



## ORDER

U.S. Department of  
Transportation

Office of the Secretary  
of Transportation

DOT M 1500.6B

3-29-18

Subject: DOT TRAVEL ORDER AND MANUAL

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1. PURPOSE. This Order and attached DOT Travel Manual establishes Departmental policy and guidance on all aspects of Federal travel and also 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 matter that is financially advantageous to the Government and convenient for the traveler.
2. BACKGROUND. The General Services Administration's (GSA) FTR set the standards and procedures that govern travel for most all Federal agencies. While the FTR covers most all aspects of travel management, there are numerous areas in which individual agencies have discretion and flexibility with regard to how these regulations are interpreted and implemented. This Order is intended to both institutionalize the most recent requirements of the general FTR and to tailor discretionary areas to most efficiently address the DOT-specific needs.
3. CANCELLATION. This Order and Travel Manual cancels:
  - DOT Travel Guiding Principles, DOT Order 1500.11, December 16, 1996
  - DOT Guidance "Policy for Use and Approval of Premium Class Travel", December 18, 2007
  - Travel Manual, DOT Order 1500.6A, January 2, 1985

4. POLICY. The DOT Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Budget and Programs directs Secretarial Offices and DOT Operating Administrations (OA) to follow policy and guidance as described in this Order and the accompanying DOT Travel Manual. Secretarial offices and DOT OAs are also directed to ensure the Department's travel guidance is followed and that internal controls are developed to support a well-managed travel management program.
5. REFERENCES. This Order is issued pursuant to the following provision of law and regulation:
- FTR, 41 (CFR), Chapters 300-304
  - DOT Travel Card Management Policy
6. SCOPE. This Order and the DOT Travel Manual applies to all Secretarial Offices and DOT OAs, with the exception of the Federal Aviation Administration.
7. RESPONSIBILITIES.

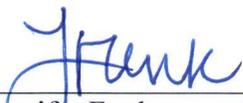
DOT Chief Financial Officer (CFO/OST-B): Establishes and oversees this Order and the associated DOT Travel Manual.

Office of Financial Management (B-30): The Office of Financial Management (B-30) manages DOT's travel management programs for the Department, including oversight over travel policy, the e-travel system, and the travel credit card program.

DOT OA CFOs: DOT OA CFOs are responsible for ensuring the Department's policy is upheld and internal guidance and controls are developed to support a well-managed travel program. Further, OAs may wish to issue agency-specific guidance or procedures based on unique agency programs or travel needs not specifically addressed by this Order.

8. IMPLEMENTATION. Upon issuance, any further guidance or standard operating procedures (SOPs) issued by DOT OAs to implement the provisions of this Order must be forwarded to the Chief Financial Officer/Assistant Secretary for Budget and Programs, Attention: B-30.

FOR THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION:

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Jennifer Funk  
 Acting Deputy Chief Financial Officer

3-29-18  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
(DOT)**



**TEMPORARY DUTY ASSIGNMENT TRAVEL MANUAL**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOT)  
TEMPORARY DUTY ASSIGNMENT TRAVEL MANUAL**

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**Purpose**

This document, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Temporary Duty (TDY) Assignment Travel Manual, is issued in accordance with and serves as a supplement to the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR), Title 41 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Chapters 300-304 and the DOT Travel Order.

The purpose of this document is to:

- establish procedures for TDY travel;
- identify key roles and associated responsibilities as related to TDY travel; and
- replace *DOT Travel Guiding Principle*, DOT Order 1500.1, dated October 1, 1996.

Each Operating Administration (OA) may or may not want to issue their own specific policies and/or procedures in relation to the entire set of regulations. To understand the entire body of regulations and policy surrounding allowable travel and transportation entitlements, OAs should first read the FTR, then the TDY Travel Manual, and, if applicable, the OA's travel policy and/or procedure.

**Applicability**

This document, the U.S. DOT TDY Assignment Travel Manual applies to employees of all DOT OAs, with the exception of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

**References**

- FTR, (41 CFR 300-304)
- DOT Travel Card Management Policy

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## **Section 1: General Travel and Transportation Rules**

Employees must exercise the same prudence when incurring expenses during official travel as any pragmatic individual would while traveling on personal expense.

### **1.1 Travel Authorizations**

As a *rule*, employees must obtain an approved electronic travel authorization from DOT's official eTravel system prior to the incurrence of any travel or transportation expenses. In limited instances, a designated approving official may elect to approve a select travel authorization for reimbursement following travel. Such circumstances exist when the DOT e-Travel system:

- a. causes an unreasonable burden on the OA's mission accomplishment(s) (e.g., emergency travel (and the system is unavailable), invitational travel, necessity of disability accommodations or special needs (in accordance with FTR § 301 – 13);
- b. compromises a national security interest; or
- c. may endanger the life of the employee (e.g., an individual traveling under the Federal witness protection program, or threatened law enforcement/investigative personnel traveling in accordance with FTR § 301 – 31).

However, written or electronic advance authorization is required for the following items:

- a. use of reduced fares for group or charter arrangements;
- b. payment of a reduced per diem rate;
- c. acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source for travel expenses; and
- d. travel expenses related to attendance at a conference.

#### **1.1.1 Appropriate Approving Officials**

Approving officials play a significant role in the accountability for public funds. As such, approving officials are responsible for ensuring the approval of travel authorizations and subsequent reimbursement of travel expenses adhere to this policy.

The following individuals within an OA may serve as designated approving officials for travel authorizations:

- a. Administrator
- b. Deputy Administrator
- c. Executive Director

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- d. Associate Administrator, Assistant Administrator, and Chief Counsel, each with authority to re-delegate approving official responsibilities to:
- (1) Associate or Assistant Administrator’s Deputy and Deputy and/or Assistant Chief Counsels
  - (2) Heads of offices and services
  - (3) Division Managers
  - (4) Branch Managers
  - (5) Supervisory Staff
  - (6) Non-Supervisory Staff tasked with program management responsibilities.

1.1.2 Travel and Transportation Expenses and Required Authorizations

The following expense scenarios require authorization approval from the listed individuals within an OA:

Expense Scenario	Required Approving Official
Other than coach-class accommodations aboard common carrier transportation	OA Chief Financial Officer
Use of foreign flag airline carrier	As listed in <i>Section 1.1.1</i> of this document
Use of reduced fares for group/charter arrangements	As listed in <i>Section 1.1.1</i> of this document
Use of cash as a method of payment for common carrier transportation expenditures	As listed in <i>Section 1.1.1</i> of this document
Use of extra-fare train service	As listed in <i>Section 1.1.1</i> of this document
Transportation aboard ships (both U.S. and foreign flag vessels)	Administrator or Deputy Administrator – Authority may not be re-delegated
Rental of commercial automobile	As listed in <i>Section 1.1.1</i> of this document
Use of government aircraft	OA or OST Chief Counsel – Authority may not be re-delegated
Fixed (reduced) rate of reimbursement for per diem expenses	As listed in <i>Section 1.1.1</i> of this document
“Actual Expense” reimbursement for per diem expenses	As listed in <i>Section 1.1.1</i> of this document
Expenses associated with Emergency Travel	Administrator, Deputy Administrator, Associate Administrators, Assistant Administrators, or OA or OST Chief Counsel – Authority may not be re-delegated

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Travel and transportation expenses associated with official non-routine international travel for groups involving Administrators, Deputy Administrators, Associate Administrators, or five (5) or more employees	DOT Chief of Staff – Authority may not be re-delegated
Travel and transportation expenses associated with official non-routine international travel for groups of five (5) or fewer employees	Employees’ OA Administrators – Authority may not be re-delegated
Travel and transportation expenses associated with official routine international travel	Employees’ OA Administrators – Authority may be re-delegated to employees’ supervisor

International travel should be coordinated with the appropriate International Affairs or Program Offices within each OA as required by OA policy. OA International Affairs or Program Offices will coordinate Departmental approval with the Office of the Under Secretary for Policy.

