



# ORDER

U.S. Department of  
Transportation  
Office of the Secretary  
of Transportation

DOT 1500.6C

12-05-2024

Subject: DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TRAVEL ORDER AND MANUAL

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1. **PURPOSE:** This Order and attached Department of Transportation (DOT) Travel Manual establishes the Departmental policy and guidance on all aspects of Federal travel and identifies key roles and associated responsibilities for DOT personnel. The Order was developed in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR), Title 41 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Chapters 300-304 and is intended as a supplement to provide DOT-specific guidance where applicable. The goal of this Order is to facilitate and standardize a safe and cost-effective method for travelers to perform job-related travel in a manner that is financially advantageous to the government and convenient for the traveler.
2. **CANCELLATION:** This Order cancels:
  - a. DOT Travel Order and Manual, DOT M 1500.6B dated March 29, 2018.
  - b. DOT Policy memo for use and approval of “Premium Class Travel” dated December 18, 2007.
  - c. Interim Guidance on Local Travel Reimbursement for Remote Work Employees dated March 3, 2023.
3. **APPLICABILITY:** This Order applies to all DOT travelers and invitational travelers executing official travel on behalf of the Department. This Order applies to DOT Operating Administrations (OAs) and all Secretarial Offices, and the Office of Inspector General (OIG) (unless inconsistent with OIG independence), except for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Where a collective bargaining agreement conflicts with this Order, such agreement is a valid exception to and supersedes this Order for travelers covered by the agreements.
4. **BACKGROUND:** The General Services Administration’s (GSA) FTR set the standards and procedures that govern travel for most Federal agencies. While the FTR cover most aspects of travel management, there are many areas in which individual agencies have discretion and flexibility in how these regulations are implemented. This Order is intended to both institutionalize the most recent requirements of the general FTR and to tailor discretionary areas to address the DOT-specific needs most efficiently.

## 5. REFERENCES:

- a. FTR, 41 CFR, Chapter 301, Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel Allowances.
- b. Travel and Transportation Reform Act (TTRA) of 1998, Public Law 105-264.
- c. Prompt Payment Act of 1982, Public Law 97-177.
- d. DOT Order 1011.1A Procedures for Processing Reasonable Accommodation Requests from DOT Job Applicants and Employees with Disabilities, September 19, 2014.
- e. GSA Federal Acquisition Service Smart Bulletin No. 025, Record Retention Requirements.
- f. United States Code (U.S.C.) § 6502(b)(2), The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 which legally requires written telework agreements.
- g. DOT Order 1240.5A Coordination Requirements for International Policy Activities and Meetings dated July 29, 2022.
- h. DOT Order 1240.6 International Travel Approval Policy dated July 29, 2022
- i. DOT Departmental Personnel Manual (DPM) DPM-650-2 Remote Work Policy dated March 23, 2022.
- j. DOT Order 1011.1B Procedures for Processing Reasonable Accommodation Requests from Job Applicants and DOT Employees with Disabilities dated January 14, 2021

## 6. DEFINITIONS:

- a. Actual Expense: 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.
- b. Approving Official (AO): An AO is the approving or authorizing official at the operational level responsible for the mission and the authority to obligate funds to support TDY travel for the mission. The AO authorizes only travel necessary to accomplish the mission of the Federal Government.
- c. Authorized Point of Travel: A residence, official duty station, telework location, or other location authorized by the traveler's AO as an acceptable point of origin or return for travel.
- d. Business Class: A premium class of accommodations offered by a common carrier in terms of cost and amenities. Extra-fare train service (e.g., Acela) and sleeper (e.g., Roomette) classes are considered premium class accommodations.
- e. Contract City Pair Program (CPP): The CPP procures and manages discounted air passenger transportation services for Federal Government travelers. CPP offers government travelers extra features and flexibility when planning official travel, in addition to maintaining deep program discounts.
- f. Coach Class: The class of accommodations that is normally offered by common carriers regardless of terminology used.
- g. Common Carrier: Private-sector supplier of air, rail, ship, or bus transportation or a local transit system.
- h. Constructive Cost Comparison: When personal travel is being taken in conjunction with official government travel, or when the traveler chooses a method of transportation that was not approved as the most advantageous method by the AO, the constructive cost comparison documents the anticipated travel and transportation expenses a traveler would reasonably have incurred for round-trip travel versus the anticipated, actual expenses incurred.

- i. Continental United States (U.S.) (CONUS): Domestic travel within the continental U.S.; the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia.
- j. Conventional Lodging: The most common types of lodging facilities, such as hotel/motel, boarding houses, or similar that are usually found in non-remote areas.
- k. Dual Lodging: Reimbursement for lodging at two different TDY locations during the same period.
- l. E-Gov Travel Service (ETS): ETS is the Federal Government-contracted, end-to-end system, its associated online self-service booking tool, and travel management center (TMC) that automates and consolidates the Federal travel process. The ETS covers all aspects of official government travel, including travel planning, authorization, reservations, ticketing, expense reimbursement, and travel management reporting.
- m. Emergency Travel: Emergency travel occurs when a traveler is in TDY status and becomes incapacitated by a serious or life-threatening illness or injury, a member of the traveler's immediate family dies or contracts a serious illness or a disaster that directly impacts the traveler's home occurs or is expected to occur.
- n. Extra-Fare Train: A train that operates at an increased fare due to the extra performance of the train (i.e., faster speed or fewer stops or both).
- o. FedRooms: A GSA program that provides government travelers with discounted lodging rates within the maximum rate for each TDY location. The program provides certain benefits and flexibility for travelers who perform TDY travel.
- p. First Class: The highest class of accommodation offered by a common carrier in terms of cost and amenities.
- q. Foreign Air Carrier: An air carrier that does not hold a certificate issued by the United States under 49 U.S.C. § 41102.
- r. Fuel: The energy source needed to power a vehicle. Examples include, but are not limited to, petroleum, hydrogen, propane, and electricity/electric vehicle (EV) charging.
- s. Furnished Meal: A meal provided to a traveler, either directly from the Federal Government or as a result of the Federal Government paying a registration fee or other cost which allows the traveler to attend a conference or other event.
- t. Government Aircraft: Any aircraft owned, leased, chartered, or rented and operated by an executive agency of the U.S. Government.
- u. Government Owned Vehicle (GOV): A vehicle owned by an agency, assigned, or dispatched to an agency from the GSA Interagency Fleet Management System, or leased by the government for a period of 120 days or longer from a commercial source.
- v. Incapacitating Illness/Injury: An illness or injury that occurs suddenly and requires the traveler to interrupt or discontinue TDY travel, either temporarily or permanently.
- w. Innovative Mobility Technology Company (IMTC): An organization, including a corporation, limited liability company, partnership, sole proprietorship, or any other entity, that applies technology to expand and enhance available transportation choices, better manages demand for transportation services, or provides alternatives to driving alone.
- x. International Travel: Travel to a destination outside of the United States or its possessions.
- y. Interviewee: An individual who is being considered for employment by DOT. The individual may currently be a Federal Government employee.
- z. Invitational Traveler: An individual either not employed or employed (under 5 U.S.C. § 5703) intermittently in Federal Government service as consultants or

experts and paid on a daily, when-actually-employed basis. In addition, an individual serving without pay or at \$1 a year when acting in a capacity that is related to official activities of the Federal Government.

- aa. Limited Open Authorization: An authorization permitting a traveler to travel without obtaining further authorization within the eTravel system under specific conditions, which may include limitations on the purpose(s) of travel, the geographic area(s) that may be visited, trip costs, and the period of time in which travel is authorized.
- bb. Local Travel: DOT defines local travel as travel for official government business within a 50-mile radius of the traveler's authorized telework location, official duty station (e.g., remote work traveler's residential address of record) or office location for travelers who are not in a telework status.
- cc. Long-Term TDY Travel Assignment: A pre-authorized trip that meets all the following criteria:
  - 1) Traveler is anticipated to be in TDY status for 30 consecutive calendar days or longer at one location or for training of 16 class days or more;
  - 2) TDY location is outside both primary residence and the official duty station; and
  - 3) Travel is not considered a temporary change of station (TCS).
- dd. Lodging-Plus Per Diem: The method of computing per diem allowance for official government travel in which the per diem allowance for each travel day is established based on the actual amount the traveler pays for lodging expenses plus an allowance for meals and incidental expense (M&IE), the total of which does not exceed the applicable maximum per diem rate for the location concerned.
- ee. Meals and Incidental Expense (M&IE): A daily allowance provided to a traveler in TDY status to pay for the cost of reasonable meals and travel-related expenses. A traveler receives the full M&IE rate for the locality while in TDY status, except on travel days, when the rate is reduced to 75% of the locality rate.
- ff. Mileage Reimbursement Rate: A GSA-issued rate provided to a traveler when traveling by privately-owned vehicle (POV) for official government travel. The mileage reimbursement rate accounts for costs associated with fuel/EV charging, maintenance, depreciation, taxes, and insurance.
- gg. Miscellaneous Expense: An expense related to TDY travel that does not fall under the main cost categories of transportation, lodging or M&IE reimbursement.
- hh. Non-Conventional Lodging: A type of lodging that may be necessary if there are no conventional lodging facilities in the area (e.g., in remote areas) or when conventional facilities are in short supply because of an influx of attendees at a special event (e.g., trade show, conference, or major sporting event). Such lodging includes college dormitories or similar facilities, internet-based temporary rooms, or apartment rentals or rooms not offered commercially but made available to the public by area residents in their homes (41 CFR § 301-11.12(a)(4)).
- ii. Office Location: An employee's assigned center or facility (i.e., as shown in box 22 of the traveler's SF-50).
- jj. Official Deviation/Directed Travel: An adjustment to a travel itinerary when a traveler in TDY receives directions to perform official government travel at another TDY location.
- kk. Official Duty Station: An area defined by the agency that includes the location where the employee regularly performs their 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 (i.e., as shown in box 39 of the traveler's SF-50).

