



SmartPay[®]

Supporting your mission

U.S. General Services Administration

Federal Travel and Ethics

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GSA SmartPay TRAINING FORUM

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Federal Travel Regulation

- The Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) is the Governmentwide travel regulation for executive branch civilian agencies and their employees
 - Code of Federal Regulations at Title 41, Chapters 300–304. For example, "FTR 304–3.13" really means 41 CFR sec. 304–3.13.
 - FTR allows agencies to implement internal agency policies in compliance with the FTR

The FTR Big Picture

- Agencies need flexibility to accomplish their mission
- That flexibility must be exercised ethically
- Rules apply universally

Agenda

- Transportation
- Lodging
- Travelers with Special Needs
- Smart Pay[®] Travel Card
- Promotional Benefits
- Non-Federal Source Travel
- FTR Updates and References

Answering Transportation Q's

Most transportation questions fall into these three categories:

1. Route: where are you going?
2. Mode: what are you riding?
3. Class: can you upgrade?

Routing Travel

- "Usually traveled route" FTR definition
- Unless the agency says otherwise, employees are authorized to travel by "usually traveled route"
- Reimbursement for interrupted/indirect travel

Authorizing a Mode

- Order of precedence:
 - Common carrier
 - Government vehicle (GOV)
 - Rental car
- Authorizing privately owned vehicle (POV)
- Special conveyances
- Practically speaking...

City Pair Program (CPP)

- Must be used for official travel
 - Coach: _CA and YCA
 - Premium Economy: _CP
 - Business: _CB
- Exceptions
- May not be used for personal travel

Government Vehicle (GOV)

- Only used for official purposes
 - On TDY, includes travel to/from places necessary for employee sustenance, comfort, and health
 - Check agency policy about non-Government passengers
- **Misuse: suspension or termination**

Rental Cars

- DTMO Car Rental Agreement
- Default is least expense compact car
 - Exceptions
- Refueling (petroleum/electricity)
- CDW and/or theft Insurance
- Reimbursed for official use only

Constructive Cost

- Sum of all travel and transportation expenses
 - Includes per diem, taxi/rideshares, rental car fee, baggage charges, etc.
 - Often have to make assumptions
- Used for
 - Alternate modes of transportation
 - Combined personal/official travel

Example: Alternate Mode 1

- Authorized: Washington, D.C. (DCA), to Cleveland, Ohio (CLE), roundtrip by plane
 - DCA -> CLE -> D.C. City Pair: $\$203 \times 2 = \406
- Actual: DCA -> CLE—roundtrip by personal automobile
 - Mileage (734 miles) and tolls: \$480
- What's the employee's reimbursement?

Example: Alternate Mode 2

- Authorized: Washington, D.C. (DCA), to Cleveland, Ohio (CLE), roundtrip by plane
 - DCA -> CLE -> D.C. City Pair: $\$203 \times 2 = \406
 - Rideshare to/from airports: $\$80$
 - Total constructive cost: $\$406 + \$80 = \$486$
- Actual: DCA -> CLE roundtrip by personal POV
 - Mileage (734 miles) and tolls: $\$480$
- Employee reimbursed $\$480$

Example: Alternate Mode 3

- Authorized: Washington, D.C. (DCA), to Cleveland, Ohio (CLE), roundtrip by plane
 - DCA -> CLE -> D.C. City Pair: $\$203 \times 2 = \406
 - Rideshare to/from airports: $\$80$
 - Total constructive cost: $\$406 + \$80 = \$486$
- Actual: DCA -> CLE-roundtrip by personal POV
 - Mileage (734 miles) and tolls: $\$480$
 - 1-day extra M&IE per diem: $\$59$ M&IE
 - Total actual cost $\$480 + \$59 = \$539$
- Employee reimbursed $\$486$

Example: Combined Travel 1

- Authorized: New York City (JFK) to Los Angeles (LAX), roundtrip by plane
 - JFK -> LAX -> JFK City Pair: $\$140 \times 2 = \280
- Actual: JFK -> LAX -> Seattle (SEA) -> NYC
 - JFK -> LAX City Pair: $\$140$
 - LAX -> SEA -> JFK commercial: $\$250$
 - Actual cost: $\$140 + \$250 = \$390$
- Employee reimbursed $\$280$