**Section 2: Reimbursable Transportation Expenses**

**2.1 Expense Reimbursements and Methods of Travel**

Employees who perform authorized travel at DOT’s expense are eligible for reimbursement of fares, rental fees, mileage payment, and other expenses related to transportation.

DOT permits employees to utilize the following methods of transportation when properly authorized by the designated approving official:

- a. common carrier transportation (e.g. aircraft, train, bus, ship, or local transit system);
- b. government vehicle;
- c. privately owned vehicle (POV); and
- d. special conveyance (e.g. taxi or commercial automobile).

Employees must select the method of transportation most advantageous to DOT, taking total cost (including per diem, overtime, lost work time and actual transportation costs) and efficiency into consideration in accordance with FTR §301 – 10.4. The FTR presumes common carrier and government automobiles to be the most advantageous modes of travel. Should an employee select a method of travel not required by regulation or authorized by DOT, without prior authorization from a designated approving official, the employee will be responsible for any additional expenses incurred.

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DOT tasks employees' approving officials (unless otherwise noted in *Section 1.1.2*) with final determination of whether employees' selected methods of transportation prove most advantageous to DOT.

Employees must travel to their destinations along the usually traveled route unless a designated approving official authorizes an alternate route in advance as necessary to completion of the mission. Reimbursements for travel are limited to the cost of travel for a given TDY assignment by a direct route or on an uninterrupted basis. Employees hold responsibility for any additional expenses incurred because of unauthorized indirectly routed travel, or authorized indirectly routed travel associated with personal leave.

### 2.1.1 Local Travel

The FTR defines official duty station as an area that includes the location where the employee regularly performs his or her duties or an invitational employee's home or regular place of business. The area may be a mileage radius around a point, a geographic boundary, or any other definite domain, provided no part of the area is more than fifty (50) miles from where the employee regularly performs his or her duties or from an invitational employee's home or regular place of business (see FTR § 300 – 3.1).

Therefore, DOT defines local travel to be employee travel within a fifty (50) mile radius of employees' official duty stations. Any exceptions to this rule must require written approval from the OA Chief Financial Officer.

DOT reimburses employees for local travel expenses, associated with official DOT business, which exceed employees' normal transportation costs between employees' personal residences and official duty stations.

Employees' normal transportation costs between personal residences and official duty stations will be calculated as follows:

- (Round-trip mileage driven in privately owned vehicle (if applicable) x Mileage reimbursement rate when no government vehicle is available) + Daily Parking Fees (if applicable) + Round-trip local transit system fare (if applicable).

### 2.1.2 Official Travel Interrupting Authorized Personal Leave

In some instances, an employee may be required to cancel or reschedule planned personal travel if needed for official duty. If the employee purchased a non-refundable ticket, or made a non-refundable deposit, the approving official may authorize reimbursement for either the actual costs of the non-refundable item(s) or any applicable change fee. The employee may only be reimbursed for unavoidable actual losses incurred due to cancelled or interrupted travel. Unavoidable actual

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losses may include costs of non-refundable item(s) purchased by the employee for immediate family members, as defined by 41 CFR § 300-3.1.

If an employee is required to interrupt personal travel and return to the permanent duty station or perform TDY travel, the approving official may authorize travel from the personal travel destination point to the permanent duty station or the TDY location, and, if applicable, from the TDY location back to the personal travel destination point or the permanent duty station.

- a. *Non-refundable tickets.* It is possible that an unused personal ticket either may be used later or cannot be used at all. If the ticket cannot be used at all, the employee must attach the unused ticket, if available, when claiming reimbursement. If a ticket is not available, the employee must provide evidence of cost and cancellation. If the employee can use the ticket later and there is an associated change fee, the travel approving official may authorize reimbursement of the change fee when the employee incurs the change fee expense. If the airline increases the cost of the original ticket, the travel approving official may authorize reimbursement of the difference in cost. However, if the employee elects a costlier class of travel than the original ticket (e.g., selects business-class instead of coach-class), the employee must bear the additional cost.
- b. *Non-refundable deposits.* When claiming reimbursement for a non-refundable deposit, the employee must provide evidence of the cost of the deposit and the cancellation.

## **2.2 Common Carrier Transportation**

DOT considers airlines, trains, ships, buses, and local transit systems to be acceptable forms of common carrier transportation.

### **2.2.1 Airlines**

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

- a. employees must use contract carriers, whenever available, unless otherwise exempted as referenced in *Section 2.2.1.1.*;
- b. employees must use coach class accommodations, unless otherwise exempted as referenced in *Section 2.2.1.2.*; and
- c. employees must use a U.S. flag air carrier, unless otherwise exempted as referenced in *Section 2.2.1.3.*

### 2.2.1.1 Use of Contract City-Pair Fares

DOT requires employees to use General Services Administration's (GSA) city-pair contracts for air passenger transportation services. An approving official may authorize the use of a fare other than a contract city-pair fare when:

- a. space on a scheduled contract flight is not available in time to accomplish the purpose of the employee's travel, or use of contract service would require him or her to incur unnecessary overnight lodging costs which would increase the total cost of the trip;
- b. the contractor's flight schedule is inconsistent with explicit DOT policies regarding scheduling travel during normal working hours;
- c. a non-contract carrier offers a lower fare to the public that, if used, will result in a lower total trip cost to DOT (the combined costs of transportation, lodging, meals, and related expenses considered)(this exception does not apply if the contract carrier offers the same or lower fare and has seats available at that fare, or if the fare offered by the non-contract carrier is restricted to government and military employees performing official business and may be purchased only with a contractor-issued charge card, centrally billed account or government transportation request); or
- d. cost effective rail service is available and is consistent with mission requirements.

Employees 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. However, if the use of a non-contract fare was exempted and authorized in advance by the approving official, employees may be reimbursed.

Employees may only use city-pair fares for official DOT travel and are prohibited from reserving contract passenger transportation services for personal use. When no contract fares exist for a requested itinerary or route and common carriers furnish the same service at different fares between the same points for the same type of accommodations, employees must select the lowest cost service.

### 2.2.1.2 Changing or Canceling Common Carrier Transportation Reservations

An employee with advance knowledge of his/her need to change or cancel a common carrier transportation reservation must do so immediately and notify all applicable parties (approving official, Agency/Organization Program Coordinator (A/OPC), travel management center, etc.) of all reservation adjustments. Failure to change/cancel common carrier

transportation reservations in a timely manner (as determined by a designated approving official and/or A/OPC) may subject the employee to liability for any resulting losses.

#### 2.2.1.3 Airline Accommodations

The following classes of airline accommodations are available as defined within FTR § 301 – 10.121:

- a. *coach-class, also referred to as “tourist” or “economy-class”*
- b. *business-class, also referred to as “business, business elite, business first, world business, connoisseur, or envoy”*
- c. *first-class*
- d. *single-class.*

DOT requires the use of coach-class, or equivalent, accommodations for all official DOT air travel, both domestic and international, outside of scenarios pre-approved by the designated approving official as referenced below in 2.2.1.4.

#### 2.2.1.4 Other Than Coach-Class Fares

DOT employees are required to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business when making official travel arrangements, and therefore, should consider the least expensive class of travel that meets the needs of the agency’s mission. Employees may use the lowest other than coach-class airline accommodations only when an approving official specifically authorizes/approves such use as specified below.

