

# Defense Travel Dispatch

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*The DoD Center  
for Travel Excellence*



## Defense Travel System Update

DTS software Release 6, implemented in August, added several *Special Circumstance Travel* trip types that were previously not available in DTS, enhanced information and reporting features, as well as increased DTS travel reservation functionality. This release also included an enhancement known as “Tech Refresh,” which led to degraded system performance over a two-month period and caused the Department to reassess and reformulate the strategy for DTS. [Story »](#)

## Steps to Take When Involved in a Rental Vehicle Accident

The U.S. Government Car and Truck Rental Program provides special rental benefits and reduced rates to all federal government employees on official business. If you are involved in an accident while operating a rental vehicle, there are some basic steps to follow. [Story »](#)

## Training Opportunities for Authorizing Officials

Training for Authorizing Officials is available in several formats to include web-based training modules (WBTs), Distance Learning (DL) classes, demonstrations and classroom training via use of instructor materials. [Story»](#)

## Overseas Barracks Cost of Living Allowance Increases

As of October 1, 2009, service members residing in overseas barracks, without dependents, saw an increase in their barracks Overseas Cost of Living Allowance (COLA). [Story »](#)

## DTMO Announces 2010 DTA Seminar

The Defense Travel Management Office is pleased to announce the 2010 Defense Travel Administrator Seminars, “Connect 2010.” [Story »](#)

DTMO is working to outline a strategy and course of action for providing travel services in the future. With our partners, we are exploring leading practices and innovations within the travel industry and looking for opportunities to adapt these practices to the Department of Defense environment.

We cannot transform the Defense Travel Enterprise alone. Please let us know what would improve your travel experience; email your ideas to [nextgen@dtmo.pentagon.mil](mailto:nextgen@dtmo.pentagon.mil).

-Pam Mitchell  
Director, DTMO

### Quick Links

[DTMO Website](#)  
[DTS Website](#)  
[Travel Training](#)  
[TraX](#)  
[Provide Feedback](#)

## About the Defense Travel Management Office

*DTMO was established to serve as the single focal point for commercial travel within the Department of Defense to establish strategic direction, set policy, and centrally manage commercial travel programs.*

*DTMO maintains central oversight for commercial travel management, travel policy and implementation, customer support and training, DoD travel card program management, functional oversight for the Defense Travel System, and allowance and entitlement program management.*



## DTS Update

DTS software Release 6, implemented in August, added several *Special Circumstance Travel* trip types that were previously not available in DTS, enhanced information and reporting features, as well as increased DTS travel reservation functionality. This enhancement brought the Department closer to employing a single travel system across the enterprise.

Release 6 also included improvements known as “Tech Refresh,” which involved transitioning outdated software language to a more commonly used code that is more efficient and facilitates quicker, simpler, changes to the system. This element led to degraded system performance over a two-month period, causing many users to experience difficulty accessing the system and slow response times. Over the last few months, several software patches have been implemented to improve system performance. As a result, the system is performing well, and the implementation of additional software patches continues to address the remaining issues.

The issues encountered with Release 6 caused the Department to reassess and reformulate the strategy for DTS. As a result, the immediate focus has shifted to maintaining system stability, incrementally transitioning out old code and improving usability. The Department will concentrate on resolving known system problems, which have been identified through help desk tickets submitted by users. Only after this steady state has been achieved will additional functionality be added incrementally.

Users who continue to experience issues with the system are encouraged to contract the Travel Assistance Center.

## Questions About Travel?

### Travel Assistance Center

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

1-888-Help1Go  
DSN: 312-564-3950

(Overseas) DSN or 1-809-463-3376  
(wait for the beep), then dial 1-888-Help1Go

[www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Passport](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Passport)

Contact your local help desk for local business rules.



### Get answers on...

- *DTS*
- *Government Travel Charge Card*
- *Military Bus Program*
- *Car/Truck Rental Program*
- *Travel Policy*
- *After hours recruit travel*
- *Lodging*

The TAC conducts Outreach Calls designed to inform and educate the DoD travel community on travel-related issues and topics. Calls are held on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 8:00 am and 1:00 pm ET. For more information on how to participate, please see the Announcements section of TraX.

