

Subject: ENGAGEMENT WITH FOREIGN CABINET, SUB-CABINET AND NON-CABINET LEVEL OFFICIALS AT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

1. PURPOSE: This Order sets forth policy and guidance for visits by foreign nationals to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT or the Department). This order also consolidates two previous directives and provides further guidance for coordination of visits by foreign nationals.
2. CANCELLATION: This Order cancels and supersedes DOT 1240.3A, “Non-Cabinet Level Visitors to the Department of Transportation,” dated 5-11-88. This Order also cancels and supersedes DOT 1240.4A, “Cabinet and Subcabinet Level Foreign Visitors to the Department of Transportation,” dated 5-11-88.
3. BACKGROUND:
 - a. Visits by high-level foreign officials result from a) invitations issued by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Under Secretary, Assistant Secretaries, and Administrators to their counterparts, or b) the acceptance of a meeting request submitted by a foreign official on behalf of their government. Other instances include Operating Administration (OA) staff-level meetings with foreign visitors and hosted international fellow programs whereby foreign officials spend a specified term working within the Department. Proper coordination within the Department and with other government agencies is essential in the planning and execution of these visits.
 - b. Requests for official visits by foreign officials must be submitted through appropriate diplomatic channels, such as respective country embassies, U.S. Embassies, foreign government ministries, other U.S. Government agencies, or international organizations sponsoring individuals or groups.
4. DEFINITIONS:
 - a. *Cabinet and Subcabinet officials* – Foreign counterparts to the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Under Secretary, Assistant Secretaries, or Administrators. This includes heads of state, ambassadors, and senior level officials that generally carry the title of Minister, Vice Minister, Secretary of State or Director General.
 - b. *Non-Cabinet official* – Working level government officials and non-government officials, including lobbyists, chief executives, and academia presidents.
 - c. *Foreign visit* – Foreign representatives under the sponsorship of their government or international organization¹.

¹ To the extent that an in-person visit has been substituted for a virtual meeting, the virtual meeting is also included.

5. POLICY: Within the availability of resources, it is the policy of the Department to encourage the active interchange of ideas and information within the international transportation community. In furtherance of these cooperative exchanges, the visit of appropriate foreign nationals to the Department is encouraged. This allows the Department to foster international working relationships and further priorities of the Secretary and the Administration. It is important, however, that the Department maintain a cohesive foreign policy and senior leadership must be kept abreast of Departmental international activities. The Office of International Transportation and Trade (OIT&T) will coordinate these activities and foreign nationals visiting the Department.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES:

a. Office of International Transportation and Trade

OIT&T, within the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs, Office of the Secretary (OST), is the principal coordinating office for Cabinet and Subcabinet foreign officials visiting the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Under Secretary and Assistant Secretary, including heads of state, ministers, ambassadors and other high-level Non-Cabinet officials.

In such regard, the OIT&T generally has the following responsibilities:

- 1) Develop proposed programs (dependent upon the visitor and length of stay) which include negotiating agenda topics of discussion, social activities, and site visits (e.g., tour of transportation facilities in U.S.).
 - a) Assist in the coordination of meeting and event logistics, including the coordination for greeting and escorting senior-level foreign officials visiting the Department to meet with the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Under Secretary, and Assistant Secretary.
 - b) Arranging parking through coordination with the Office of Security (M-40).
- c) Coordinate with the Office of General Counsel, Office of International Law (C-20), for legal guidance.
 - d) Communicate with intergovernmental agencies, embassies, and modal administrations
 - e) Ensure adherence to protocol related guidelines and cultural sensitivities, including obtaining language services and ensuring accessibility when needed.
- 2) Coordinate with appropriate OAs and other Government agencies, including the Department of State, to obtain scene-setters, related cables, background materials and high-level messaging, as appropriate.


- 3) Coordinate with the Office of Security (M-40) to arrange appropriate clearances and access into the building in accordance with Departmental security policies for foreign visitors entering the building.² OIT&T will provide guidance to OAs on proper courtesies for cabinet-level officials.
 - a) The Foreign Nationals Visitor Form 1600.8 must be submitted to M-40 for proper vetting.
 - b) Foreign officials must be escorted by a DOT staff person at all times while in the DOT building.
 - c) Use of electronic devices such as cameras and recording devices are not permitted.
 - d) Should there be extenuating circumstances such as a pandemic or natural disaster, access to the DOT building will be restricted. Visits with a specific business need will be allowed and must be approved by the designated OA manager and undergo appropriate screening and clearances by M-40.
- 4) Serve as the liaison to DOT international offices to arrange and coordinate visit programs hosted by the Department of State International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP).
- 5) Arrange programs for all foreign visitors wishing appointments with more than one OA.
- 6) Advise OAs of requests for visits when the visitor is interested only in one DOT focus area of transportation. As appropriate, notify all OAs of upcoming visits by foreign visitors to the Department.
- 7) Compile weekly and monthly reports of all foreign visitors to the Department.

b. Secretarial Offices and Operating Administrations

- 1) Coordinate with OIT&T when an OA or Secretarial Office is contacted directly by foreign officials requesting to visit DOT or seeking a virtual meeting, including visits and meetings for the purpose of conducting negotiations (see number 5).
 - a) Coordinate with OIT&T to arrange programs for foreign visitors who are interested in activities which fall under the jurisdiction of multiple OAs (*i.e.*, State Department IVLPs and visits by foreign governments).
 - b) Provide assistance in hosting foreign visitors in accordance with programs developed by OIT&T.

² Office of Security (M-40) Foreign Nationals Program (internal site),
<http://one10.dot.gov/office/ost/security/PerSec/SitePages/ForeignNationalsProgram.aspx>.

- 2) Participate in meetings, site visits, and discussions with foreign dignitaries as established in approved programs.
- 3) Research and provide background materials to OIT&T for the purpose of developing briefing packages for the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Under Secretary, and Assistant Secretary meetings with senior-level foreign dignitaries.
- 4) Provide support services as required in approved programs, both at headquarters and in the field.
- 5) Obtain policy clearance from OIT&T and legal guidance from C-20. (Refer to DOT Order 1240.5A "Coordination Requirements for International Policy Activities and Meetings" dated 1-19-21.)
- 6) Arrange programs for foreign visitors who are interested in activities which fall under one modal administration, such as technical exchange and fellowship programs. OAs must submit a read-out report of the visit to OIT&T.
- 7) Coordinate with OIT&T, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, and the Office of Security and follow Standard Operating Procedures for consistency across the Department. (Refer to DOT Order 1240.5A "Coordination Requirements for International Policy Activities and Meetings" dated 1-19-21)
- 8) Notify OIT&T of any requests by foreign nationals wishing to visit OAs, including joint meetings with other OAs.
 - a) Provide assistance in the hosting of foreign visitors in accordance with programs developed by OIT&T.
- 9) When there are international activities within one OA, OAs must report such short and long-term visits to OIT&T weekly. Departmental leadership needs to be kept informed of visitors for the benefit of future relations with respective countries. (Refer to DOT Order 1240.5A "Coordination Requirements for International Policy Activities and Meetings" dated 1-19-21)



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