- a. The approving official, as identified in 1.1.2, may authorize/approve first class or business class accommodations if any of the following apply:
  - (1) No coach-class accommodations are reasonably available. “Reasonably available” means available on an airline that is scheduled to leave within 24 hours of the employee’s proposed departure time, or scheduled to arrive within 24 hours of his or her proposed arrival time;
  - (2) Use of other than coach-class is necessary to accommodate a medical disability or other special need;
    - (a) A 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:

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- i) that special accommodation is necessary;
    - ii) an approximate duration of the special accommodation; and
    - iii) a recommendation as to the suitable class of transportation accommodations based on the disability.
  - (b) A special need must be certified annually in writing per OA's procedures. However, if the special need is a lifelong condition, then a one-time certification statement is required.
  - (c) If a DOT employee is authorized to have an attendant accompany him or her per FTR § 301 – 13.3(a), the approving official may also authorize the attendant to use other than coach-class accommodations if the attendant's services are required en route.
- (3) There are exceptional security circumstances requiring other than coach-class airline accommodations. Exceptional security circumstances are determined by an OA and should only be authorized up to the minimum other than coach-class accommodation necessary. These circumstances include, but are not limited to:
- (a) use of coach-class accommodations would endanger the employee's life or government property;
  - (b) the employee is an agent on protective detail and is accompanying an individual authorized to use other than coach-class accommodations; or
  - (c) the employee is a courier or control officer accompanying controlled pouches or packages.
- (4) Other than coach-class is required because of OA mission, consistent with the OA's internal procedures pursuant to FTR § 301 – 70.102(i).
- (5) Coach-class accommodations on an authorized/approved foreign air carrier do not provide adequate sanitation or health standards.
- (6) Regularly scheduled flights between origin/destination points (including connecting points) provide only other than coach-class accommodations. The employee must certify such on his or her voucher.
- (7) The employee's transportation costs are paid in full through the OA's acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source in accordance with FTR § 304.
- (8) The employee's travel meets the criteria of the 14-hour rule, where:
- (a) the origin and/or destination are OCONUS;
  - (b) the scheduled flight time, including stopovers and change of planes, is in excess of 14 hours, in accordance with FTR § 301 – 10.125;

- (c) the employee is required to report to duty the following day or sooner; or
  - (d) scheduled flight time is the flight time between the originating departure point and the ultimate arrival point 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 airports.
- (9) The use results in an overall cost savings to the DOT by avoiding additional subsistence costs, overtime, or lost productive time while awaiting coach-class accommodations.
- (10) No space is available in coach-class accommodations in time to accomplish the mission, which is urgent and cannot be postponed.

If other than coach-class accommodation is authorized based on the 14-hour rule, then the employee will not be eligible for a rest stop en route or a rest period upon arrival at his or her duty site.

Blanket authorization of other than coach-class transportation accommodations is prohibited and shall be authorized on an individual trip-by-trip basis, unless the employee has an up-to-date documented disability or special need.

DOT employees may upgrade to other than coach-class accommodations at their personal expense, including through redemption of frequent flyer benefits.

Coach-class seating upgrade programs, sometimes called “Coach Elite,” “Coach Plus,” “Preferred Coach” or some other identifier, allow passengers to obtain, for a fee, a more desirable seat choice within the coach-class cabin. These airline upgrade or preferred seat choices are generally available for an annual fee, at an airport kiosk or gate or as a frequent flier perk. These coach upgrade options are not considered a new or higher class of accommodation since the seating is still in the coach cabin. However, the use of these upgraded/preferred coach seating options is generally an employee’s personal choice and therefore is at the employee’s personal expense.

#### 2.2.1.5 Use of United States Flag Air Carriers and Foreign Air Carriers

United States flag air carrier service is defined as follows:

*U.S. flag air carrier service provided on an air carrier which holds a certificate under 49 U.S.C. 41102 and which service is authorized either by the carrier’s certificate or by exemption or regulation. U.S. flag air carrier service also includes service provided under a code share agreement with a foreign air carrier in accordance with Title 14,*

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*Code of Federal Regulations when the ticket, or documentation for an electronic ticket, identifies the U.S. flag air carrier's designator code and flight number.*

Employees whose air travel is funded by DOT must use U.S. flag air carrier service, regardless of whether the cost of foreign air carrier service is less than that of a U.S. flag air carrier, unless otherwise exempted as referenced in FTR § 301 – 10.135 through § 301 – 10.137.

Employees may only use foreign air carrier service when U.S. flag air carrier service is unavailable, will not accomplish DOT's mission, or as otherwise referenced in FTR § 301 – 10.138. In instances when an employee receives approval from a designated approving official to use foreign air carrier service, the employee must provide certification in accordance with FTR § 301 – 10.142. Failure to properly submit required foreign air carrier certification prior to travel precludes employees from claiming reimbursement for all fares associated with foreign air carrier service.

DOT will not reimburse any travel costs for or associated with any foreign air carrier service that is not approved in advance by a designated OA approving official and accompanied by all proper certifications.

Failure to secure air transportation reservations in a timely manner (as determined by a designated approving official and/or A/OPC) may subject the employee to liability for any resulting losses.

#### 2.2.1.6 Airline Compensation During Official DOT Travel

Should an air carrier deny DOT employees a confirmed reserved seat during official travel, employees must relinquish all payments received for liquidated damages to DOT. Employees must ensure that compensating payments are made payable to the "Treasurer of the United States."

Separately, employees who voluntarily vacate confirmed reserved seats during official travel, when an air carrier requests volunteers, may personally keep any compensation from the airline in accordance with the following:

- a. voluntarily vacating seats may not interfere with the performance of employees' official duties or accomplishment of agency mission;
- b. additional travel expenses incurred because of vacating seats will be borne by employee and not reimbursed by DOT; and

- c. employee is charged annual leave for any delays during duty hours which result from voluntarily vacated seats. It is the responsibility of the employee to document timecards appropriately.

## 2.2.2 Trains

### 2.2.2.1 Train Accommodations

The following classes of train accommodations are available as defined within FTR § 301 – 10.160:

- a. *coach-class*, which includes reserved coach accommodations and “slumber coach” accommodations for instances of overnight train travel
- b. *slumber-coach*
- c. *first-class*
- d. *business-class*.

DOT requires the use of coach-class, or equivalent, accommodations for all official DOT train travel outside of scenarios pre-approved by the designated approving official as referenced in FTR § 301 – 10.162 and *section 2.2.2.2* of this travel manual.

Employees may, at personal expense, select to upgrade to first-class or business-class.

### 2.2.2.2 Extra-Fare Train Service

Extra-fare train service is defined as follows:

*Train service that operates at an increased fare due to the extra performance of the train (i.e., faster speed, fewer stops).*

Extra-fare train service is a class above the lowest class offered on any train and must be pre-authorized/approved only when:

- a. No coach-class accommodations are reasonably available on a train that is scheduled to leave within 24 hours of the employee’s proposed departure time, or scheduled to arrive within 24 hours of his or her proposed arrival time.
- b. Use of other than coach-class accommodations are necessary to accommodate a medical disability or other special need;
  - (1) A 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:

- i) that special accommodation is necessary;
  - ii) an approximate duration of the special accommodation; and
  - iii) a recommendation as to the suitable class of transportation accommodations based on the disability;
- (2) A special need must be certified annually in writing according per the OA's procedures. However, if the special need is a lifelong condition, then a one-time certification statement is required.
- c. If a DOT employee is authorized to have an attendant accompany him or her per FTR § 301 – 13.3(a), the approving official may also authorize the attendant to use other than coach-class accommodations if the attendant's services are required en route.
- d. There are exceptional security circumstances requiring other than coach-class rail accommodations. Exceptional security circumstances are determined by the OA and should only be authorized to the minimum other than coach-class accommodation necessary to meet the OA's mission. These circumstances include, but are not limited to:
  - (1) use of coach-class accommodations would endanger the employee's life or government property;
  - (2) the employee is an agent on protective detail and is accompanying an individual authorized to use other than coach-class accommodations; or
  - (3) the employee is a courier or control officer accompanying controlled pouches or packages.
- e. Coach-class accommodations on an authorized/approved rail carrier do not provide adequate sanitation or health standards.
- f. Other than coach-class is required because of OA mission, consistent with the OA's internal procedures pursuant to FTR § 301 – 70.102(i).

