

Defense Travel Dispatch

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*The DoD Center
for Travel Excellence*



Optimizing Your Budget by Educating Your Travelers

In most jurisdictions in the United States (state, county, municipal) there are multiple taxes and fees applied to lodging stays. By educating your travelers on which taxes and fees are exempt, you can optimize your budget and save tax dollars. [Story »](#)

Enhanced Rental Vehicle Assistance Tool Launched

DTMO is pleased to announce the launch of the new and improved Rental Vehicle Assistance Tool. This web-based tool has been enhanced to provide travelers with a user-friendly resource for rental car and truck customer service matters. [Story »](#)

Travelers Could Incur Fees on Cashless Toll Roads

As states begin to install cashless toll roads, travelers should be aware of reimbursable and non-reimbursable costs associated with using these roadways, and automated toll payment devices. [Story »](#)

Good News for Airline Passengers

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) recently approved new passenger protection measures that address a variety of issues affecting air travelers. [Story »](#)

Valid Receipts for Travel Vouchers

Although a receipt is a seemingly simple item, a great deal of confusion surrounds what qualifies as a valid receipt for travel reimbursements. Learn about what constitutes a valid receipt, how to submit them, and what to do if you do not have a receipt. [Story »](#)

As we move forward with simplifying and, ultimately, transforming travel, we need to hear from you! As always, we encourage you to submit your ideas for the future to nextgen@dtmo.pentagon.mil.

I'd also ask you to check out our new DoDLive blog, *Travel Talk*, and engage in discussion on relevant issues. We're learning about blogging as we go, so we have gotten off to a bit of a slow start, but will be posting much more frequently as we head into summer. I hope you will join the conversation, and tell us what's most important to you.

— Pam Mitchell
Director, DTMO

Quick Links

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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.

Optimizing Your Budget by Educating Your Travelers on Lodging Tax Breaks



In most jurisdictions in the United States (state, county, municipal) there are multiple taxes and fees applied to lodging stays. For Federal Government travelers, many of these taxes and fees are exempt. By educating your travelers, you can optimize your budget and save tax dollars.

In most states and localities, taxes and fees at lodging establishments can be waived either automatically, upon request, or under other certain circumstances. Submitting a completed state or local form verifying that a traveler is on official travel, is usually enough to save excess state and local tax costs – that saves you and the Federal Government money. This applies to any traveler under orders for any night, on any date. Specific state tax information and links to tax exemption forms are available on the General Services Administration's (GSA) website.

Do Your Travelers Know This about Long-Term Lodging?

If a long-term lodging stay goes beyond a certain period of time and is no longer considered temporary lodging, but more permanent in nature, in certain locales, no state or local taxes would apply. In the case of long-term stays, states, counties, and municipalities have different parameters which define a “temporary” or “permanent” stay. For example, in some areas “permanent” stays incur at 30, 60 or 90 nights.

In cases where taxes are applied to lodging, the charges typically start on the first night, and can be refunded after the 30th night, or the night after the definition of extended stay lodging has been met. Some extended stay lodging

providers will automatically refund the taxes after the traveler meets the number of qualifying nights, while others may only refund upon request.

Additionally, in some jurisdictions the traveler must state their intent to stay beyond 30 nights (or whatever is required in that jurisdiction) at the time of registration in order to get the tax refund after they meet the qualifying number of nights. The hotel may require the traveler to complete a form to request that the hotel refund tax costs after the qualifying number of nights.

Virtually every Temporary Duty lodging receipt has taxes applied to the “folio” during the stay. You can save your organization’s funds and the tax dollars behind them by scrutinizing a traveler’s lodging receipts and educating them on the exemption of state and local taxes on Federal travel lodging costs associated with long-term TDYs.

It is recommended that travelers be aware of long term lodging qualifications and other tax exemptions before they travel. GSA’s website, <https://smartpay.gsa.gov/businesses-vendors/tax-information>, provides links to individual state websites where travelers can find more information on specific state requirements and tax exempt forms. If information is unavailable on a state’s website, travelers should call the state’s tax office or ask hotel staff at the time of check-in.

Enhanced Rental Vehicle Assistance Tool



DTMO is pleased to announce the launch of the new and improved Rental Vehicle Assistance Tool early this summer. This web-based tool has been enhanced to provide the Federal government traveler with a user-friendly resource for rental car and truck customer service matters.