Example: Combined Travel 2

- Authorized: New York City (JFK) to Los Angeles (LAX), roundtrip by plane
 - JFK -> LAX -> JFK City Pair: $\$140 \times 2 = \280
- Actual: JFK -> LAX -> Seattle (SEA) -> NYC
 - JFK -> LAX City Pair: $\$140$
 - LAX -> SEA -> JFK commercial: **$\$99$**
 - Actual cost: $\$140 + \$99 = \mathbf{\$239}$
- Employee reimbursed **$\$239$**

Common Carrier Classes

- Coach Class, including Coach-Plus
- Premium Economy
- Business Class
- First Class
- Agency requirements to report data on first and business-class authorizations (air and rail)

Coach Class and Coach-Plus

- Coach class is the default
 - Limited exceptions
 - Agency discretion (marked by *)
 - Trip-by-trip authorization
- Coach-plus authorized subject to agency policy
- Coach-plus and other-than-coach classes at personal expense

Premium Economy Class

1. Accommodate a disability or special need
2. Exceptional security requirements*
3. Inadequate sanitation in coach class on a foreign carrier*
4. Only other-than-coach class accommodations on flight*
5. Non-Federal source pays costs*
6. OCONUS flight time > 8 hours*
7. Overall cost savings*
8. No coach class availability in time to accomplish the mission*
9. Required for agency mission per agency policy*

Business Class

1. Accommodate a disability or special need
2. Exceptional security requirements*
3. Inadequate sanitation in coach class on a foreign carrier*
4. Only other-than-coach class accommodations on flight*
5. Non-Federal source pays costs*
6. **OCONUS flight time > 14 hours***
7. Overall cost savings*
8. No coach class availability in time to accomplish the mission*
9. Required for agency mission per agency policy*

Prem. Econ. 8-hour Exception

- Origin and/or destination are OCONUS
- Total flight time (wheels up to wheels down) is more than 8 hours

Business Class 14-hour Rule

- Origin and/or destination are OCONUS
- Total flight time (wheels up to wheels down) is more than **14 hours**
- **Required to report for duty after or sooner**
- **No rest stops en route or on arrival**

First Class

1. Accommodate a disability or special needs
2. Exceptional security requirements*
3. Required for agency mission per agency policy*
4. No other seats reasonably available within 24 hours of departure and/or arrival time*

Exceptions Summary

	Disability or Special Needs	Exceptional Security Req	Schedule	Health/ Sanitation	Only Other-then-Coach	NFS Pays	OCONUS Trips	Overall Cost Savings	Required for Agency Mission
Coach+	Yes	←----- Depends on Agency Policy (AP) -----→							
Premium	Yes	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	8 hrs.*	Yes*	AP
Business	Yes	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	14 hrs.*	Yes*	AP
First	Yes	Yes*	24 hrs.*	No	No	No	No	No	AP

Overbooked Flights

- FAA regulations on overbooked flights
- Voluntarily vacate: employee can keep compensation like other promotional items
- Involuntary bumped: check goes to the Government

Overbooked Flight Check

1	DENIED BOARDING	SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.	
	#OF PAX <u>1</u>	P.O. Box 36611	
	TICKET # (S) [REDACTED]	DALLAS, TX 75235-1611	
	FARE REFUND AMT \$ <u>204.50</u>	PAYABLE THROUGH	PAY
	INVOL COMP. AMT \$ <u>613.50</u>	CHASE	TO THE
	TOTAL REFUND AMT \$ _____	P.O. BOX 655415	ORDER
		DALLAS, TX 75265	OF
2	BAGGAGE CLAIM # _____	\$ <u>818.00</u>	
	REASON _____	SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.	
3	CHARTER FLIGHT # _____	REFUND ACCOUNT	
4	OTHER:	<u>Eight Hundred</u>	
	REASON _____	[REDACTED]	
	*APPROVED BY _____	AUTHORIZED SWA REPRESENTATIVE	
	(MANAGER OR SUPERVISOR NAME)		
	*(REQUIRED FOR "OTHER" ONLY)		

Involuntary bumped compensation is a check from the airline. It will say "DENIED BOARDING" on the check.