### 2.2.3 Ships

#### 2.2.3.1 Ship Accommodations

The following classes of ship accommodations are available as defined within FTR § 301 – 10.182:

- a. *First-class*
- b. *Lowest first-class*

DOT requires the use of lowest first-class, or equivalent, accommodations for all official DOT ship travel outside of scenarios pre-approved by the designated approving official as referenced in FTR § 301 – 10.183. Employees may, at personal expense, select to upgrade to first-class.

#### 2.2.4 Local Transit Systems (Public Buses, Subways, Streetcars)

DOT regards the use of public buses, subways, or streetcars to be a reimbursable expense for local travel while on TDY in the following scenarios:

- a. travel between places of business and official duty stations or TDY stations;
- b. travel between places of lodging (excludes personal residences) and TDY stations; or
- c. travel between TDY stations and the nearest available location at which to obtain meals, when the nature and location of the work at employees' TDY stations are such that meals cannot be obtained reasonably.

Employees claiming reimbursement for local transit system travel expenses as described under scenario "c" of this section must attach an explanation, which speaks to the necessity of said travel, to the submitted voucher.

### 2.3 Government Vehicles

DOT permits employees to utilize the following types of government vehicles when properly authorized by a designated approving official:

- a. government automobile;
- b. government aircraft; or
- c. other type of government vehicle in accordance with all government-issued rules governing its use.

Employees, when properly authorized by a designated approving official, may only use non-aircraft government vehicles for travel in the following scenarios (or as otherwise referenced in FTR§ 301 – 10.201):

- a. travel between places of business and official duty stations or TDY stations;
- b. travel between places of lodging (excludes personal residences) and TDY stations; or
- c. travel between TDY stations and the nearest available location at which to obtain meals, when the nature and location of the work at employees' TDY stations are such that meals cannot be obtained.

DOT will not reimburse any travel costs for or associated with the use of any government vehicle that is not approved in advance by a designated approving official. Unauthorized use of a government vehicle is considered misuse of government property and endangers offenders to administrative and/or criminal liability.

### 2.3.1 Government Automobiles

When government automobiles are available at or within the vicinity of employees' official duty stations and local transit systems do not serve as an efficient or effective method of alternate transportation, employees must first consider the use of government automobiles over the use of a privately-owned vehicles or special conveyances, if advantageous to DOT.

DOT tasks employees' approving officials with final determination of whether employees' use of government automobiles proves most advantageous to DOT.

Employees must possess the following prior to the operation of any DOT automobile:

- a. a state, District of Columbia, or territorial motor vehicle operator's license; and
- b. an approved travel authorization specifically authorizing the use of a government-furnished automobile.

### 2.3.2 Government Aircraft

DOT employees may only use government aircraft for official travel in the following scenarios (or as otherwise referenced in FTR§ 301 – 10.260 and § 301 – 10.261):

- a. when authorized in accordance with FTR§ 301 – 10.262; and
- b. when transportation aboard a government aircraft serves as the most cost-effective method of travel.

DOT's senior legal official authorizes government aircraft as a method of travel on a case-by-case basis for all employees, in accordance with FTR§ 301 – 10.262(b) and (c), unless exempted as referenced in FTR§ 301 – 10.262(a) (1) and (2).

Employees traveling aboard government aircraft must maintain, on their persons, the following items for presentation to the aircraft management office operating the government aircraft:

- a. a valid government-issued identification card; and
- b. an approved travel authorization specifically authorizing the use of a government aircraft.

No reimbursement to the government is required for official travel aboard a government aircraft.

## 2.4 Privately Owned Vehicle (POV)

DOT authorizes the use of privately owned vehicles when it serves as the most advantageous (in terms of cost, success of mission, etc.) method of travel, or to accommodate employees' medical needs in accordance with *Section 5* of this document.

DOT tasks employees' approving officials with final determination of whether employees' use and reimbursement for use of privately owned vehicles proves most advantageous to DOT. Approving officials must consider all alternate methods of transportation (government automobiles, local transit systems, special conveyances, etc.) prior to authorizing use of privately owned vehicles.

### 2.4.1 Privately Owned Vehicle Expense Reimbursements

DOT reimburses employees for mileage traveled in a privately owned vehicle when authorized in advance by a designated approving official.

Employees who select to use a privately-owned vehicle when other forms of authorized transportation are available will receive limited reimbursement as prescribed in *Section 2.4.1.1* and *2.4.1.4* of this document.

#### 2.4.1.1 Determining Automobile/Motorcycle Travel Mileage and Calculating Reimbursements

Employees will determine mileage per mile published in standard highway mileage guides, or actual mileage traveled as recorded from automobile/motorcycle odometer readings.

Employees will calculate mileage reimbursements by multiplying the determined distance traveled by the applicable mileage reimbursement rates as published by GSA.

Employees who select the use of a privately owned automobile/motorcycle when authorized to travel aboard common carrier transportation will receive mileage reimbursement, at the prescribed mileage reimbursement rates, limited to an amount not to exceed the lowest available cost of an associated common carrier itinerary (in accordance with *Section 2.2* of this document).

2.4.1.2 Additional Reimbursable and Non-Reimbursable Privately Owned Vehicle Expenses

DOT will reimburse the following expenses in addition to reimbursed mileage, when the use of a privately owned vehicle is properly authorized in advance by a designated approving official:

- a. parking fees
- b. ferry fees
- c. bridge, road, and tunnel fees

DOT will *not* reimburse the following expenses as related to privately owned vehicles:

- a. charges for repairs
- b. depreciation
- c. replacements
- d. grease and/or oil
- e. antifreeze
- f. towage and similar speculative expenses
- g. gasoline
- h. insurance
- i. state and federal taxes

2.4.1.3 Shared Privately Owned Vehicle Transportation

Employees' decision to transport other employees within a privately owned vehicle is strictly voluntary. DOT will only reimburse *one* employee for the use of a privately owned vehicle.

2.4.1.4 Privately Owned Vehicle Transportation and Special Conveyances

Employees who are authorized and select the use of a privately owned automobile/motorcycle between a residence and official duty station to/from a common carrier terminal, will receive both mileage reimbursement at the prescribed mileage reimbursement rates and additional reimbursements for associated fees (if applicable, as referenced in *Section 2.4.1.2*), limited to a total amount not to exceed the cost of taxi fare to/from the terminal.

## 2.5 Special Conveyance

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

- a. taxicabs and shuttle services;
- b. commercial rental automobiles; and
- c. any other special conveyance determined to be advantageous (in terms of cost, success of mission, etc.) to DOT.

### 2.5.1 Special Conveyance Expense Reimbursements

DOT determines what constitutes a reimbursable special conveyance expense, which may include, but not limited to the following:

- a. gasoline and oil
- b. garage rentals
- c. operator per diem
- d. ferriage, tolls, etc.

Employees who are authorized to use a special conveyance and select the use of a privately owned vehicle will receive both mileage reimbursements at the prescribed mileage reimbursement rates and additional reimbursements for associated fees (if applicable, as referenced in *Section 2.4.1.2*), limited to a total amount not to exceed the cost of the special conveyance.

### 2.5.2 Taxicabs and Shuttle Service

Employee use of taxicabs and shuttle services for *local travel* is reimbursable, when properly authorized in advance by a designated approving official, in the following instances:

- a. travel between places of business and official duty stations;
- b. travel between places of lodging (excludes personal residences) and TDY stations; and
- c. travel between TDY stations and the nearest available location at which to obtain meals, when the nature and location of the work at employees' TDY stations are such that meals cannot be obtained.

Employee use of taxicabs and shuttle services to and from a common carrier terminal (when no courtesy transportation is available) is reimbursable, when properly authorized in advance by a designated approving official, in the following instances:

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- a. travel between a common carrier terminal and personal residences;
- b. travel between a common carrier terminal and places of business, official duty stations, or TDY stations;
- c. travel between a common carrier terminal and places of lodging; or
- d. travel between a common carrier terminal and shuttle terminal.