- ll. Official Government Travel: Travel under an official government travel authorization from an employee's official duty station or other authorized point of travel to a temporary duty location and return from a temporary duty location, between two temporary duty locations, or relocation at the direction of a Federal agency.
- mm. Other than Coach Class: Any class of accommodations above coach class.
- nn. Outside of the Continental United States (OCONUS/Foreign): Any area situated beyond both the CONUS and OCONUS/non-foreign areas.
- oo. Outside of the Continental United States (OCONUS/Non-Foreign): The states of Alaska and Hawaii, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the territories and possessions of the U.S.
- pp. Per Diem: The per diem allowance (also referred to as subsistence allowance) is a daily payment instead of reimbursement for actual expenses for lodging, meals, and related incidental expenses. The per diem allowance is separate from transportation expenses and other miscellaneous expenses. The per diem allowance covers all charges and services, including any service charges where applicable. Lodging taxes in the United States 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.
- qq. Permanent Change of Stations: The process that an employee completes to permanently relocate from one official duty station to another.
- rr. Premium Accommodations: First class or business class accommodations on a common carrier.
- ss. Premium Economy Class: A class of airline accommodations that are lower than both first and business class, but higher than coach class in terms of cost and amenities.
- tt. Primary Residence: The location a traveler regularly inhabits, also called a main residence. It may be a house, apartment, trailer, or other dwelling; it is where an individual, couple, or family household lives most of the time.
- uu. Privately-Owned Vehicle (POV): Any vehicle (e.g., automobile, motorcycle, aircraft, boat) owned/leased by the traveler.
- vv. Prudent Person Rule: A requirement that a traveler must exercise the same care when incurring official government travel expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling at personal expense.
- ww. Receipt: A document which typically shows the date and time a purchase was made, items bought, amount of purchase price and totals, the name and location of store/entity where the purchase was made, and method of payment.
- xx. Remote Work Traveler: An employee who has been authorized to work from an offsite location full-time (e.g., traveler's residence). The place is the official duty station of record and differs from the office location shown in box 22 of the SF-50.
- yy. Scheduled Flight Time: The flight time between the originating departure point and the ultimate arrival point, as scheduled by the airline, including scheduled non-overnight time spent at airports during plane changes. Scheduled non-overnight time does not include time spent at the originating or ultimate arrival points.
- zz. Special Conveyance: Commercially rented or hired vehicles other than a POV and other than those owned or under contract to an agency, (e.g., taxi, Transportation Network Company (TNC), IMTC, or commercial rental vehicle).
- aaa. Split Pay: Process to split the travel voucher reimbursement between the travel card service provider and the traveler's personal bank account.

- bbb. Taxi: A hired car that carries passengers to a destination for a fare based upon the distance traveled, time spent in the vehicle, other metric, or a flat rate to and from one point to another.
  - ccc. Telework: A flexible work arrangement where an employee performs and completes official duties and responsibilities from an alternative worksite.
  - ddd. Telework Location: A place other than the office location approved by a traveler's AO and reflected in their telework agreement. However, on a case-by-case basis a traveler's AO may approve an alternate telework location.
  - eee. Telework Traveler: A traveler who has a telework arrangement in which the traveler works at an authorized, alternate location. The traveler's office location shown in box 22 and official duty station as shown in box 39 on their SF-50 will be the same.
  - fff. Temporary Duty Travel (TDY) Assignment: Official government travel where the destination is located outside a 50-mile radius from the traveler's authorized point of travel.
  - ggg. Transportation Network Company (TNC): A corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, or other entity, that uses a digital network to connect riders to drivers affiliated with the entity in order for the driver to transport the rider using a vehicle owned, leased, or otherwise authorized for use by the driver to a point chosen by the rider; and does not include a shared-expense carpool or vanpool arrangement that is not intended to generate profit for the driver (e.g., Lyft, Uber).
  - hhh. Travel Advance: Prepayment issued through the eTravel system of certain estimated travel expenses to an invitational traveler.
  - iii. Travel Arranger: An employee or contractor who creates travel reservations, authorizations, and vouchers on behalf of a DOT traveler or invitational traveler.
  - jjj. Travel Authorizations: Documented permission to travel on official business.
  - kkk. Travel Voucher: A written request, supported by documentation and receipts where applicable, for reimbursement of a traveler's expenses incurred in the performance of official government travel.
  - lll. Travel Management Center (TMC): A commercial travel agency that provides a full range of travel reservations and ticketing services for common carriers, lodging accommodations, and rental vehicle services. The TMC functions as a component within ETS.
  - mmm. Trip-by-Trip Authorizations: A travel authorization that allows a traveler to take one specific official TDY trip, which must include specific purpose, itinerary, and estimated cost.
  - nnn. Usually Traveled Route: The most direct route between the traveler's authorized point of travel and the TDY location, as defined by maps or consistent with established common carrier schedule of services.
7. **POLICY**: Secretarial Offices and OA's must ensure compliance with the Department's policy and guidelines established in this Order and Travel Manual by the Office of Financial Management (OST B30) to support a well-managed travel program. Where applicable, OA's may develop supplemental internal travel guidelines that more directly address specific business needs of the OA. Supplemental guidance must not conflict with the policy outlined in this document. All OA-specific guidance must be compared against this Order for concurrence, and a copy of the document must be sent to DOTtravelteam@dot.gov for review prior to the OAs publishing their guidance. OIG may, consistent with its independence and in accordance with the law and the FTR, issue and maintain supplemental guidance that varies from this Order.

8. **RESPONSIBILITIES:** The following personnel are responsible for implementing this Order.
- a. DOT Assistant Secretary for Budget and Programs/Chief Financial Officer (CFO): Establishes and oversees all financial management activities for the Department, as outlined by the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990, to include policies, internal controls, and financial systems.
  - b. Office of Financial Management (OFM) B30: Establishes and manages DOT-wide travel policy and internal controls and delegates travel management duties to the designated OA travel management officials.
  - c. OA CFO/Deputy CFOs (DCFO): Ensures compliance with this travel Order. Ensures OA travelers receive information on how the travel program operates and how the policies affect their travel decisions.
  - d. Approving Official (AO): Determines whether travel is necessary and ensures that travelers travel by the most expeditious means of transportation practicable and commensurate with the nature of their duties to meet the mission. Reviews and approves trip arrangements, travel expenses, and travel fund obligations. Contractors may not authorize travel or perform funds certification. They may only serve as an initial travel authorization or voucher reviewer.
  - e. Traveler: Ensures the accuracy of their vouchers and all expenses they claim as well as adhering to the policies set forth in this Order and other DOT Orders, the FTR, DOT memoranda on related topics, and other applicable OA guidance.

FOR THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Victoria B. Wassmer  
Assistant Secretary for Budget and  
Programs and Chief Financial Officer

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Date

# Temporary Duty and Local Travel Manual

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## **Section 1: Distinguishing Between Types of Travel**

### **1.1 Defining Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel**

A TDY trip constitutes authorized official government travel where the destination is located outside a 50-mile radius from a traveler's authorized point of travel. When approving the authorized point of travel, the AO must take into account the cost-effectiveness of the travelers nearest common carrier terminal. The following sections provide additional guidance on distinguishing between TDY, local, long-term and relocation travel.

### **1.2 Distinguishing Between TDY and Local Travel**

In contrast to TDY travel, local travel involves travel within a 50-mile radius of a traveler's authorized telework location or official duty station.

### **1.3 Distinguishing Between TDY and Long-Term Travel**

TDY travel is considered long-term travel when the destination of a trip is outside a 50-mile radius from a traveler's authorized point of travel and they are required to remain at the destination for 30 consecutive calendar days or longer, or 16 consecutive calendar days or longer if the trip is for the purpose of training. For more information on long-term travel, please reference DOT Order 1501: Long-Term Temporary Duty Travel Policy.

### **1.4 Distinguishing Between TDY and Relocation Travel**

In contrast to TDY travel, when a traveler returns to their official duty station following a TDY trip, relocation travel involves a traveler who is authorized to move to a new official duty station and will not return to the current official duty station. A traveler who is relocating is not eligible for TDY allowances and should work with the appropriate OA Human Resources (HR) and permanent change of station (PCS) points of contact.

## **Section 2: Local Travel**

### **2.1 Local Travel Approval**

An eTravel system authorization is not required for local travel. The approving official should authorize local travel in writing (including electronic text message or email), verbal approval, or via another method as deemed appropriate by the AO.

### **2.2 Calculating the 50-mile Radius for Local Travel**

A traveler's work status (e.g., working from an authorized telework location, remote work traveler working from their official duty station, or reporting to the office location) for a particular day determines the starting point for local travel, as detailed below.

Remote work travelers: The 50-mile radius is calculated from the remote work traveler's official duty station, which is the residential address of record as shown in their approved remote work agreement.

Telework travelers:

- When a traveler is in telework status, the 50-miles radius is calculated from the address of their authorized telework location; and
- When a traveler is not in telework status, the 50-mile radius is calculated from the address of the office location as shown in box 22 of the traveler's SF-50.

### **2.3 Reimbursement for Local Travel**

Local travel expenses can be incurred in a variety of work-related situations within the radius as outlined in Section 2.1, including but not limited to required attendance at meetings, conferences, other official functions, or trainings or periodic work assignments. Travelers who are in telework status, regardless of their telework location, are never eligible for travel reimbursement when traveling to their office location. In addition, remote work travelers whose residential address of record is within a 50-mile radius are also never eligible for local travel reimbursement when traveling to their office location in accordance with the DOT Departmental Personnel Manual (DPM) DPM-650-2 Remote Work Policy.