# Steps to Take When Involved in a Rental Vehicle Accident

# Focus on the Traveler

The U.S. Government Car and Truck Rental Program provides special rental benefits and reduced rates to all federal government employees on official business. Administered through the U.S. Government Car and Truck Rental Agreements, the program is designed to meet the needs of the federal traveler, providing quality rentals through 17 car and four truck companies at over 10,000 rental locations.



If involved in an accident while operating a rental vehicle, travelers should take the following steps:

- Notify the car/truck rental company as soon as possible.
- Call the police as soon as possible after the accident occurs and obtain a police report.
- Fill out an accident report with the car/truck rental company. In some states, travelers may be charged for the cost of repairs if they fail to file an accident report with the car rental company.
- Notify your agency claims office (or your supervisor, if the claims office is not readily available).

## Determining Coverage Under the Agreement

The car/truck rental company will initially determine whether the accident is covered under the Agreement. If the accident is covered, the rental company will typically handle the matter directly with the traveler. You may be asked to provide a statement regarding the facts of the

accident to a claims adjuster (contact your agency legal counsel if you have any questions).

If the accident is not covered by the Agreement, a bill will be submitted directly to the traveler’s organization. The organization will then determine liability based on whether the

traveler was operating the vehicle while traveling on official purposes at the time of the loss. If the agency denies liability, the rental company will handle the matter directly with the traveler.

## Accident Resolution Assistance

Travelers may also seek vehicle accident resolution assistance from the DTMO. The Vehicle Rental Accident and Customer Service Assistance Tool was developed to assist official travelers when dealing with car/truck rental companies regarding disputed accident liabilities. Access the tool through the DTMO website at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Rental>. When using the tool, be prepared to provide the following information:

- Name, phone and email address
- Vehicle type
- Date of rental
- Rental Company name
- Rental Location
- Incident Date
- Amount of the claim
- Claim description
- Travel Orders
- Rental Contract
- Itinerary
- Traveler Statement
- Police Report



The DTMO will evaluate the information and work with the rental car company to determine if the accident should be covered under the Agreement.

# Training Opportunities for Authorizing Officials

Authorizing Officials (AOs) perform a critical role in the Department’s travel program. They are primarily responsible for the obligation of TDY funds, and may have financial liability for erroneous payments. This risk can be mitigated by a number of training opportunities that can aid AOs in performing their duties.

Training is available in several formats to include web-based training modules (WBT’s), Distance Learning (DL) classes, demonstrations and classroom training via use of instructor materials.

The recommended training for AOs falls into three distinct areas that permit AOs to fully execute their duties as defined in Certifying Officer Legislation (COL) Public Law 104-106.

- **Accountable Officials Training:** This training is mandatory per Certifying Officer Legislation, and is comprised of the web-based course *Training for Accountable Officials and Certifying Officers*.
- **Travel Policy:** This course will provide the AO a general understanding of travel regulations. Courses available are *Travel Policy 101* (WBT), *Travel Policies* (DL course P115), and classroom training provided by your organization using instructor materials. AO’s only need to choose from one of these courses.
- **Defense Travel System:** This course will provide a working knowledge of authorizing/approving travel within DTS. Courses available include: *Routing Officials Overview* (WBT), *DTS Approval Process* (DL course A100), *Route and Review* (narrated demonstration) and classroom training provided by your organization using instructor materials. AO’s only need to choose from one of these courses.

SELECT ONE FROM EACH CATEGORY



## Accountable Officials Training

(Mandatory, Per Certifying Officer Legislation)

- Training for Accountable Officials and Certifying Officers (web-based training)



## Travel Policy

- Travel Policy 101 (web-based training)
- Travel Policies (Distance Learning Course P115)
- Classroom Training provided by your organizations DTA using Travel Policy 101 instructor materials



## Defense Travel System

- DTS Approval Process
- The DTS Approval Process (Distance Learning Course A100)
- Route and Review (voice demonstration)
- Classroom Training provided by your organizations DTA using DTS Approval Process instructor materials

This training will provide AOs the basic knowledge to avoid common pitfalls associated with their duties, assist in making sound decisions related to travel policy, and save time and effort in identifying the meaning of individual travel flags and whether or not they are significant in decision making.