Employees will treat courtesy transportation services provided by hotels/motels, when available, as the first source of transportation between places of lodging and a common carrier terminal.

#### 2.5.2.1 Taxicab and Shuttle Service Gratuity Reimbursement

DOT will reimburse taxicab and shuttle service gratuity payments, limited to an amount not to exceed fifteen (15) percent of the taxicab or shuttle service fare (which includes all applicable tolls and fees required for the taxicab/shuttle service trip).

DOT will reimburse courtesy transportation service gratuity payments, limited to an amount not to exceed fifteen (15) percent of a comparable taxicab or shuttle service fare.

#### 2.5.3 Commercial Rental Automobiles

Employees may use rental automobiles when it is determined to be advantageous to DOT (in terms of cost, success of mission, etc.).

DOT tasks employees' approving officials with final determination of whether employees' use of commercially rented automobiles proves most advantageous to DOT. Approving officials must consider all alternate methods of transportation (government automobiles, local transit systems, special conveyances, etc.) prior to authorizing use of commercially rented automobiles.

DOT will not reimburse any commercial rental automobile expenses that are not approved in advance by a designated approving official.

##### 2.5.3.1 Commercial Rental Automobile Insurance Reimbursements

The government is a self-insurer and DOT will *not* reimburse collision damage waiver (CDW) or theft insurance for automobiles rented for travel within the continental United States.

DOT *will* reimburse employees for CDW or theft insurance expenses for automobiles rented for travel outside of the continental United States.

All individuals who intend to operate commercial rental automobiles must notify the vendor at time of vehicle receipt.

#### 2.5.3.2 Commercial Rental Automobile Class/Size

DOT employees must use the least expensive compact car available, unless an exception for another class of vehicle is approved. Approving officials should approve these exceptions on a limited basis and must indicate on the travel authorization the reason for the exception. Use of other than a compact care may be authorized if any of the following apply:

- a. use of other than a compact car is necessary to accommodate a medical disability or other special need;
  - (1) A 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:
    - (a) a written statement by a competent medical authority stating that special accommodation is necessary;
    - (b) an approximate duration of the special accommodation.
  - (2) A special need must be certified annual in writing per the OA's procedures. However, if the special need is a lifelong condition, then a one-time certification statement is required.
  - (3) If the employee is authorized under FTA § 301 – 13.3(a) to have an attendant accompany him or her, the approving official may authorize the use of other than a compact car if deemed necessary by the OA;
- b. when required because of OA mission, consistent with the OA's internal procedures pursuant to FTR § 301 – 70.102(i);
- c. when the cost of other than a compact car is less than or equal to the cost of the least expensive compact care;
- d. when additional room is required to accommodate, multiple employees authorized to travel together in the same rental vehicle;
- e. when employees must carry a large amount of government material incident to their official business, and a compact rental vehicle does not contain sufficient space; or
- f. when necessary for safety reasons, such as during severe weather or having to travel on rough or difficult terrain.

#### 2.5.3.3 Commercial Rental Automobile Vendor Fuel Surcharges

While DOT will reimburse employees for fuel expenses necessary for the operation of a rented automobile, DOT **will not** reimburse an employee for fuel surcharges that are charged when the employee returns the rental automobile with a fuel tank that is not full.

### **Section 3: Reimbursable Per Diem Expenses**

DOT will provide employees an allowance (a per diem allowance or actual expense reimbursement) when an employee incurs per diem expenses while performing non-local official travel for a period exceeding twelve (12) hours, unless an employee agrees in advance not to receive per diem expense reimbursement.

An employee whose official travel period equates to twelve (12) hours or fewer is ineligible for a per diem allowance or actual expense reimbursement (excluding authorized transportation expenses).

Employees eligible for per diem expense reimbursements may receive both a per diem allowance and actual expense reimbursements for a single authorized itinerary, but may only receive *one* method of reimbursement, *either* per diem allowance *or* actual expense reimbursement, on any given calendar day. The approving official, and not employees, determines when the transition between per diem allowance and actual expense reimbursement occurs.

#### **3.1 Local Travel and Per Diem Expenses**

DOT will not reimburse per diem expenses (including lodging) for employees performing local travel (as defined in *Section 2.1.2* of this document) without prior written approval from employees' Operating Administration Chief Financial Officer.

#### **3.2 Per Diem Allowance and Actual Expense Reimbursement**

##### **3.2.1 Maximum Per Diem Allowances and Actual Expense Rates**

DOT adheres to maximum per diem allowances and actual expense rates as provided in FTR § 301 – 11.6.

TDY locations determine maximum per diem reimbursement rates. Employees arriving at lodging locations after 12:00 AM will claim lodging expenses for the preceding calendar day.

DOT may, at its authorizing official's discretion, authorize maximum per diem rates for employees who travel, for a period equaling or exceeding twelve (12) hours, to a TDY location where lodging is unavailable.

### 3.2.2 Per Diem Expense Reimbursement Periods

Per diem expense reimbursement periods begin on the date employees depart their personal residences, official duty stations, or other previously authorized points, and end on the date employees return to any of the aforementioned locations.

Employees must record dates of departure from, and arrival to official duty stations, TDY stations, or any place travel begins or ends. Likewise, employees must record instances of any travel stopovers or authorized rest periods.

Employees who cross the International Date Line will use actual elapsed travel time, and not calendar days, to determine proper per diem reimbursements.

### 3.2.3 Complimentary or Furnished Meals

Complimentary meals provided by a common carrier or hotel/motel have no bearing on per diem expense reimbursement rates.

Separately, employees receiving meals, furnished by the government or 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, and/or dinner) from the overall Meals & Incidental Expense (M&IE) reimbursement rate for the day on which the meal is received.

Neither complimentary nor furnished meals have any bearing on incidental expense rates.

### 3.2.4 Per Diem Expense Reimbursement on Non-Workdays

DOT will reimburse employees non-workday per diem expenses (per diem allowance or actual expense reimbursement) in the following instances:

- a. accomplishment of the mission requires non-workday stay at a TDY location;  
or
- b. official DOT business occurs on workdays immediately preceding and following non-workdays *and* the cost of round trip travel to employees' official duty stations exceeds *total* non-workday per diem expenses

Employees who select to return to their official duty stations on non-workdays, while on TDY assignment and when the cost of round trip travel to employees' official duty stations exceeds total non-workday per diem expenses, will receive non-workday transportation expenditure reimbursement limited to an amount not

to exceed the *total* cost of non-workday per diem expenses for the specified TDY location. Additionally, employees choosing to return to their official duty stations on non-workdays may only claim non-workday per diem expenses limited to an amount not to exceed the *total* cost of non-workday per expenses less non-workday transportation costs associated with return travel to an official duty station, if applicable.

Separately, DOT *will* reimburse employees both per diem expenses (per diem allowance or actual expense reimbursement) and roundtrip travel expenditures in the following instances:

- a. DOT requires employees' return to official duty stations for official business;
- b. DOT benefits from substantial cost savings from returning employees to official duty stations; or
- c. return travel to official duty stations is justified incident and authorized in advance as part of an extended TDY assignment.

DOT will *not* reimburse employees' non-workday per diem expenses when employees select to take leave immediately preceding or following a non-workday.

### 3.2.5 Lodging

#### 3.2.5.1 Lodging Reimbursements

Employees are required to make lodging reservations through the DOT eTravel system. When selecting a commercial lodging facility, first consideration should be given to government lodging agreement programs such as FedRooms®. The advantages of obtaining lodging using the FedRooms® program are:

- a. Lodging rates are set at or below per diem rates.
- b. There are no add-on fees.
- c. The room cancellation deadline is 4:00p.m. on the day of arrival.
- d. Most hotels offer last standard room availability rates.
- e. There are no early departure fees.
- f. Rates are available using all booking channels (e.g., E-Gov Travel Service, Travel Management Service, FedRooms® website, and hotel reservation call centers). The FedRooms® rate (XVU) must be entered to get the program benefits.