Reimbursable expenses for local travel may include, but are not limited to, expenses such as:

- Local mileage for POVs;
- Parking fees;
- Tolls;
- Fares, metro cards and tokens for public transportation (i.e., subways, buses, and trains);
- Taxi, TNC or IMTC transportation services; and
- Bicycle and scooter rentals.

Travelers must submit local travel vouchers using the eTravel system. A traveler is entitled to reimbursement of authorized local travel expenses when the local travel originates from their designated work location for the day. However, if for convenience, a traveler elects to originate local travel from an unauthorized point of travel, DOT limits their reimbursement to the cost that exceeds their normal commute. For example, if a traveler needs to perform local travel and is in non-telework status and starts the trip from their normal telework location, their reimbursement would be limited to local travel expenses from the office location to the site of the official business, not from their normal telework location to the site of the official business.

#### **2.3.1 Per Diem and Rental Vehicle Expenses for Local Travel**

Typically, DOT travelers performing local travel are not eligible to receive reimbursement for per diem expenses (lodging and M&IE) or rental vehicle expenses. However, DOT makes exceptions for extenuating circumstances such as threats to human life or while travelers are performing mission-critical duties.

DOT OA CFOs or DCFOs must approve in writing any per diem or rental vehicle expenses for local travel within a 50-mile radius of a traveler's authorized telework location, official duty station (e.g., remote work traveler's residential address of record) or office location for travelers who are not in a telework status. This authority may not be redelegated to other OA officials.

#### **2.3.2 Documentation Required for Local Travel Reimbursement**

Travelers are required to electronically attach receipts to local travel vouchers for the following items:

- Taxi, TNC, and IMTC transportation services;

- Bicycle and scooter rentals;
- Parking fees; and
- Individual local travel expenses over \$75.

If it is impracticable to provide documentation as required by this section, the failure to do so must be fully explained on the travel voucher. Mere inconvenience in the matter of providing documentation will not be considered. In certain rare instances, a copy of the travel card transaction may be accepted in lieu of a receipt.

## **Section 3: TDY Travel**

### **3.1 TDY Travel Authorization**

Before authorizing TDY travel, an AO must first determine if travel is necessary to achieve the proposed trip's official purpose. DOT requires the AO to consider less expensive alternatives to travel, such as local or technology-based alternatives (e.g., virtual options or teleconferencing). If travel is deemed necessary, the AO must ensure that the traveler follows the prudent person rule and completes the trip using the most direct route. In addition, the AO must take into account the cost-effectiveness of the travelers nearest common carrier terminal when determining the authorized point of travel. Excess costs, circuitous routes, delays, or luxury accommodations and services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business are not acceptable under this rule. Travelers will be responsible for excess costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience. AOs may determine when travelers book an excessively expensive route for personal preference (e.g., traveling through a significantly more expensive airport or by taxicab instead of public transportation).

If a traveler chooses to deviate from the approved route because of personal preference (non-authorized point of travel), any additional costs incurred from these actions are not reimbursable. See Section 3.3.6 for additional information about constructive cost comparisons. Additionally, the AO should confirm the trip supports DOT's effort to reduce its carbon footprint by focusing on minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, whenever possible and advantageous to the government. For example, using a public transit system at the TDY site is preferable to using a rental vehicle because it is both cost-effective and results in reduced carbon footprint.

Travel approval must be obtained prior to incurring any official travel-related expenses. Approval should be completed using the eTravel system prior to the trip start date. If it is not possible to obtain approval through the eTravel system prior to travel (e.g., last minute, mission-critical travel request such as responding to a natural disaster event), other allowable approval methods include but are not limited to the following:

- In writing (electronic format text message or email, etc.);
- Verbal approval; and
- Limited Open Authorizations (LOAs). (See Section 3.1.1 Limited Open Authorization for additional details around when an LOA can be used.)

DOT does not reimburse travelers for costs associated with unauthorized travel.

Regardless of how the travel approval is obtained, electronic travel authorizations must be completed within the eTravel system prior to reimbursement of official travel-related expenses, except for day trips where no expenses are being claimed. In situations when travel authorizations cannot be completed in advance of travel, this must be completed within five business days of returning from travel. Examples include, but are not limited to, when it causes an unreasonable

burden on the trip mission accomplishment and emergency response travel.

However, DOT requires that the appropriate AO provide written or electronic authorization in advance of travel for the following items:

- Use of other than coach class service on common carrier transportation;
- Use of a foreign air carrier or foreign ship;
- Use of reduced fares for group or charter arrangements;
- Use of cash to pay for common carrier transportation;
- Use of extra-fare train service;
- Use of a government aircraft;
- Use of non-conventional lodging (see Section 3.6.2.4 for more information);
- Payment of a reduced per diem rate;
- Acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source for travel expenses; and
- Travel expenses related to attendance at a conference.

### **3.1.1 Limited Open Authorizations (LOAs)**

DOT permits travelers to use LOAs to accommodate a frequent travel situation. LOAs allow travelers to travel on official business, under certain specific conditions, without obtaining pre-approval for individual trips within the eTravel system. Travelers may use LOAs for frequent TDY day trips across a set time period, as determined by the AO, when no official travel-related expenses are being reimbursed.

### **3.1.2 Emergency Travel Situations while on TDY**

The following circumstances are considered emergency travel situations while on TDY:

- A traveler is incapacitated by illness or injury, not resulting from a traveler's misconduct;
- Death or serious illness of a member of a traveler's immediate family member; or
- Catastrophic occurrence or impending disaster (fire, flood, etc.) which directly affects a traveler's home.

Immediate Family is defined in FTR 300-3.1. Approving officials may expand this definition on a case-by-case basis.

The following expenses are reimbursable in emergency travel situations while on TDY:

- Per diem at the location where the traveler incurred or was treated for incapacitating illness or injury for a reasonable period of time, normally not to exceed 14 calendar days (AOs may approve a longer period if justified);
- Round-trip travel and lodging expenses for a spouse, significant other or family member to visit a traveler who is incapacitated by illness or injury while on TDY travel and cannot return to their official duty station;
- Transportation and per diem expense for travel to an alternate location to receive medical treatment in excess (if any) of actual costs of travel from the point of interruption to the alternate location and return to the TDY assignment, over the constructive costs of round-trip travel between the official station and the alternate location; and
- Transportation costs of a medically necessary attendant.

Note: A traveler is not entitled to receive per diem entitlements at a medical facility within a 50-mile radius of their official duty station or when interrupting TDY travel for non-emergency travel situations.

### **3.1.3 Pre-Trip Expenses**

In limited circumstances, and with AO approval, travelers are allowed to submit pre-trip vouchers within the eTravel system when official travel-related expenses are incurred prior to the beginning of a trip. Eligible pre-trip expenses may include, but are not limited to:

- Airfare or rail when booking services in advance of a trip lead to cost savings to the government; and
- Hotel reservation requires a deposit or payment in advance of the trip.

See Section 3.7.1 for more information on receipt requirements for pre-trip vouchers.

If a traveler needs to cancel or change a trip after they have made reservations and incurred pre-trip costs, they should do so as soon as reasonably possible and notify all applicable parties (e.g., AO, TMC, vendor). In this situation, if a traveler receives a refund from a vendor after vouchering for the expense, the traveler must send the refund to DOT. Failure to change or cancel reservations as outlined in the appropriate cancellation policy may subject the traveler to liability for any resulting losses.

### **3.1.4 Personal Leave Interruptions**

In some situations, DOT may require travelers to interrupt, cancel, or reschedule planned personal leave for official duty. If this occurs and the traveler cannot secure a full refund for the expenses associated with their personal itinerary, DOT will reimburse travelers for the difference in costs.

## **3.2 Types of TDY Travel**

### **3.2.1 CONUS and OCONUS Travel**

TDY travel may occur within the continental United States (CONUS) or outside the continental United States (OCONUS). The guidance included in this document is applicable to CONUS travel, unless explicitly stated that it applies to OCONUS.

#### **3.2.1.1 OCONUS Foreign Travel**

DOT Order 1240.5A Coordination Requirements for International Policy Activities and Meetings and DOT Order 1240.6 International Travel Approval Policy set forth guidance for the planning of and approval of procedures and policies surrounding travelers traveling internationally. DOT Order 1240.5A Coordination Requirements for International Policy Activities and Meetings sets forth an updated Departmental policy for the coordination of international policy activities and meetings. The Order details that OAs must coordinate significant international activities through the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs (OST-X). OAs must also seek policy clearance from OST-X and legal clearance/guidance from the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) prior to entering into negotiations with the intent of concluding a Memoranda of Cooperation (MoC) or similar arrangement.

DOT Order 1240.6 International Travel Approval Policy describes the policy for the planning and approval of OCONUS foreign trips for DOT travelers.

#### **3.2.2 Invitational Travel**

In regard to TDY travel allowances, invitational travelers are treated the same as DOT travelers.

### **3.2.2.1 Travel Advances**

Travel advances may be issued for invitational travelers when the OA demonstrates that the travel advance is necessary, as these travelers may refuse to travel without an advance. Travel advances may not be issued to DOT travelers. DOT travelers must incur travel-related expenses on their travel cards.

Note: Cash withdrawals through the travel card program are not considered to be a travel advance. The DOT Order 2300.1 DOT Travel Card Management Policy sets forth guidance regarding proper use of cash withdrawals for DOT travelers.

### **3.2.3 Pre-Employment Interviewee Travel for non-DOT Travelers**

Pre-employment interviewee travel may be necessary to recruit highly qualified candidates. This determination is made by the vacancy's selecting officials, who must coordinate with the supervisory staff accountable for the funds for pre-employment interviewee expenses. The eTravel system must be used to obtain approval for pre-employment interviewee travel. If travel is approved, DOT will reimburse candidates for all expenses afforded to DOT travelers, excluding any communication services not directly related to arranging travel for the upcoming interview. Booking a space to transact an official pre-employment interview is not allowed. OAs must charge all pre-employment interviewee common carrier transportation costs to specified centrally billed accounts.