Convention Lodging

- FTR: Employees' first consideration should be given to using FedRooms®
 - Your agency may have a mandatory lodging program
- Lodging taxes and non-optional fees (resort fee, urban destination fees, etc.) are reimbursable as a miscellaneous expense
 - Some state exempt Gov travelers from lodging taxes
 - FedRooms® rates waiver any non-optional fees

Peer-to-Peer Lodging

- Considered non-conventional lodging (requires an exception to use)
 - Can be used when conventional lodging is in short supply
 - Only option for some missions
- Also requires exception from use of ETS/TMC

Peer-to-Peer Lodging

Authorized P2P Lodging

- Cleaning fees divided by days and added to daily lodging
- If over per diem, the agency should authorize actual expenses
- Platform services fees reimbursed as miscellaneous

Unauthorized P2P Lodging

- Cleaning fees divided by days and added to daily lodging
- If over per diem, the employee pays excess
- No reimbursement for platform services fees

Travels with Special Needs

- Coach-plus or other-than-coach class accommodation
- Specialized transportation
- Travel for a family member or other attendant
- Services of an attendant
- Baggage handling costs
- Wheelchair rental or transportation
- Nursing employees: FTR Bulletin 22–03

SmartPay[®] Travel Card

- Use for all expenses directly relayed to official travel
 - FTR exemptions
 - Agencies can make other exemptions
- Check agency policy on other uses

Promotional Benefits

- Includes frequent flier, loyalty point, and in-app perk programs
- May be retained for personal use
 - **Exceptions:** promotional benefits obtained for planning/scheduling and official conference lodging to the Government

Non-Federal Source Travel

1. A non-Federal source
2. Offers to provide in kind or reimburse for travel-related expenses
3. For an employee to attend a meeting or similar function
4. That takes place away from the employee's official station

Excludes activities to carry out statutory or regulatory functions, promotional vendor training, or marketing

NFS Travel Payments

- Still official travel
- Payments above subsistence maximums
 - Allowed domestically, not allowed in foreign areas
 - Must also be offered to similarly situated attendees
- Other-than-coach class travel
 - Only if paid in full in advance
 - Must also be offered to similar attendees

Never accept cash or personally-payable checks

Authorizing NFS Travel

- NFS authorization must be before official travel
- **Limited exceptions** for surprises
 - "Comparable value" rules
 - Does not apply to anything agency already declined
- If the agency declines after the fact, NFS is reimbursed

Waived Registration Fees

- Not a payment if...
 - All Government attendees ("Government rate")
 - For speakers/presenters/panelists on **days they participate**
- Still a payment...
 - Days the employee isn't participating
 - Anything for "support" employees
 - Meals

FTR Amendments

- 2020–01: Clarification of Payment in Kind for Speakers at Meetings and Similar Functions
- 2022–01: Rental Car for OCONUS relocations, fuel & insurance
- 2022–01: Common Carrier Transportation
- 2023–01: Constructed Cost Transportation

FTR Bulletins

- 2019–04: Reimbursement for Fees for Conventional and nonconventional Lodging
- 2022–03: Employees who are Nursing
- 2023–04: Emergency Travel
- 2024–02: Sustainable Transportation for Official TDY Travel
- Several bulletins on reporting requirements—
First/Business class and TRIP

Summary

- The Federal Travel Regulation rules are—
 - Flexible: Agencies have flexibility to accomplish their missions
 - Ethical: Employees must exercise that flexibility ethically
 - Universal: Everyone follows the same rules

GSA Travel Reference

- Travel Resources—<https://www.gsa.gov/travel>
 - Plan a trip (per diem, lodging, transportation, travel charge card)
 - Services (travel schedules, ETS, emergency lodging)
 - Travel Policy (travel reporting, 41 CFR, amendment and bulletins)
- Civilian Board of Contract Appeals (CBCA)
<https://www.cbca.gov/>

Official Travel POC's

- Agency Travel or Relocation policy office
- GSA—OGP's Travel Mailbox: travelpolicy@gsa.gov

GSA-OGP:

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202-501-3822

Questions & Answers