Employees must submit lodging receipts to be eligible for reimbursement. DOT determines employees' lodging reimbursements as follows (or as otherwise referenced in FTR§ 301 – 11.12):

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- a. *conventional lodgings* (hotel/motel, boarding house, etc.) – Employees reimbursed single occupancy rate;
- b. *government quarters* – Employees reimbursed, as lodging expense, fee or service charge required to use quarters;
- c. *lodging with friend(s) or relative(s) (with or without charge)*. An employee may be reimbursed for *additional* costs a friend or relative incurs in accommodating him or her *only* if the employee can substantiate the costs and the approving official determines such costs to be reasonable. Employees will not be reimbursed the cost of comparable conventional lodging in the area or a flat “token” amount;
- d. *nonconventional lodging*. Employees may be reimbursed the cost of other types of lodging when 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., World’s Fair or international sporting event). Such lodging includes college dormitories or similar facilities or rooms not offered commercially but made available to the public by area residents in their homes; or
- e. *recreational vehicle (trailer/camper)*. Employees may be reimbursed for expenses (parking fees, fees for connection, use, and disconnection of utilities, electricity, gas, water and sewage, bath or shower fees, and dumping fees) which may be considered as a lodging cost.

DOT will not reimburse employees for:

- a. *personally-owned residence*. Employees will not be reimbursed for any lodging expenses for staying at his or her personally-owned residence or for any real estate expenses associated with the purchase or sale of a personal residence at the TDY location, except in conjunction with an authorized relocation pursuant to FTR § 302; or
- b. *personally-owned Recreational vehicle (trailer/camper)*. Employees will not be reimbursed any expenses associated with the purchase, sale or payment of a recreational vehicle or camper at the TDY location.

In instances where two or more Federal government employees elect to share lodging, only the employee assuming the lodging costs will receive reimbursement. Separately, employees who select to share lodging with a non-government employee will receive reimbursement limited to the associated single occupancy rate.

#### 3.2.5.2 Long Term Lodging and Associated Reimbursements

Long term lodging is defined as lodging reserved on a weekly or monthly basis. DOT determines long term lodging reimbursement rates by dividing

the total long term lodging cost by the number of days of official authorized occupancy.

Employees will receive long term lodging reimbursement limited to an amount not to exceed the maximum daily per diem rate associated with TDY locations.

Employees will *not* receive separate reimbursement for the following associated long-term lodging expenses which DOT considers to be a portion of daily long term lodging reimbursement rates:

- a. rental fees for necessary furniture and appliances (stove, refrigerator, chairs, tables, beds, sofas, televisions, vacuum cleaners, etc.), if applicable;
- b. utility (water, sewage, gas, electric, etc.) usage and connection/disconnection fees;
- c. maid/cleaning fees;
- d. monthly telephone use fees (excluding installation and long-distance calls); or
- e. special user fees (cable television, etc.).

#### 3.2.5.3 Prepaid Lodging Reimbursement

DOT will reimburse employees for non-refundable pre-paid lodging expenditures (forfeited rental deposits, first night prepaid hotel stay, etc.) when authorized travel is curtailed, canceled, or interrupted for *official purposes or other reasons beyond employees' control*.

Employees claiming reimbursement of prepaid lodging expenditures must make reasonable efforts to obtain refunds and minimize losses to DOT prior to submitting vouchers.

#### 3.2.5.4 Lodging Taxes

Employees traveling within the continental United States must pay all applicable lodging taxes, unless exempted by the state of local jurisdiction.

Applicable lodging taxes for travel within the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, and U.S. territories & possessions, do *not* count towards employees' lodging reimbursement rates and employees must separately claim reimbursement for lodging taxes as miscellaneous expenses. Employees will receive reimbursement for continental United States lodging taxes limited to an amount not to exceed the local tax rate as applied to the per diem lodging reimbursement rate for the specified TDY location. Prior to travel, employees should visit GSA's website

([www.gsa.gov/perdiem](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem)) to obtain and utilize state tax exemption forms, if applicable.

Applicable lodging taxes for foreign travel outside the continental United States *are* included in foreign per diem rates and employees may *not* separately claim reimbursement for lodging taxes applied to foreign travel.

#### 3.2.5.5 Advanced Lodging Deposit Reimbursement

In instances when employees are unable to procure lodging accommodations, within applicable per diem rates, DOT will reimburse employees for lodging deposits prior to authorized travel *only* when lodging deposits are required to secure lodging reservations.

Employees who claim and receive non-refundable lodging deposit reimbursements prior to travel, and who do not travel associated authorized itineraries because of personal matters, must repay reimbursed deposits to DOT.

#### 3.2.6 Travel Expense Receipts

Employees must provide receipts for the following expenses:

- a. lodging expenses
- b. transportation expenses (common carrier, special conveyance, etc.)
- c. authorized individual travel expenses equal to or exceeding \$75

Employees unable to provide receipts for required expenses must provide and submit written explanation for lack of receipts when claiming reimbursement.

### 3.3 Per Diem Expense Reimbursement Calculation Methods

DOT will calculate per diem expense reimbursements using the following methods:

- a. “lodgings-plus per diem” method
- b. “reduced per diem” method
- c. “conference lodging allowance” method
- d. “actual expense” method

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3.3.1 “Lodgings-Plus Per Diem” Method

DOT reimburses employees, whose travel exceed twelve (12) hours and require overnight lodging, actual lodging costs limited to an amount not to exceed the prescribed lodging rate for the TDY location.

DOT reimburses employees for meals & incidental expenses by providing a meals & incidental expenses allowance in accordance with the following:

Travel Length & Circumstance		M&IE Allowance
Travel period between twelve (12) and twenty-four (24) hours		75% of applicable M&IE rate
Travel period exceeds twenty-four (24) hours	Day of departure	75% of applicable M&IE rate
	Full day of travel	100% of applicable M&IE rate
	Last day of travel	75% of applicable M&IE rate

DOT determines applicable meals & incidental expenses rates in accordance with the following:

Travel Circumstance & Length		Applicable M&IE Rate
Lodging is required and authorized		M&IE rate associated with TDY location
Lodging is not required	Travel period between twelve (12) and twenty-four (24) hours	M&IE rate associated with TDY location, or highest M&IE rate (if itinerary includes multiple locations)
	Travel period exceeds twenty-four (24) hours <i>and</i> employee travels to new TDY location	M&IE rate associated with new TDY location
	Travel period exceeds twenty-four (24) hours and employee returns to official duty station	M&IE associated with previous day of travel

3.3.2 “Reduced Per Diem” Method

In instances when lodging, meals, and/or incidental expenses are expected to be less than the prescribed per diem rate associated with a TDY location, DOT will reimburse the lower “reduced” per diem rate.

Employees who are subject to a reduced per diem allowance will be notified by the approving official prior to travel.

#### 3.3.2.1 Extended TDY Assignments

Employees, along with designated approving officials, must make all reasonable efforts to determine the lowest reduced per diem rates, if applicable, for employees assigned to TDY assignments exceeding thirty (30) calendar days.

#### 3.3.3 “Actual Expense” Method

DOT will reimburse “actual expenses,” limited to an amount not to exceed 300% of the prescribed maximum per diem rate associated with the TDY location, in the following instances:

- a. lodging and/or meals are procured at a prearranged location where a meeting, conference or training session is conducted;
- b. authorized travel expenses have escalated because of simultaneously occurring unique events (sporting events, conventions, natural disasters, etc.) *and* the combined cost of nearby lodging, meals, and roundtrip commuting to/from nearby lodging and meals, exceeds prescribed per diem reimbursement rate for TDY location;
- c. the TDY location is subject to a Presidentially-Declared Disaster and the OA has issued a blanket actual expense authorization for the location (see FTR § 301 – 70.201);
- d. OA mission requirements necessitate reimbursement of actual expenses; or
- e. any reason approved by the OA.