### **3.2.4 Day Trips**

When travelers travel and return on the same day, the day trip is considered TDY if the destination where official business is being performed is located outside a 50-mile radius from a traveler's authorized point of travel. If the destination is within a 50-mile radius, refer to the Section 2: Local Travel.

When no official travel-related expenses are being reimbursed, travel approval must be obtained and documented prior to the trip start date. The preferred approval method is within the eTravel system. However, the following approval methods include but are not limited to, in writing (text message or email, etc.), verbal approval, and LOAs.

When official travel-related expenses are being reimbursed, regardless of how the travel approval is obtained, electronic travel authorizations must be completed within the eTravel system travel prior to reimbursement of official travel-related expenses. This does not apply to instances where LOAs are being used. In situations when eTravel authorizations cannot be completed in advance of travel, this should be done as soon as reasonably possible. Examples include, but are not limited to, when it causes an unreasonable burden on the trip mission accomplishment and emergency response travel.

### **3.2.5 Relocation Travel**

A traveler who is relocating to a new duty station is not eligible for TDY travel reimbursement. Refer to the DOT Order 1501: Long-Term Temporary Duty Travel Policy, FTR Chapter 302 and your HR office for additional guidance.

### **3.2.6 Mission-Critical Emergency Response**

Travel approval must be obtained prior to incurring any official travel-related expenses. Approval should be completed using the eTravel system prior to the trip start date. If it is not possible to obtain approval through the eTravel system prior to travel due to a last-minute travel request, other allowable approval methods include but are not limited to, text message, email, or verbal approval.

See Section 3.1 TDY Travel Authorization for additional information.

### **3.2.7 Threatened Law Enforcement/Investigative Travelers**

If an employee or their family is in danger and requires temporary housing at or away from the official duty station, an AO may authorize lodging, per diem, and transportation expenses. See FTR 301 - 31 for additional information on travel for threatened Federal travelers and their families.

## **3.3 Methods of Transportation**

While traveling to and from the TDY location, travelers and AOs must select the methods of transportation most advantageous to the government taking total cost (including per diem, over time, lost work time and actual transportation costs) as listed below. AOs should consider total cost (including costs such as per diem expenses, parking, baggage fees, etc.), efficiency, and environmental impact when making these determinations. For example, as opposed to authorizing rental vehicles, OAs should encourage the use of the local transit systems, when feasible. Unless local transit is unduly burdensome or the use of a rental vehicle would result in substantial cost savings, local transit systems should be used as the "greener" and less expensive option.

The following are presumed to be the most advantageous methods of transportation by order of precedence:

- Common carrier transportation (e.g., aircraft, train, bus, ship, or local transit system): Travel by common carrier is presumed to be the most advantageous method of transportation and must be used when reasonably available;
- GOV: When the AO determines that your travel must be performed by automobile, a government-furnished automobile is presumed to be the most advantageous method of transportation;
- Commercial rental vehicle: If no government-furnished automobile is available, but the AO has determined that travel must be performed by automobile, then a rental vehicle should be authorized; and
- POV: POVs should be determined to be the most advantageous method of transportation only after the AO evaluates the use of a common carrier, a government-furnished automobile, and a rental vehicle.

Note: The FTR does not authorize OAs to require that travelers use their POV for TDY travel, even if the costs will be less for the government. Special conveyances, except for commercial rental vehicles, should mainly be utilized while travelers are at their TDY location or for local travel.

### **3.3.1 Common Carrier Transportation**

#### **3.3.1.1 Air Travel**

DOT requires travelers to adhere to the following guidelines when selecting an airline as the authorized method of travel:



### 3.3.1.1.1 Use of Coach Fares

Travelers must use GSA Contract City Pair (CPP) fares (\_CA when available or YCA) for air travel unless a CPP fare does not exist or when otherwise authorized. When a contract CPP carrier offers a lower cost capacity-controlled coach class contract fare (\_CA) and an unrestricted coach class contract fare (YCA), you must select the lower cost capacity-controlled fare when it is available. Selecting a non-contract fare that costs more than the contract (YCA) fare will require one of the following justifications:

- A CPP fare is not available in a time to accomplish the purpose of the traveler's travel, or the use of the contract carrier flight would require incurring overnight lodging costs that would increase the total cost of the trip;
  - For example, DOT permits travelers to reserve a more expensive non-Contract City Pair flight if the Contract City Pair flight does not arrive in time for a meeting or other official travel obligation.
- The traveler's AO determines that the use of rail service is more advantageous to the government.

In addition, when using a restricted fare, the traveler must receive approval from their AO agreeing to reimburse costs, fees, and penalties associated with work-related changes and cancellations or necessitated by circumstances of an emergency nature affecting the traveler. Travelers are liable for any additional costs or penalties resulting from the use of a non-contract fare, without prior authorization or exemption, when a contract fare is available.

When a non-contract fare is selected that costs less than the contract (YCA) fare, DOT does not require travelers to provide a justification documenting that the fare selected is less expensive than the (YCA) fare. However, if a restricted fare is selected, the approval requirement outlined above will apply.

The GSA CPP offers four different contract fares:

- 1) Capacity-Controlled Fare (\_CA): The \_CA code is used to identify capacity-controlled coach class contract fares for Government contract carriers. \_CA fares are lower in cost than the YCA Fare, with the same conditions except that \_CA fares do not offer last seat (inventory) availability. They are fully refundable and exchangeable, no administrative fees or penalties are applied for rebooking, re-ticketing, or cancellation. The first letter of the three-character fare basis code will vary by airline, e.g., QCA, LCA, etc. Early booking increases the likelihood of reserving a \_CA fare. \_CA fares are subject to auto-cancellation of all un-ticketed reservations 48 hours prior to departure time and date.
- 2) Unrestricted Coach Class Fare (YCA): The YCA code is used to designate unrestricted coach class contract fares for Government contract carriers. "CA" means "contract award." YCA fares are higher in cost than \_CA fares and offer last seat (inventory) availability (unless a flight is already sold out). They are fully refundable and exchangeable, no administrative fees or penalties are applied for rebooking, re-ticketing, or cancellation. YCA fares are subject to auto-cancellation of all un-ticketed reservations 48 hours prior to departure time and date.
- 3) Contract Business Fare (\_CB): The \_CB code is used to identify capacity-controlled Government contract business class fares. The first letter of the three-character fare basis code will vary by airline. They are fully refundable and exchangeable, no administrative fees or penalties are applied for rebooking, re-ticketing, or cancellation. Domestic and international \_CB fares may be subject to auto-cancellation of all un-ticketed reservations seven (7) calendar days prior to departure time and date and

applies only to reservations booked eight (8) calendar days or more before departure. Reservations made seven (7) calendar days or less prior to departure time may be exempt and may require ticketing six (6) hours before departure at the carrier's discretion.

- 4) **Contract Premium Economy Fare (\_CP):** The \_CP code is used to identify capacity-controlled Government contract premium economy class fares. The first letter of the three-character fare basis code will vary by airline. They are fully refundable and exchangeable, no administrative fees or penalties are applied for rebooking, re-ticketing, or cancellation. International \_CP fares may be subject to auto-cancellation of all un-ticketed reservations seven (7) calendar days prior to departure time and date and applies only to reservations booked eight (8) calendar days or more before departure. Reservations made seven (7) calendar days or less prior to departure time may be exempt and may require ticketing six (6) hours before departure at the carrier's discretion.

Note: GSA CPP fares may only be used for official DOT travel.

### **3.3.1.1.2 Use of U.S. Flag Carriers**

The Fly America Act requires that all government-funded air travel be by a "U.S. flag" carrier service. This requirement applies to:

- Travelers and their dependents;
- Consultants, contractors, and grantees; and
- Other travelers whose travel is paid for by DOT.

Exceptions to Fly America Act requirements can be found at 49 U.S.C. 40118. Cost or convenience are never exceptions to the Fly America Act requirements. Fly America Act waiver requests must be routed for review to the OA travel office and must obtain approval from the OA's Office of the Chief Counsel. Failure to obtain approval prior to travel precludes travelers from claiming reimbursement for all fares associated with foreign air carrier service.

### **3.3.1.1.3 Use of Premium Class Accommodations**

Travelers should use the least expensive class of travel that meets the needs of the OAs mission, unless the OA CFO approves premium economy, business or first-class accommodations as specified below and in FTR 301-10.103.

- 1) The traveler may be authorized for the use of premium economy class accommodations when:
  - a) Required to accommodate a medical disability or other special need:
    - i) A medical disability must be certified annually in a written statement by a competent medical authority. However, if the disability is a lifelong condition, then a one-time certification statement is required. Certification statements must include at a minimum:
      - (1) A written statement by a competent medical authority stating that special accommodation is necessary;
      - (2) An approximate duration of the special accommodation; and
      - (3) A recommendation as to the suitable class of transportation accommodations based on the medical disability.
        - (a) A special need must be certified annually in writing according to DOT's procedures. However, if the special need is a lifelong condition, then a one-time certification statement is required; and

- (b) If a traveler is authorized under FTR 301–13.3(a) to have an attendant accompany them, DOT may also authorize the attendant to use premium economy class accommodations if the traveler requires the attendant's services en route.
  - b) Exceptional security circumstances, as determined by DOT, require premium economy class accommodations;
  - c) Coach class accommodations on an authorized foreign carrier do not provide adequate sanitation or health standards;
  - d) Regularly scheduled service between origin and destination points, including connecting points, provide only other than coach class accommodations and the traveler certifies such on their voucher;
  - e) Common carrier costs are paid in full through agency acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source in accordance with chapter 304 of title 41 CFR;
  - f) The origin or destination is OCONUS and the traveler's scheduled flight time, including stopovers and change of planes, is in excess of eight hours;
  - g) The use results in an overall cost savings to the government by avoiding additional subsistence costs, overtime, or lost productive time while awaiting coach class accommodations;
  - h) No space is available in coach class accommodations that allows the traveler to arrive in time to accomplish the mission, which is urgent and cannot be postponed; or
  - i) Required because of the OAs mission, consistent with DOT's internal procedures pursuant to FTR 301–70.102(i).
- 2) The traveler may be authorized for the use of business class accommodations under paragraphs (a)(1) through (5) and (7) through (9) of FTR 301-10.103, or when:
- a) The origin or destination is OCONUS;
  - b) The scheduled flight time, including stopovers and change of planes, is more than 14 hours;
  - c) There is a requirement to report to duty the following day or sooner; and
  - d) It has been determined that business class accommodations are more advantageous than authorizing a rest period en route or at your destination pursuant to FTR 301–11.20.
- 3) DOT may authorize or approve first class accommodations under paragraph (a)(1), (2), or (9) of FTR 301-10.103, or when no coach class, premium economy class, or business class accommodations are reasonably available. "Reasonably available" means available on a common carrier that is scheduled to leave within 24 hours of your proposed departure time or scheduled to arrive within 24 hours of your proposed arrival time.

