HHS mandates the use of split disbursement for all Government travel charge cardholders.
<i>Suspension</i>	Includes expenses such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lodging, including taxes and service charges; 2. Meals, including taxes and tips; and 3. Incidental expenses (see incidental expenses under definition of Per Diem Allowance.)
<i>Temporary Change of Station (TCS)</i>	The temporary termination of travel charge card privileges.
<i>Temporary Consultant or Expert</i>	The relocation to a new official station for a temporary period (not less than six months or more than 30 months) while performing a long-term assignment, and subsequent return to the previous official station upon completion of that assignment.
	A consultant or expert whose employment does not exceed one year. An expert or consultant serving under a temporary appointment may have a full-time, part-time, seasonal, or intermittent work schedule. (See 5 CFR 304.102) Section 1.7 provides travel policy for Temporary Consultants.

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>Temporary Duty (TDY) Location</i>	A place, away from an employee's official station, outside of the local travel area, where the employee is authorized to travel.
<i>Temporary Duty Station (TDS)</i>	The location away from the official station where the employee is temporarily on official business.
<i>Temporary Duty (TDY) Assignment</i>	Refers to a Government employee travel assignment at a location other than the employee's official station.
<i>Temporary Quarters</i>	Lodging obtained for the purpose of temporary occupancy from a private or commercial source.
<i>Temporary Storage (Storage in Transit)</i>	The storage of HHG for a limited period of time at origin, destination, or en route in connection with transportation to, from, or between official station or post of duty or authorized alternate points. It is also referred to as storage in transit (SIT).
<i>Training</i>	The process of providing for and making available to an employee, and placing or enrolling in, a planned, prepared, and coordinated program, course, curriculum, subject, system, or routine of instruction or education, in scientific, professional, technical, mechanical, trade, clerical, fiscal, administrative, or other fields, which will improve individual and organizational performance and assist in achieving the agency's mission and performance goals. See 5 U.S.C. 410.101 and Section 1.8, Reimbursement for Travel and Related Expenses Incidental to Training under the Government Employees Training Act (GETA).
<i>Travel Advance</i>	Prepayment of estimated travel expenses paid to an employee.
<i>Travel Authorization (Order)</i>	Written permission to travel on official business. There are three basic types of travel authorizations (orders): Unlimited-open; Limited-open; and Trip-by-trip.
<i>Travel Claim (Voucher)</i>	A written request, supported by documentation and receipts where applicable, for reimbursement of expenses incurred in the performance of official travel, including PCS travel.
<i>Travel Management Service (TMS)</i>	A service for booking common carriers (e.g., air, rail, and bus confirmations and seat assignments), lodging accommodations, and car rental services; fulfilling (i.e. ticketing) reservations; providing basic management information on those activities; and meeting other requirements as specified in FTR 301-73.106 . A TMS may include a travel management center (TMC), Commercial Ticket Office (CTO), an electronically available system, or other methods of arranging travel.

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<i>Travel, Subsistence, and Related Expenses</i>	Expenses for transportation, food, lodging, or other travel-related services for official travel away from the employee's station. This includes conference or training fees and benefits that are incident to the meeting, which are made available by the meeting sponsor(s) to all attendees. See FTR 304-2.1 .
<i>Trip-By-Trip Authorization</i>	A travel authorization allowing an individual or group of individuals to take one or more specific official business trips, which must include specific purpose, itinerary, and estimated costs.
<i>Unlimited-Open Authorization</i>	A travel authorization allowing an employee to travel for any official purpose without additional authorization.
<i>Voucher</i>	A written request, supported by documentation and receipts where applicable, for reimbursement of expenses incurred in the performance of official travel, including PCS travel.
<i>Widely Attended Gathering (WAG)</i>	<p>A gathering that is attended by a large number of persons and it is open to members throughout the interested industry or profession, or if those in attendance represent a range of persons interested in a given matter.</p> <p>An employee may accept an unsolicited gift of free attendance at all or appropriate parts of a widely attended gathering of mutual interest to a number of parties from the sponsor of the event or, if more than 100 persons are expected to attend the event and the gift of free attendance has a market value of \$250 or less, from a person other than the sponsor of the event.</p>
<i>Y-Up Fares (Up Fares)</i>	Y-Up Fares are Coach Class fares that are "booked" in First Class seats.

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