Employees must receive advance authorization from the designated approving official to claim actual expense reimbursement. Employees who claim actual expense reimbursement without prior authorization must submit written justification(s) with associated travel vouchers.

DOT tasks employees’ approving officials with final determination of whether employees’ claims for actual expense reimbursement are justified and appropriate.

Employees with advance authorization to claim actual expense reimbursement, who claim actual expenses less than the prescribed per diem, associated with the TDY location, will receive reimbursement for actual expenses *only*.

Employees *must* itemize all expenses, including meals (each meal must be itemized separately) for which they will be reimbursed under actual expense. Expenses that do not accrue daily (e.g., laundry, dry cleaning, etc.) may be averaged over the number of days the authorized/approved for actual expenses. Receipts are required for lodging, regardless of amount, and any individual meal when the cost exceeds \$75. An OA may require receipts for other allowable per diem expenses, but employees must be informed of such requirement in advance of travel. When an OA authorizing official limits M&IE reimbursement to either the prescribed maximum M&IE rate for the locality concerned or a reduced M&IE rate, it may or may not require M&IE itemization at its discretion.

#### **Section 4: Reimbursable Miscellaneous Expenses**

DOT will reimburse miscellaneous expenses, as referenced in FTR § 301 – 12.1, when properly authorized by a designated approving official.

Employees claiming reimbursement for miscellaneous expenses must submit miscellaneous expense receipts. In instances where receipts are unavailable, written explanations must accompany employees' travel vouchers.

DOT tasks designated approving officials with final determination of whether employees claimed miscellaneous expenses (not otherwise referred to within *Section 4* of this document) incurred during official travel are reimbursable.

### **4.1 Common Miscellaneous Expenses**

#### **4.1.1 Luggage**

DOT will reimburse employees for the following miscellaneous luggage expenses:

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

DOT will not reimburse employees for expenses associated with checking a second (or more) piece(s) of luggage or luggage exceeding air carriers' size and/or weight restrictions without advance authorization from a designated approving official.

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DOT tasks employees' approving officials with final determination of whether employees' TDY assignments require the use of and reimbursement for excess luggage.

At the discretion of the approving official, reimbursement may be authorized for additional baggage related to the transport of special equipment needed to accomplish the mission.

#### 4.1.2 Laundry, Cleaning, and Pressing

DOT will reimburse travel within the continental United States for laundry and clothing pressing expenses incurred at the TDY location, limited to an amount not to exceed \$25 for every four (4) day period, if employees' travel authorizations include overnight lodging at a TDY location equal to or exceeding four (4) consecutive nights.

Employees traveling outside of the continental United States may *not* claim reimbursement for laundry and clothing pressing expenses.

#### 4.1.3 Communication

DOT will reimburse employees on non-extended stay TDY assignments, which exceed 48 hours, for personal and business telephone calls from landlines in accordance with the following:

Travel Scenario	Reimbursement
Travel within continental United States	Incurred cost of telephone call not to exceed \$5 per call on two (2) separate instances over seven (7) day travel period
Travel outside continental United States	Incurred cost associated with ten (10) minute telephone call on two (2) separate instances over seven (7) day travel period
Itinerary change after employee begins travel	Incurred cost associated with telephone call(s) to arrange alternate travel/itinerary
Employee notified of a "emergency" situation (as defined in <i>Section 6</i> of this document) during official travel	Incurred cost associated with up to three (3) telephone call(s) to communicate with appropriate parties

Considering the prevalence of unlimited nationwide cellular communication services, employees must first consider calling hours and communication alternatives prior to incurring communication costs. Communication

reimbursement is not an entitlement. Employees must incur communication costs to claim reimbursement.

Employees provided with a government-issued cellular telephone are not eligible for reimbursement except for instances where travel is to a remote area where cellular service is limited.

DOT will *not* reimburse employees for telephone calls conducted while traveling aboard common carrier transportation.

#### 4.1.4 Lodging Taxes

DOT will reimburse lodging taxes in accordance with *Section 3.2.5.4* of this document.

### **Section 5: Travel of Employees with Special Needs**

DOT will reimburse reasonable expenses required to accommodate employees' special physical needs, as defined in FTR § 301 – 13.2, which are:

- a. clearly visible and discernible; and
- b. substantiated in writing by a competent medical authority.

Reasonable reimbursable expenses include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- a. transportation and per diem expenses incurred by a family member or attendant, without whom employee travel would not be possible
- b. specialized transportation to/from and/or at TDY location
- c. specialized services/accommodations provided by common carrier
- d. luggage expenses directly associated with special need
- e. renting and/or transporting wheelchair
- f. necessary premium class travel to accommodate special need
- g. necessary attendant services to accommodate special need, limited to an amount as prescribed by OPM

DOT tasks Operating Administrations' Office of Human Resources/Employee Relations, Office of Civil Rights and/or Chief Counsels as appropriate with final determination of the following:

- a. employees' special needs statuses;
- b. how to reasonably accommodate an employee's acknowledged special need; and
- c. what expenses associated with accommodating a special need DOT will reimburse.

## **Section 6: Emergency Travel**

Emergency travel is defined as travel which results from the following circumstances:

- a. employees incapacitated by illness or injury, while on TDY assignment, not resulting from employees' misconduct;
- b. death or serious illness of a member of employees' immediate families (as defined in FTR § 301 – 3.1); or
- c. catastrophic occurrence or impending disaster (fire, flood, etc.) which directly affects employees' homes.

Employees who require an interruption or discontinuance of authorized travel associated with TDY assignments must contact the appropriate travel management personnel (approving official and A/OPC) as soon as possible.

### **6.1 Reimbursable Expenses Incurred by Employees Incapacitated by Illness or Injury**

DOT will reimburse employees incapacitated by illness or injury for per diem expenses (per diem allowance or actual expense reimbursement) associated with the location at which an employee incurred or was treated for incapacitating illness or injury for a period not to exceed fourteen (14) calendar days.

However, DOT will *not* reimburse employees incapacitated by illness or injury for per diem expenses if the hospital or medical facility at which an employee is confined for treatment is proximate to the employee's official duty station, or is the same hospital or facility at which the employee would receive treatment had the incapacitating illness or injury occurred at the employee's official duty station or residence.

Separately, DOT will reimburse employees for transportation and associated per diem expenses between either 1) the location at which the incapacitating illness or injury occurred or 2), the hospital or medical facility nearest to the location at which the illness of injury occurred, and the employee's official duty station.

Following the occurrence of an incapacitating illness or injury, DOT's reimbursement of an employee's additional *transportation* expenses for the specified authorization/itinerary is limited to an amount not to exceed the cost of transportation between either 1) the location at which the incapacitating illness or injury occurred or 2) the hospital or medical facility nearest to the location at which the illness of injury occurred, and the employee's official duty station.

## **6.2 Reimbursable Expenses for Emergency Travel Unassociated with Employee Illness or Injury**

DOT will reimburse employees for transportation and associated per diem expenses between the location at which the employee is notified of 1) a family member's death or illness or 2) a catastrophic or impending disaster affecting the employee's home, and the employee's official duty station.

Following an employee's notification of a family member's death or illness or a catastrophic or impending disaster affecting the employee's home, DOT's reimbursement of an employee's additional *transportation* expenses for the specified authorization/itinerary is limited to an amount not to exceed the cost of transportation between the location at which the employee is notified of 1) a family member's death or illness or 2) a catastrophic or impending disaster affecting the employee's home, and the employee's official duty station.