DOT travelers may upgrade to other than coach class accommodations at their personal expense, including through redemption of frequent flyer benefits per FTR 301-53.3.

Coach class preferred seating upgrades allow travelers to obtain a more desirable seat choice within the coach class cabin at a higher cost. These upgraded seats are not considered a new or higher class of accommodation since the seating is still in the coach cabin and are generally considered a personal expense. However, the AO may determine the use is required due to a medical reason, mission accomplishment, or other special need unless otherwise specified by the OA.

### **3.3.1.2 Rail**

DOT requires the use of coach class or equivalent accommodations for all official DOT rail travel. OA CFO approval is required for all other than coach class rail accommodations. See Section 3.3.1.1.3 for specific scenarios that may be approved for other than coach class.

Note: Travelers may select to upgrade to first class or business class at their personal expense or by using rewards/loyalty points.

### **3.3.1.3 Ships**

DOT requires the use of lowest first class or equivalent accommodations for all official DOT ship travel, unless pre-approved for first class accommodations by the OA CFO and in line with OA policy. Travelers may select to upgrade to first class at personal expense.

### **3.3.1.4 Local Transit Systems**

DOT regards the use of local travel systems (e.g., buses, subways, streetcars, light rail) to be a reimbursable expense for TDY travel in the following scenarios:

- From the traveler's residence or other authorized point of departure (e.g., use of light rail to travel from residence to airport);
- To the traveler's residence or other authorized point of return from TDY (e.g., use of subway to travel from airport to residence);
- From the transit system station at the TDY location to the traveler's place of lodging or place of official business;
- Between the traveler's place of lodging and official business;
- Between places of official business; or
- To obtain meals at the nearest available location when reasonable at the discretion of the AO.

### **3.3.1.5 Common Carrier Compensation during TDY Travel**

Occasionally, common carriers may compensate travelers directly for incidental expenses (e.g., DOT equipment damaged by an airline) or inconvenience (e.g., being “bumped” from a flight due to overbooking). In such situations, the traveler may not keep any compensation from the airline. Monetary and non-monetary compensation must be directed to the appropriate DOT OA.

Travelers who voluntarily vacate confirmed reserved seats during official travel, when an air carrier requests volunteers, may personally keep any compensation from the airline if the following applies to the scenario (FTR § 301-10.122 and § 301-10.123.):

- Voluntarily vacating the seat does not interfere with the performance of the traveler’s official duties or accomplishment of the OAs mission;
- Additional travel expenses incurred because of vacating seats are covered by the traveler and not reimbursed by DOT; and
- The traveler is charged annual leave for any delays during duty hours which result from voluntarily vacated seats. The traveler is responsible for documenting this on their timecards appropriately.

### **3.3.2 Government Owned Vehicle (GOV) Travel**

While on official travel, a traveler must only use GOVs for travel only if authorized and in the following scenarios:

- Between places of business and official duty stations or TDY locations;
- Between places of lodging (excluding personal residences) and TDY locations; and
- Between TDY locations and the nearest available location at which to obtain meals, when the nature and location of the work at traveler’s TDY locations are such that meals cannot be obtained.

An employee's AO must determine if the use of GOVs is the most advantageous method of transportation to DOT. When GOVs are determined to be most advantageous to a DOT traveler, and are available, and local transit systems do not serve as an efficient or effective method of alternate transportation, the traveler must first consider the use of GOVs over the use of POVs or special conveyances.

### **3.3.3 Commercial Rental Vehicle Travel**

If a traveler is authorized to use a commercially rented vehicle, they must use the least expensive compact car available, unless an exception for a more expensive vehicle is approved. AOs should approve these exceptions on a limited basis and must confirm that the reason for the exception is indicated on the travel authorization. Use of other than a compact car may be authorized if any of the following apply:

- When it is necessary to accommodate a medical disability or other special need. See Section 3.6.5 for more information;
- When required because of the OAs mission, consistent with the OA's internal procedures pursuant to FTR 301 - 70.102(i);
- When the cost of another car type, including zero emission or hybrid vehicles, is less than or equal to the cost of the least expensive compact car;
- When additional room is required to accommodate multiple travelers authorized to travel together in the same rental vehicle;
- When travelers must carry a large amount of government material incident to their official business and a compact rental vehicle does not contain sufficient space; or
- When necessary for safety reasons, such as during severe weather or having to travel on rough or difficult terrain.

### **3.3.4 Privately-Owned Vehicle (POV) Travel**

DOT authorizes the use of POVs when it serves as the most advantageous to DOT (in terms of cost, success of the mission, environmental factors, etc.) in accordance with Section 3.3.1 or to accommodate travelers' medical needs (see Section 3.6.5 for more information).

DOT regards the use of POV to be a reimbursable expense for TDY travel in the following scenarios:

- From the traveler's residence or other authorized point of departure (e.g., use of POV to travel from residence to airport);
- To the traveler's residence or other authorized point of return from TDY (e.g., use of POV to travel from airport to residence);
- Between the traveler's place of lodging and official business;
- Between places of official business; or
- To obtain meals at the nearest available location when reasonable at the discretion of the AO.

### **3.3.5 Special Conveyance Travel**

DOT permits the use of the following special conveyances, when properly approved by a designated AO:

- Taxicabs;
- Commercial rental vehicles;
- TNC or IMTC services; and

- Any other special conveyance determined to be advantageous (in terms of cost, success of mission, etc.) to DOT.

### **3.3.6 Constructive Cost Comparisons**

Regardless of the method of transportation an AO deems to be most advantageous and expeditious to the government, DOT travelers may choose to use another method of transportation while traveling to and from a TDY location. If a traveler does not select the most advantageous method of transportation, a cost comparison must be completed to determine “constructive cost” of travel. This cost comparison must incorporate all costs associated with travel and compare them with all costs associated with the most advantageous, AO-approved means of travel. The calculation will necessarily involve assumptions. Examples of related expenses that could be considered constructive costs include, but are not limited to, taxi and TNC fares, baggage fees, rental vehicle costs, tolls, ferry fees, lost work time, and parking charges.

If the constructive cost of the AO-approved method of transportation is less than the traveler-selected method of transportation, the traveler will be reimbursed the lesser amount. If the constructive cost shows the traveler-selected cost is less than the AO-approved method, they will be reimbursed that amount.

### **3.3.7 Rest Periods during TDY Travel**

When travelers are traveling long distances, or in transit for long periods of time, they are entitled to take rest periods in certain circumstances, as detailed below.

#### **3.3.7.1 Rest Periods for Air Travel**

DOT allows a traveler to take a rest period of up to 24 hours in duration at either an intermediate point or at a traveler’s destination when:

- Either the origin or destination is OCONUS;
- The scheduled flight time, including stopovers, exceeds 14 hours (see Section 3.3.7.2 for the business class lounge pass exception);
- Travel is by a direct or usually traveled route; and
- Travel is by coach class or premium economy class.

When a rest stop is authorized, the applicable per diem rate is the rate for the rest stop location. DOT authorizes rest periods exceeding 24 hours when no scheduled transportation service departs within 24 hours of the traveler’s arrival at an intermediate point. To qualify for a rest period exceeding 24 hours, the traveler must be scheduled to board the first available scheduled departure. The AO determines a reasonable additional length of time for any rest period exceeding 24 hours.

#### **3.3.7.2 Business Class Lounge Pass in Lieu of a Rest Period**

Unless specifically disallowed elsewhere in the regulations, any scheduled flights in excess of 14 hours on a usually traveled route, including scheduled stopovers when traveling by less than premium class accommodations, may be interrupted for a rest period of up to 24 hours. However, a traveler may alternatively be reimbursed for the cost of a day pass to a business class lounge for the intermediate point on the authorized itinerary. If this option is selected the traveler is no longer authorized an overnight rest stop and is expected to continue travel on the next available flight to the traveler’s destination.

Travelers are responsible for requesting the approved overnight rest stop or the business class lounge day pass from the AO prior to travel. The point of interruption for a rest stop should be at any normally scheduled transit point or stop along the direct route between the authorized origin and destination. The traveler may choose to take an authorized rest stop at the destination, provided that the destination is not the traveler's permanent duty station.

Note: Rest stops, or day passes to a business class lounge are not authorized when indirect travel is performed. Additionally, rest stops or day passes to a business class lounge are not authorized for travelers using premium class accommodations except when certified as necessary by a competent medical authority. Travelers authorized to travel in premium class accommodations may use a business class lounge if the service is offered free of charge by the airline, but they are not authorized reimbursement separately for the cost of a day pass to the lounge.