For more information on training, visit the DTS Training and Resource Center on the DTMO website or the Training Center in Trax.

- All web-based training classes, distance learning classes and demonstrations are available in the Training Center in TraX.
- Instructor-led materials for classroom training include an instructor guide, the participant guide and Power-Point slides. These materials are downloadable from the Knowledge Center in TraX. You may use the pull-down search titled “DTS Instructor Curriculum” or use the direct links:
  - **The DTS Approval Process**  
<https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Passport/index.cfm?Router=735>
  - **Travel Policies**  
<https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Passport/index.cfm?Router=635>

## Preventing Duplicate Airline Reservations

When more than one reservation is made on the same airline on the same flight, and/or multiple flights to the same destination, the resulting duplication can negatively affect the government traveler. Regardless of how the reservations were made—whether through the Defense Travel System (DTS), Commercial Travel Office (CTO), or directly with the airline, duplicate reservations may cause:

- Cancellation of the traveler's reservations.
- Additional airline ticket and transaction fees charged to the traveler's government charge card.

To prevent duplicate bookings:

- If you have made your reservation with a CTO, you do not need to make reservations again in DTS. Skip the reservations module by selecting "Other" in box B on the Trip Overview screen in DTS when you create your authorization. In addition, do not select rental car or lodging.
- Once you have made your reservations and selected flights in DTS, you may need to contact the CTO. When contacting the CTO, remember to inform them of your existing reservations.

For additional information consult the DTS website or your DTS administrator.

## Did You Know . . . Texting While Driving When on Official Business Now Prohibited

Executive Order #13513, "Federal Leadership on Reducing Text Messaging While Driving," was signed October 1, 2009, to help reduce the dangers of text messaging while driving. The Executive Order states: "Federal employees shall not engage in text messaging: a) when driving a GOV, or when driving a POV while on official Government business, or b) when using electronic equipment supplied by the Government while driving." This ban covers reading from or entering data into any handheld or other electronic device, for the purpose of Short Message Service texting, emailing, instant messaging, obtaining navigational information, or engaging in any other form of electronic data retrieval or electronic data communication. Additional guidance will be forthcoming that will outline appropriate measures to implement this order. Visit <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-24203.pdf> to review a complete version of Executive Order #13513.

## Baggage Procedures for OCONUS Travel

Prior to international airline travel that requires a connecting flight, travelers should be aware of each country's baggage claim procedures. In most cases, luggage is usually checked to the final destination if the itinerary requires a change in flights. However, in some instances, such as taking a connecting flight within country, travelers may be required to identify or claim their luggage for security or local customs reasons. The airline will usually advise travelers if they need to claim their baggage on arrival, but travelers should also familiarize themselves with local conditions and laws.



For example, travelers flying to Turkey and connecting to a domestic flight are required by Turkish law to clear immigration and customs at the first point of entry with their luggage. To do this, passengers must retrieve their luggage from the plane and proceed through customs. Luggage not retrieved by passengers will not be transferred to the connecting flight.

In addition to the information that airlines should provide, please visit the State Department's website at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1765.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html) for specific country information.

# Overseas Barracks Cost of Living Allowance Increases



As of October 1, 2009, service members residing in overseas barracks without dependents saw an incremental increase in their overseas barracks Cost of Living Allowance (COLA).

COLA rates are calculated with a standardized methodology to ensure that service members are not disadvantaged by their overseas assignment. Although service members living in barracks are provided on-base housing and dining facility privileges, they shop for many of the same goods and services as their counterparts stationed overseas receiving a full COLA payment. A recent review found that those service members residing in overseas barracks were not receiving an adequate supplemental allowance to offset the prices of these goods and services.

The overseas barracks COLA increase was approved by the Per Diem Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee, following the recommendation of the Military Advisory Panel.

The overseas barracks COLA will increase incrementally, from 47 percent to 53 percent on October 1, 2009, to 58 percent by October 1, 2010, and finally to 63 percent on October 1, 2011.