## **Section 7: Pre-employment Interview Travel**

### **7.1 Pre-employment Interview Authorization and Expense Reimbursement**

Vacancies' selecting officials, in conjunction with supervisory staff accountable for the funds from which pre-employment interview expense reimbursements originate, will use the eTravel system to authorize and approve pre-employment interview expense reimbursement when determined by selecting officials to be necessary to recruit highly qualified candidates.

Should selecting officials authorize pre-employment transportation and per diem expense (including lodging) reimbursement (if applicable), DOT will reimburse candidates for all expenses afforded to DOT employees (as outlined in *Sections 2* through *Section 5*), excluding communication services.

### **7.2 Pre-employment Interview Expense Methods of Payment**

Operating Administrations must charge all pre-employment interview common carrier transportation costs (save local transportation) to specified centrally billed accounts.

The candidate must provide initial payment for all other pre-employment interview travel expenses which DOT will reimburse upon proper voucher submission and approval.

## **Section 8: Arranging Travel Services**

### **8.1 Arranging Travel using an eTravel Service**

DOT employees must use the designated eTravel system and its associated “online self-service booking tool” when arranging travel services, unless exempted by a collective bargaining agreement or as otherwise referenced in FTR § 301 – 50.4.

Employees who fail to utilize the eTravel system for the arrangement of travel services, when no appropriate exemptions apply, are liable for any additional costs (which include, but are not limited to, higher fares, rental card charges, service fees, cancellation penalties, etc.) to be determined by employees’ approving officials and/or A/OPCs.

### **8.2 Travel Arrangement Guidelines**

DOT employees must adhere to the following guidelines when arranging travel:

#### **8.2.1 Common Carrier Transportation**

DOT requires employees to use GSA’s city-pair contracts for air passenger transportation services *unless* a non-contract carrier provides a lower fare to the public which results in a lower total trip cost (combined costs of transportation, lodging, meals, and related expenses) to DOT while meeting all non-contract fare requirements as referenced in FTR § 301 – 10.108.

Additionally, when arranging for air passenger transportation services, employees must select a U.S. flag air carrier, unless itineraries meet exemption requirements as referenced in FTR § 301 – 10.136 through § 301 – 10.138.

Separately, employees are to travel in coach class accommodations for flights, rail transportation, and ships, and DOT employees may not travel in first class accommodations outside of scenarios referenced in FTR § 301 – 10.123, § 301 – 10.162, or § 301 – 10.183, nor travel in business class accommodations outside of scenarios referenced in FTR § 301 – 10.124.

#### **8.2.2 Lodging**

DOT requires employees to book commercial lodging facilities via the eTravel system, unless:

- a. a FedRooms® facility is unavailable at the TDY location;

- b. an employee is attending a conference with prearranged lodging and is required to book lodging directly with the lodging facility; or
- c. an employee is traveling outside of the continental United States.

### 8.2.3 Car Rental Accommodations

When an employee is authorized to rent a vehicle for official travel, the reservation must be made via the eTravel system as part of the authorization.

## **Section 9: Paying Travel Expenses**

### **9.1 Method of Payment**

DOT requires all employees to use government contractor-issued travel cards as the method of payment for all expenses related to official travel (unless exempted), wherever accepted, as referenced in DOT's Travel Card Management Policy.

Employees will adhere to DOT's Travel Card Management Policy when using government contractor-issued travel cards and paying for official travel expenses.

Individuals exempted from using a government travel card as the method of payment for travel expenses will refer to DOT's Travel Card Management Policy for alternate forms of payment.

### **9.2 Advances**

DOT uses government contractor-issued travel card cash withdrawals to supplant cash advances for travel expenses. Employees will refer and adhere to DOT's Travel Card Management Policy regarding travel card cash withdrawals.

## **Section 10: Claiming Reimbursement**

### **10.1 Travel Voucher Submission & Approval**

All employees traveling on TDY assignment must use the eTravel system to file an electronic travel voucher within five (5) business days of returning from travel, unless otherwise exempted by a collective bargaining agreement.

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All approving officials must electronically approve or return employee submitted travel vouchers within five (5) business days of receiving electronic notice of employee voucher submission, or arrange for assigned alternate approving officials to approve or return vouchers in their absence.

All employees traveling under “continuous travel status” must use the eTravel system to file an electronic travel voucher at least once every thirty (30) calendar days unless otherwise exempted by a collective bargaining agreement.

#### 10.1.1 Local Travel Reimbursement

Employees claiming mileage and/or expense reimbursement for local travel must use the eTravel system to file local travel vouchers unless otherwise exempted by a collective bargaining agreement.

- a. Approving officials must review claims for accuracy before approval. Relevant factors include mode of transportation utilized, distance traveled, and the amount that exceeds the employee’s commuting costs. The approving official must ensure the mode of transportation used was more advantageous to the government than other available modes of transportation.
- b. Claims must be filed in the eTravel system.
- c. Claims should be filed monthly or when the amount of reimbursement exceeds \$25. If required, however, claims may be filed sooner.
- d. When travel involved two or more DOT employees on official business, one employee should pay and claim the entire expense (e.g., taxicab fare, bridge toll, etc.).
- e. All taxicab fare receipts exceeding \$25 and any other local travel expense receipt exceeding \$75 must be electronically attached to the eTravel system voucher.

## 10.2 Receipts and Required Travel Voucher Information

DOT employees are only entitled to be reimbursed for expenses incurred and are required to provide and electronically attach receipts to submitted travel vouchers for the following items:

- a. lodging expenses
- b. transportation expenses (common carrier, special conveyance, etc.)
- c. authorized individual travel expenses equal to or exceeding \$75

Employees must retain receipts for 6 years in accordance with National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) under General Records Schedule 1.1, Number 001.

Separately, as part of the vouchering process, employees will include all travel information as referenced in FTR § 301 – 52.2, as well as any written approvals or documentation supporting exceptional travel circumstances (premium class travel, emergency travel, per diem reimbursement for local travel, etc.).

### **10.3 Disallowed Payment of Travel Expenses**

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

- a. Employee fails to properly itemize travel expense.
- b. Employee fails to provide receipt or necessary documentation to support claimed travel expense.
- c. Employee claims an unauthorized travel expense.

Should DOT disallow payment of an employee’s claimed travel expense, the employee, upon notification of disallowance, may challenge the decision by providing additional facts and/or documents to support the original reimbursement claim in accordance with FTR § 301 – 52.11.

### **10.4 Reimbursement Claims for Official Non-Travel Expenditures**

DOT will *not* reimburse employee claims for official non-travel expenditures (non-transportation/per diem/miscellaneous travel expenses) submitted on Standard Form (SF) 1012, Travel Voucher or SF 1164, Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business, regardless of whether forms are submitted manually or electronically via the eTravel system.

Employees whose assigned missions require the acquisition of materials, equipment, and/or services will use assigned purchase cards (when applicable) and procure materials, equipment, and/or services in accordance with DOT’s Transportation Acquisition Manual (TAM).

Employees may *not* use the eTravel system, government travel cards, or applicable travel forms (SF 1012, SF 1164, etc.) to acquire or claim reimbursement for non-travel expenditures. DOT regards such attempts as efforts to circumvent applicable DOT procurement and acquisition policy, and violators are subject to disciplinary action.

**Section 11: Promotional Materials and Frequent Employee Programs**

Employees may retain any promotional benefits or materials, received from a travel service provider (transportation, lodging, rental vehicle, etc.) during authorized individual official travel, for personal use only when such promotional benefits or materials are obtained under the same conditions as those offered to the public and at no additional cost to DOT.

Employees who receive promotional benefits or materials because of duties associated with official conference planning or the coordination/reservation of official group travel may accept such promotional benefits or materials *on behalf* of DOT for future official DOT business only, and are restricted from using said benefits or materials for personal use.

A denied boarding benefit is not a promotional benefit and employees must relinquish denied boarding benefits in accordance with *Section 2.2.1.4* of this document.