### **3.3.7.3 Time Zone Considerations for Rest Periods**

DOT requires travelers flying on a direct route, without interruption except for flight connections, with a difference of five or more time zones between authorized points of travel, to arrange departure that allows for arrival at the destination a minimum of 24 hours before commencing duty whenever possible. This also applies for the following scenarios, provided there is a difference of five or more time zones between the rest stop and the destination point:

- When the flight is of such duration that it includes an authorized rest stop; or
- When the flight is of such duration that it is authorized premium economy seating.

In the scenarios above, excused absence without charge to leave is to be granted for any part of the 24-hour adjustment period following arrival at the duty point which happens to fall within working hours. Travelers are entitled to per diem during the adjustment period.

### **3.3.7.4 Rest Periods for Travel while Driving**

Travelers traveling via POV or GOV must take the appropriate steps to reduce fatigue-related driving and should consider factors such as physical condition, weather, length of trip, and road conditions to determine reasonable travel times within this policy's limits. Travelers must adhere to the following to reduce fatigue-related driving:

- No traveler may exceed 10 hours of driving time behind the wheel while on official travel;
- Travelers embarking on travel after working a partial shift or attending training are limited to a maximum total work/driving period of 12 hours;
- Travelers traveling by common carrier (e.g., air, rail, bus) may only drive a combined 12-hour working/driving limit once they reach their destination. This 12-hour limit may be exceeded for the traveler to drive to local area accommodations (close to the airport) or if returning from TDY to their residence; and
- Vehicles with multiple drivers may drive up to a combined total of 12 hours with no person exceeding 10 hours behind the wheel.

Exceptions to the scenarios above may be made in rare circumstances to accomplish immediate and critical operational objectives or address special needs such as emergency incidents.

## **3.4 Combining Official with Personal Travel**

The primary purpose of travel should be for official travel-related reasons. Official events and travel should never be built around personal events. When combining official and personal travel, the traveler must designate which portions of the outbound and inbound trip are official travel. For

the official travel segments, City Pair contract fares should be booked and purchased with the traveler's government travel card through the eTravel system or by calling the designated TMC. The personal airfare portion of the trip must be booked with the airline directly and secured on a personal method of payment.

DOT limits travel reimbursement to the official travel-related costs for a TDY assignment by the most direct or uninterrupted route. If the designated official portion of the trip is not the authorized point of travel, the reimbursement will be limited to the cost of government fares had no personal deviation been made. Travelers are responsible for any additional expenses incurred because of travel associated with personal reasons.

In addition, if a traveler, for example, delays the return trip due to personal reasons, any extra expenses due to a delay are the traveler's responsibility, including flight cancellations due to dangerous weather or any other unforeseen events. See Section 3.3.1 for additional information about how to complete a constructive cost comparison.

### **3.5 Arranging Travel Services**

DOT employees must use the designated eTravel system and its associated online self-service booking tool and TMC when arranging travel services unless the mission requirement makes it impracticable to do so.

Employees who fail to utilize the eTravel system for the arrangement of travel services, are liable for any additional costs (which include, but are not limited to, higher airfare, rental vehicle charges, service fees, cancellation penalties, etc.) to be determined by employees' AO.

### **3.6 Reimbursable Expenses**

DOT reimburses transportation, per diem, actual, and miscellaneous expenses when the AO determines the expense is required for TDY travel. This section outlines which expense types fall under each category, and when DOT reimburses each expense type. This section also explains how DOT reimburses travel expenses for travelers with special needs, travelers who are injured or incapacitated during travel, travelers who face emergencies while on TDY travel, and travelers who book non-refundable fares.

#### **3.6.1 Transportation Expenses**

DOT reimburses travelers for necessary transportation expenses to travel to and from TDY locations and while on TDY travel. These expenses may include, but are not limited to, common carriers (e.g., airlines, trains, ships, and public transport systems), GOVs, POVs or special conveyances (e.g., taxicabs, TNC, IMTC, shuttle services, and rental vehicles) and various miscellaneous expenses.

##### **3.6.1.1 Common Carrier Transportation Expenses**

DOT reimburses travelers for common carrier transportation when authorized by AOs as direct, expeditious routes for completing official government travel. See Section 3.3.1 for additional information about arranging common carrier transportation for TDY travel.

DOT generally reimburses the standard, economy fares for airline, train, ships, and public transit system travel. See Section 3.3.1.1.3 on Use of Premium Class Accommodations for more



information on when DOT reimburses travelers for common carrier transportation expenses above the standard economy fare.

A justification is required for the reimbursement of coach airfares higher than the YCA fare.

Justifications include but are not limited to:

- Exceptional security circumstances, as determined by your AO, require more expensive airfare;
- Regularly scheduled service between origin and destination points, including connecting points, provides only airfare above the YCA fare;
- Common carrier costs are paid in full through acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source;
- The use results in an overall cost savings to the government by avoiding additional subsistence costs, overtime, or lost productive time while awaiting the YCA fare flight; or
- The YCA fare flight does not allow the traveler to arrive in time to accomplish the mission, which is urgent and cannot be postponed.

### **3.6.1.2 Special Conveyance Transportation Expenses**

DOT generally reimburses special conveyance expenses for the standard economy fare. Travelers should utilize environmentally friendly, “green” special conveyance transportation fares whenever they are equal to or less than the standard fare. DOT may approve a more expensive fare when the traveler demonstrates the above-usual fare is necessary and cost-effective when needed to accomplish the mission (e.g., to fit a larger group of DOT travelers or to accommodate a traveler with special needs). See Section 3.6.5 for more information on reimbursable expenses for travel for travelers with special needs.

#### **3.6.1.2.1 Taxicabs, TNC and IMTC**

DOT may reimburse a traveler for taxicabs, TNC, and IMTC usage during TDY travel when travel occurs between:

- A common carrier terminal and a personal residence, business location/TDY location, lodging location, or shuttle terminal (when courtesy transportation is not available, and the designated AO authorizes the expense);
- Hotels or other places of lodging such as motels or government quarters and TDY locations;
- TDY locations and the nearest available location to obtain meals when the traveler’s TDY location prevents the travelers from obtaining such meals; and
- Hotels or other places of lodging such as motels or government quarters and the nearest available location to obtain meals, when the location and circumstances associated with it prevent the traveler from obtaining a meal within walking distance or at the place of lodging as determined by the AO.

Travelers must choose courtesy transportation provided by hotels when available, as their first source of transportation between places of lodging and common carrier terminals (e.g., airports and train stations).

DOT reimburses gratuity payments for taxis, TNCs, and courtesy transportation (hotel and airport shuttles). The suggested gratuity is 15 to 20 percent of the total amount (including all applicable tolls and fees required for the trip). The determination of a reasonable gratuity amount for courtesy transportation and the approval of gratuity payments greater than the suggested percentage amounts are at the discretion of the AO.

### 3.6.1.2.2 Commercial Rental Vehicle Expenses

DOT reimburses travelers the following rental vehicle-related expenses:

- Fuel/EV charging expenses required to operate the rental vehicle. Examples include, but are not limited to, electricity obtained at an EV charging station and petroleum obtained at a gas station.
  - Note: DOT does not reimburse for fuel/EV charging surcharges incurred from failing to return the rental vehicle with the required fuel/EV charge amount (per the rental agreement). However, DOT may reimburse travelers for vendor refueling/EV charging surcharges in rare situations at the discretion of the AO. This includes, but is not limited to, cases when travelers cannot refuel/charge the EV completely prior to returning a rental vehicle because of safety issues, or situations where the location of closest fueling/EV charging station is excessively far from where the traveler must return the vehicle.
- Parking
  - Whenever available, self-parking should be selected over valet options.
- Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) or theft insurance for OCONUS travel only. Note, the government is a self-insurer; therefore, DOT does not reimburse this coverage for CONUS travel.
- Rental vehicle add-ons such as GPS devices, automated toll payment systems, and roadside assistance are reimbursable under the following circumstances:
  - GPS can be rented only in the following cases:
    - When necessary to accomplishing trip mission;
    - When renting a vehicle in a foreign country; or
    - When official travel involves access to extremely remote locations that are not close to population centers, and where clearly marked road signs may not be present.

Note: Other vehicle add-ons may be approved by the AO on a case-by-case basis if they are necessary to accomplish the mission.

- Automated Toll Payment Systems
  - Travelers should avoid renting or using an automated toll payment system (e.g., EZ Pass, FasTrak, EXpressToll, TollTag) any time the device is optional. Tolls should be paid using the government charge card and claimed on the travel voucher. The cost of renting an automated toll payment device is generally not an allowable expense. If a road does not include a cash/charge card toll option, the traveler should use another route, when possible. If an alternate route is not practical, the AO may authorize the cost of renting an automated toll payment device on a case-by-case basis.
- Roadside Assistance
  - Roadside assistance is included under the U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement. Travelers must not authorize rental vehicle companies to include charges associated with other roadside assistance options on their rental vehicle agreements. However, if roadside assistance service is needed that is not covered under the agreement (e.g., assistance to change a flat tire when the rental vehicle has a spare tire), reimbursement may be authorized by the AO on a case-by-case basis.

### **3.6.1.3 Government Owned Vehicle (GOV) Expenses**

A traveler whose AOs authorizes travel by GOV as the most advantageous method of travel, or a traveler who uses GOVs between a residence, official duty station, or other point of travel authorized by their AOs and a common carrier terminal or at the TDY location (see Section 3.3.4), may receive parking (if applicable, self-parking over valet option must be utilized when available), and tolls reimbursement when necessary to accomplish the mission.

When an AO authorizes a traveler to use a GOV, but they choose to take their POV instead, the reimbursement will be limited to the current GOV mileage rates.

When traveling to or from the terminal, the reimbursement is limited to the lower of the airport economy (long-term) parking and the taxicab or TNC fare amounts.