For comprehensive information about COLA, to include FAQs, visit [www.defensetravel.dod.mil](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil).

# Claiming Meals While on Travel

A recent update to the Joint Travel Regulations (for DoD civilian employees) and Joint Federal Travel Regulations (for uniformed

personnel) regarding reimbursement for continental breakfasts may change how much per diem government travelers receive.

The regulations already stated that if a meal is provided and paid for by the government as part of an event or through a higher hotel room rate, a traveler's per diem must be adjusted to account for that meal. This change declares "continental breakfast" as a meal. Because per diem rates already include a stipend for meals, this change prevents the government from double paying – once through a registration fee (or similar fee), and also through a per diem paid to the traveler.

Further, the regulations state that if the government has paid a fee for a traveler to attend an event where one or two meals are provided, then the traveler's per diem must be adjusted to the Proportional Meal Rate (PMR). If all three meals are provided, then a traveler receives only the incidental expense portion of a per diem rate. Meals that are not indirectly paid for by the government, including those provided by friends, hotels (lodging cost the same whether meal provided or not), or airlines, do not affect per diem payments.

To properly claim a meal deduction in DTS, go to the *Expense* screen and select *Per Diem Entitlements*. Then select the *Edit* link for the appropriate day(s). Scroll to the *Meals* section and select *Provided*. Once the screen refreshes, select the appropriate meals provided and scroll to the bottom and select *Save These Entitlements*.

## What's New @ DTMO



# Connect 2010

DISCOVER NETWORK ENERGIZE

Defense Travel Administrator Seminars

SAVE THE DATE

ALEXANDRIA, VA  
MARCH 30-  
APRIL 1

DENVER, CO  
JUNE 8-10

The Defense Travel Management Office is pleased to announce the 2010 Defense Travel Administrator Seminars, "Connect 2010."

You will have the opportunity to learn DTA best practices, find out about the latest in Defense Travel, or spend quality time networking with other DTAs at this year's seminars.

Make the connection through:

- **Enterprise and industry topic updates**
- **Engaging sessions:** Presentations that support your travel program such as:
  - Maximizing your use of the DTA Maintenance Tool
  - Enhancing your travel training program
  - Insight into CTO operations and viewpoints
- **Roundtable sessions:** Informal discussions with experts and experienced DTAs on a variety of travel topics such as:
  - Networking with experienced DTAs
  - Outreach and communications
  - General travel policy
  - Information gathering on DTA certification ideas
- **Extended availability of the DTMO Booth:** Due to the popularity of last year's "open forum" that allowed participants to ask site specific questions, the DTMO Booth and Travel Assistance Center (TAC) personnel will be available.

For more information, visit  
[www.defensetravel.dod.mil](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil)

### Registration

Registration will officially open in January for the Alexandria, VA event and in March for the Denver, CO event. Registration for these events will be through the Training Center in TraX. All registrations will be reviewed by your DTS Service Office and approved based on availability.

Additional information will be available through your DTS Service Office and through the DTMO website at [www.defensetravel.dod.mil](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil).

## Budget Rent-A-Car Ends Service in Germany

Budget Rent-A-Car is no longer operational in Germany. Current government car rental reservations with Budget will be honored through Avis Rent-A-Car in accordance with the terms and conditions of the U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement.

Budget Rent-A-Car is in the process of removing its locations in Germany from the Global Distribution System (GDS), although they are still being displayed in the Defense Travel System (DTS). For questions regarding the program, travelers can contact the Travel Assistance Center (TAC).



## Travel Assistance Center Offers Outreach Calls

The Travel Assistance Center offers Outreach Calls designed to inform and educate the DoD travel community about travel-related issues and topics. Calls are held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 8:00 am and 1:00 pm.

For more information including instructions for participating, please see the *Announcements* section of TraX.



## Delay at the Airport?

In the event of delays due to inclement weather or airline over bookings, travelers should be prepared to reschedule their flights. Contact your Commercial Travel Office (CTO) by calling the 24-hour number printed on your travel itinerary.

### Defense Travel Dispatch

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