DOT does not reimburse GOV travel costs that are not approved in advance by a designated AO. Unauthorized use of a GOV is considered misuse of government property. Offenders are subject to administrative or criminal liability.

### **3.6.1.4 Privately-Owned Vehicle (POV) Expenses**

A traveler whose AOs authorizes travel by POV as the most advantageous method of travel, or a traveler who uses a POV between a residence, official duty station, or other point of travel authorized by their AOs and a common carrier terminal or at the TDY location (see Section 3.3.4), may receive mileage, parking (if applicable, self-parking over valet option must be utilized when available), and tolls reimbursement when necessary to accomplish the mission.

The traveler must submit claims for mileage reimbursement following travel. When traveling to or from the terminal, the reimbursement is limited to the lower of the POV mileage and airport economy (long-term) parking and the taxicab or TNC fare amounts.

DOT may not prohibit a traveler from using a POV on official travel. However, if a traveler chooses to use a POV instead of the most advantageous method of transportation, they must:

- Limit reimbursement to the constructive cost of the authorized method of transportation, which is the sum of travel and transportation expenses the traveler would reasonably have incurred had the traveler traveled by the method of transportation deemed to be most advantageous to the government (see Section 3.3.6 for more information on constructive cost comparisons); and
- Take leave for any duty hours that are missed as a result of travel by POV.

DOT does *not* reimburse the following expenses when they are related to a traveler's use of a POV:

- Charges for repairs;
- Depreciation;
- Replacements;
- Grease or oil;
- Antifreeze;
- Towage and similar speculative expenses;
- Fuel/EV Charging;
- Insurance; or
- State and Federal taxes.

Note: Travelers are eligible to claim mileage for travel by POV without regard to the vehicle ownership or the person driving the vehicle.

### **3.6.2 Per Diem Expenses**

DOT provides travelers on TDY travel with per diem allowances for lodging and meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) based on the per diem rate for the TDY location. DOT adheres to maximum per diem allowances by location, as provided on the GSA website. Reimbursement of per diem expenses are allowed when:

- Official travel is performed outside a 50-mile radius from the traveler's authorized point of departure;
- Per diem expenses are incurred while performing official travel; and
- A traveler is in a travel status more than 12 hours.

#### **3.6.2.1 Per Diem Reimbursement Periods**

A traveler is eligible for per diem reimbursement beginning on the date they depart their personal residences, official duty stations, or any other points of travel the AO previously authorized. A traveler's reimbursement periods end on their return date from the TDY location.

Travelers must record their dates to and from official duty stations, TDY locations, and any other authorized point(s) of travel. Likewise, travelers must record any travel stopovers or authorized rest periods. See Section 3.3.7 for additional information on authorized rest periods.

A traveler who crosses the International Date Line must calculate their actual elapsed travel time, instead of calendar days, to determine proper per diem reimbursements.

#### **3.6.2.2 Per Diem Reimbursement on Non-Workdays**

DOT may reimburse travelers for non-workday per diem expenses (per diem allowance or actual expense reimbursement) when:

- The mission requires a non-workday stay at the TDY location;
- Travelers work at the same TDY location before and after a non-workday, and the cost of traveling home to the traveler's official duty station and back to the TDY location exceeds the total non-workday per diem reimbursement from staying at the TDY location; or
- Travelers work at different TDY locations directly before and after a non-workday, and the cost of returning home to the traveler's official duty station and traveling to the next TDY location exceeds the cost of traveling directly to the next TDY location and receiving per diem for the elapsed non-workday(s) between the first TDY location and the next.

AOs decide what factors are substantial enough to justify reimbursing both per diem and round-trip travel to and from a traveler's official duty station and reimbursement for non-workday per diem expenses when the traveler elects to take leave immediately (e.g., Friday or Monday) preceding or following non-workday(s).

#### **3.6.2.3 Per Diem Reimbursement for Day Trips**

A traveler on a day trip whose official travel period equates to 12 hours or fewer is ineligible for a per diem allowance.

### 3.6.2.4 Lodging

Travelers who perform authorized TDY travel at DOT's expense are eligible for lodging expense reimbursement at hotels, motels, and government quarters at their TDY destination according to the GSA's published per diem lodging reimbursement rates. Travelers arriving at TDY lodging locations after 12:00 AM may claim lodging expenses for the preceding calendar day. DOT determines travelers' lodging reimbursements by lodging type and any special circumstances at their TDY destination:

- Conventional lodging (e.g., hotel, motel, and boarding house): DOT reimburses travelers for actual lodging expenses incurred, not to exceed the TDY location's prescribed per diem rate. Travelers should always stay at a "fire safe" facility. This is a facility that meets the fire safety requirements of the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990. Please see Section 3.6.3 for more information on actual expenses.
  - When selecting a commercial lodging facility, travelers should first consider government lodging agreement programs such as FedRooms®. The advantages include:
    - Lodging rates set at or below per diem rates;
    - No add-on fees, resort fees or early check-out fees;
    - Room cancellation deadlines as late as 4:00 p.m. on the day of arrival;
    - Most hotels offer last standard room availability rates;
    - Free breakfast, free Wi-Fi, free parking, and free shuttle services; and
    - Identification of hotels that offer electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.
- Government quarters: DOT reimburses travelers any fee or service charge for using government quarters.
- Lodging with friend(s) or relative(s): DOT reimburses travelers for additional costs that a friend or relative incurs in accommodating them. DOT only reimburses the expenses if the traveler can substantiate the costs and the AO determines such costs to be reasonable. DOT does not reimburse travelers for the cost of comparable conventional lodging in the area.
- Non-conventional lodging: DOT reimburses travelers for the costs of other types of lodging when conventional lodging facilities do not exist in the area (e.g., in remote areas) or when conventional facilities have limited supply due to an influx of attendees at a special event (e.g., entertainment or sporting event). This lodging type may include home rental services, (e.g., Airbnb, VRBO, etc.) college dormitories or similar facilities. DOT may reimburse fees for additional services when the AO determines that the fees are necessary for the use of non-conventional lodging.
- Recreational vehicle (trailer/camper): DOT may reimburse travelers for expenses associated with recreational vehicles that may be considered lodging costs (i.e., parking fees, fees for connection, use, and disconnection of utilities, electricity, gas, water and sewage, bath, or shower fees, and dumping fees).
- Dual lodging: Expenses at two different TDY locations during the same period are reimbursable when these are incurred due to unexpected circumstances beyond the traveler's control or are necessary to accomplish the mission.

DOT *does not* reimburse travelers for the following lodging expenses:

- Personally owned residences: Any lodging expenses that travelers incur from staying at their personally owned residences, or for any real estate expenses associated with the purchase or sale of a personal residence at the TDY location, except in conjunction with authorized relocation travel; and
- Personally owned recreational vehicles: Any expenses associated with the purchase, sale, or payment of a personally owned recreational vehicle or camper at the TDY location.

Note that if travelers share lodging, DOT reimburses lodging expenses as follows:

- When government travelers on official travel share lodging, reimbursement is limited to one-half of the double occupancy rate; and
- If the person sharing the room is not a government traveler, the reimbursement is limited to the single occupancy rate.

#### **3.6.2.4.1 Lodging Taxes**

Travelers traveling within CONUS and OCONUS non-foreign locations must pay all lodging taxes, unless exempted by the state or local jurisdiction. See Section 3.6.4.5 for additional information on claiming lodging taxes as miscellaneous expenses reimbursement when traveling within the CONUS.

Lodging taxes for OCONUS foreign travel are included foreign lodging rates. Travelers are prohibited from claiming reimbursement for OCONUS foreign lodging taxes separately.

#### **3.6.2.4.2 Prepaid Lodging Reimbursement**

DOT travelers must make reasonable efforts to secure lodging reservations through the eTravel system. In rare instances where travelers cannot obtain lodging reservations within the eTravel system, and reservations are made directly with the hotel or other lodging source which requires a lodging deposit, DOT may reimburse lodging deposits prior to travel.

When a traveler must cancel, curtail, or interrupt authorized travel for official purposes or other reasons beyond their control, such as personal emergencies, DOT will reimburse the traveler for non-refundable prepaid lodging expenditures (e.g., forfeited rental deposits, first night prepaid hotel stays, etc.). However, a traveler claiming reimbursement of prepaid lodging expenditures must make reasonable efforts to obtain refunds and minimize losses to DOT prior to submitting their travel vouchers. Such reasonable efforts may include calling vendors and attempting to obtain a refund or cancelling reservations as soon as the traveler knows they will not be able to travel.

Travelers who claim and receive non-refundable lodging deposit reimbursements prior to travel, and then fail to travel according to their associated authorized itineraries due to personal matters, must repay DOT the reimbursed deposits.

#### **3.6.2.5 Meals + Incidental Expenses (M&IE)**

Supervisors should schedule travel so that, to the maximum extent possible, the traveler can perform official travel during their normal duty hours. Travelers may schedule travel one day early or stay overnight upon completion of TDY travel to avoid traveling during non-duty hours. In addition, travelers may arrive at the TDY location earlier or stay later if by doing so additional expenses would not be incurred by the agency. For example, if the work or TDY assignment begins Monday morning, the traveler may schedule their departure date on the previous Friday, but they would not be authorized any travel reimbursement until the day before (Sunday) the assignment begins.

When approving travel days, supervisors will ensure that trips are initiated and completed within an appropriate period, depending upon the variables of destination, method of travel, scheduling, length of trip, travel time, purpose, and other similar factors.

DOT provides M&IE reimbursements as outlined below: When travel is		Your allowance is
More than 12 but less than 24 hours.		75 % of the applicable M&IE rate for each calendar day you are in a travel status.
24 hours or more, on	The day of departure.	75% of applicable M&IE rate.
	Full day(s) of travel.	100% of applicable M&IE rate.
	The last day of travel.	75% of applicable M&IE rate.

DOT determines applicable M&IE expense rates as outlined below:

For days of travel which		Your applicable M&IE rate is
Require lodging, and		M&IE rate associated with TDY location or stopover point.
Do not require lodging, and	Travel is more than 12 hours but less than 24 hours.	M&IE rate associated with TDY location (or highest M&IE rate if itinerary includes multiple locations).
	Travel is 24 hours or more, and you are traveling to a new TDY site or stopover point at midnight.	M&IE rate associated with new TDY location or stopover point.
	Travel is 24 hours or more, and you are returning to your official station.	M&IE associated with previous day of travel.

### 3.6.2.5.1 Complimentary or Furnished Meals

DOT does not reduce travelers per diem reimbursement expense rates when they receive complimentary meals from common carriers or hotels.

Travelers who receive government-furnished meals, or receive meals as part of a registration fee, must deduct the reimbursement rate (as prescribed by GSA for the specified TDY location) for the furnished meal(s) (breakfast, lunch, or dinner) from the overall M&IE reimbursement rate for those days.

### 3.6.3 Actual Expenses

A traveler must obtain advance authorization to claim actual expense reimbursement from their designated AO. A traveler who claims actual expense reimbursement without prior AO authorization must submit written justification(s) with their associated travel vouchers. AOs determine if a traveler's claims for actual expense reimbursement are justified and appropriate.

DOT may reimburse "actual expenses," limited to an amount not to exceed 300% of the prescribed maximum per diem rate per TDY location in the following instances when:

- Travelers must procure lodging or meals at a prearranged location where they are attending a scheduled meeting, conference, or training session;
- Authorized travel expenses have escalated due to simultaneously occurring unique events (sporting events, conventions, natural disasters, etc.) and the combined cost of nearby lodging, meals, and round-trip commuting to/from nearby lodging and meals exceeds the prescribed per diem reimbursement rate for TDY location;
- The TDY location is subject to a Presidentially Declared Disaster and the Quality Assurance has issued an open (blanket) actual expense authorization (see FTR 301 - 70.201); or
- The mission requirements necessitate actual expenses as determined by the AO.

Travelers must itemize all actual expenses (including each meal separately) for reimbursement. Travelers must average expenses that do not accrue daily (e.g., laundry, dry cleaning, etc.) over the number of days the AO has approved for actual expenses.

Note: Travelers may receive both per diem allowances and actual expense reimbursements on different days of the same trip.

### **3.6.4 Miscellaneous Expenses**

DOT reimburses various necessary miscellaneous expenses at the discretion of the traveler's AO.

#### **3.6.4.1 Cash Withdrawal Fees**

DOT reimburses ATM cash withdrawal fees and financial institution service charges for travelers using government travel charge cards. DOT Order 2300.1 DOT Travel Card Management Policy sets forth guidance regarding proper use of cash withdrawals.

#### **3.6.4.2 Checked Bag Fees**

DOT reimburses travelers for the following checked bag fee expenses:

- Expenses associated with checking the first piece of luggage on both domestic and international flights, if checking the first piece of luggage is not included in the flight fare; or
- Expenses associated with the storage of one piece of luggage (e.g., hotel, valet) prior to/following checking in or out of lodging if conducting official business during the storage period.

AOs may authorize reimbursement for expenses associated with checking additional pieces of luggage or luggage exceeding air carriers' size or weight restrictions when needed to accomplish the mission.

#### **3.6.4.3 Communication**

Travelers who have a government issued cellular telephone are not eligible for communication related expense reimbursements unless they travel to an area where cellular service is limited or unavailable.

If a traveler is required to incur out-of-pocket communication costs because of mission-related activities or additional costs in foreign countries, the AO must approve this on a case-by-case basis.



These costs may include, but are not limited to, the mandatory use of a country's telephone carrier system and additional tariffs.

#### **3.6.4.4 Laundry**

DOT may reimburse travelers traveling within CONUS for laundry and clothing pressing expenses they incur at the TDY location if the travel authorization includes overnight lodging equal to or exceeding four consecutive nights.

DOT does not reimburse laundry and clothing pressing expenses for OCONUS travel as it is already included within the established per diem rates.

#### **3.6.4.5 Travel Insurance**

In accordance with FTR 301-10.451 and 301-10.452, DOT will not reimburse driving-related insurance for CONUS travel areas. Per the [U.S. Rental Car Agreement](#), DOT reimburses additional OCONUS rental vehicle insurance as a miscellaneous expense when required by law at the traveler's foreign destination. DOT also reimburses supplemental medical insurance at the discretion of the AO when a traveler demonstrates it is necessary for their trip to an OCONUS foreign destination.

#### **3.6.4.6 Travel Membership Programs and Subscriptions**

DOT will not reimburse individual traveler's membership programs (e.g., rewards program offered by credit card companies, TSA Precheck and Global Entry) or subscription (e.g., monthly/yearly Wi-Fi) fees unless statutorily authorized.

#### **3.6.4.7 Other Miscellaneous Expenses**

DOT may also reimburse the following miscellaneous expenses at the discretion of the traveler's AO:

- General expenses:
  - Storage of property used on official business;
  - Energy surcharge or lodging resort fee (when such fee is not optional);
  - Telephone calls/service (see Section 3.6.4.3); and
  - Wi-Fi flight duration passes.
- Special expenses associated with foreign travel:
  - Commissions on conversion of foreign currency;
  - Passport or visa fees, including fees for physical examination a country requires to obtain a visa or travel and transportation costs to the passport/visa issuing office (contact [passports@dot.gov](mailto:passports@dot.gov) for assistance if necessary);
  - Costs of photographs for passports and visas;
  - Foreign country exit fees;
  - Costs of birth, health, and identity certificates; and
  - Charges for inoculations that cannot be obtained through a Federal dispensary.

AOs may approve other miscellaneous expenses necessary for lodging, transportation, or delivery of work products. Travelers must document that all expenses are necessary to accomplish the mission.

### **3.6.5 Reimbursable Expenses for Travel of Travelers with Special Needs**

DOT reimburses reasonable expenses required to accommodate a traveler's special physical needs, as defined in FTR 301-13.2, when they are clearly visible and discernable. However, if the disability is a lifelong condition, DOT only requires a one-time certification statement. The medical authority certifying a traveler's special need must include at a minimum both an explanation that the special accommodations are necessary and the approximate duration of the special accommodation within the certification statement.

DOT reimburses reasonable expenses for the travel of travelers with special needs including, but not necessarily limited to:

- Transportation and per diem expenses for a family member or attendant when the traveler's travel would not be possible without them;
  - Note: DOT treats a family member or attendants traveling with a DOT traveler as invitational travelers. See Section 3.2.2 for more information on invitational travel.
- Specialized transportation to/from and at the TDY location;
- Specialized services/accommodations provided by the common carrier;
- Luggage expenses directly associated with a special need;
- Renting or transporting a wheelchair; and
- Necessary premium class travel to accommodate a special need. Note, if an AO authorizes a traveler to have an attendant accompany them, the AO may also authorize the attendant to use other than coach class accommodations in this scenario if the traveler requires the attendant's services en route.

DOT's Reasonable Accommodation Order (DOT Order 1011.1B) governs the process of requesting an accommodation, requesting, and reviewing medical documentation, and making determinations about:

- A traveler's special needs status;
- How to accommodate a traveler's acknowledged special need; and
- What travel expenses associated with accommodating a special need are reimbursable.

Please consult with OAs' Office of Human Resources, Office of Civil Rights, or Chief Counsels for additional information and guidance.

### **3.7 Claiming Reimbursement for TDY Travel Expenses**

All travelers traveling on TDY assignment must use the eTravel system to file an electronic travel voucher within five business days of returning from travel. DOT requires that travelers include any written approvals or documentation supporting exceptional travel circumstances (e.g., premium class travel, emergency travel, per diem reimbursement for local travel) in their vouchers.

#### **3.7.1 Documentation Required for Voucher Reimbursement**

Travelers are required to electronically attach the following receipts to their travel vouchers:

- Air and rail;
- Itemized rental vehicle showing a zero balance;
- Rental vehicle fuel/EV charging expense;
- Itemized lodging showing a zero balance;
- Taxi, TNC, or IMTC; and
- Individual travel expenses over \$75.

Receipts for M&IE are never required, except for amounts over \$75 when claiming actual expenses. If it is impracticable to provide documentation as required by this section, the failure to do so must be fully explained on the travel voucher. Mere inconvenience in the matter of providing documentation will not be considered. In certain rare instances, a copy of the travel card transaction may be accepted in lieu of a receipt.

Note: Required receipts are maintained for six years in accordance with National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) under General Records Schedule 1.1, Number 010.

DOT may disallow a traveler's payment of a claimed travel expense under the following circumstances:

- The expense is prohibited by policy;
- The expense is an unauthorized travel expense;
- The traveler fails to properly itemize travel expenses; or
- The traveler fails to provide a receipt or necessary documentation to support claimed travel expense.

When DOT disallows payment of a traveler's claimed travel expense, the traveler, upon notification of disallowance, may challenge the decision by providing additional facts or documents to support the original reimbursement claim.

### **3.7.2 Reimbursement for Official Non-Travel Expenditures**

Travelers whose assigned missions require non-travel expenditures such as the acquisition of materials, equipment, or services must procure these items prior to travel in accordance with DOT's Transportation Acquisition Manual.

### **3.8 Promotional Materials**

Any promotional benefits or materials received from a travel service provider in connection with official travel may be retained for personal use if such items are obtained under the same conditions as those offered to the general public and at no additional cost to DOT. However, promotional benefits or materials an employee receives from a travel service provider in connection with your planning or scheduling an official conference or other group travel (as opposed to performing official travel for the employee) are considered property of the government. An employee may only accept the benefits or materials on behalf of DOT and for the use of official business.