Understanding needs and acting on feedback are key to ensuring that programs and processes are improved to meet customer requirements. DTMO's Rental Vehicle Assistance Tool offers an opportunity for rental car customers to provide feedback and comments on their rental car experience, so that DTMO can better serve the federal traveler. The tool is also designed to assist the federal traveler when accidents or damage to a rental vehicle occur while on official travel, and it allows the traveler to obtain assistance with rental car and truck company customer service matters.

It is important to note that the DTMO Rental Vehicle Assistance Tool is NOT to be used to file a claim against

the Government either by a third party, or by the rental agency. All renters should first attempt to resolve issues directly with the rental company.

The following information will be required in order to provide assistance:

- Copies of travel authorization/orders
- Travel itinerary
- Rental car contract or receipt
- Incident report and/or a police report
- Any correspondence from the rental car company

Upon receipt of your information, an action officer is assigned to work as an intermediary between you and the rental car company to resolve the concern.

The Rental Vehicle Assistance Tool is located on the DTMO website at: <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Rental>. To learn more about the program, refer to the U.S. Government Rental Car Agreement #4 also available on the DTMO website.

DTMO administers the Rental Car/Truck Programs through agreements with participating vehicle rental companies. For more information on the Programs, visit the Rental Car and Rental Truck pages at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/rental.cfm>.

DEFENSE TRAVEL MANAGEMENT OFFICE
Rental Vehicle Assistance Tool

The DTMO Rental Vehicle Customer Service Assistance tool is designed to provide assistance to the federal traveler when accidents occur while on authorized travel, and to offer assistance with rental car and truck company customer service matters. The DTMO Rental Vehicle Customer Service Assistance tool is NOT a place to be used to file a claim against the Government either by a third party, or by the rental agency.

** All renters should first attempt to resolve issues directly with the rental company.*

For assistance with a rental vehicle car or truck matter, click the Start Vehicle Assistance Request button below.

To provide feedback on your rental experience, click the button below.

Start Vehicle Assistance Request OR **Provide Customer Service Feedback**

Click below to obtain copies of the U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement and U.S. Government Truck Rental Agreement:

- U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement
- U.S. Government Truck Rental Agreement

Travelers Could Incur Fees on Cashless Toll Roads

As states begin to install cashless toll roads, travelers could incur fees if they do not use an automated toll payment device to pay for tolls. States such as Texas, Virginia, Florida, Maryland, and Colorado have already adopted these types of tolls and others are considering similar programs.

Cashless toll roads do not have toll booths, or other options to pay for tolls with cash. Instead, drivers are required to have an automated toll payment device, such as a transponder or license plate-based video tolling solution to pay tolls. Vehicles without such technology may be billed later for the cost of the tolls and an additional administrative fee which can range from \$25 - \$45.

Automated toll payment services are available through rental car companies, and devices are often preinstalled in rental vehicles. Some devices must be activated before use, so travelers are advised to ask at the time of rental car pick-up, about any cashless toll roads in the area and about activation procedures.

Under the Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR)/Joint Travel Regulations (JTR), Appendix G, the actual cost of the toll incurred while conducting official business, is a reimbursable cost; however, the cost to activate a toll transponder and any daily usage fees are non-reimbursable expenses unless the Approving Official determines it was necessary for official business. Additionally, any administrative fee associated with failing to pay for a toll is a non-reimbursable expense.

The best way to avoid additional expenses is to research TDY locations for toll roads before travel to determine if cashless toll roads are in the area. If they are, be sure to include the cost of the activation fee on your authorization.



Clarification on Pre-Charging Fuel for Rental Cars

In the last edition of the Dispatch, our article on “Changes to the U.S. Government Rental Car Program” stated that pre-charging for fuel is prohibited under the new Rental Car Agreement. To clarify this, it is important to understand the definition of *pre-charging*. *Pre-charging* is a practice imposed by rental car companies in which travelers are automatically charged for fuel if they cannot prove they filled up the fuel tank before returning the car. The current Rental Car Agreement (#4) prohibits this practice, but it does allow rental car companies to ask for a fuel receipt to document that the vehicle was indeed returned with a full tank.

Government travelers may choose to pre-purchase fuel at a set price at the time of pick-up to meet the requirement to return the vehicle with a full tank of fuel; however, proper judgment should be used when selecting this option since the cost per gallon is usually more expensive than filling up at a gas station.

For more information about the rental car program or to view a copy of Rental Car Agreement #4, visit the DTMO website.

Good News for Airline Passengers

In response to the trend of airlines imposing increasingly complicated airline fees, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) recently approved new passenger protection measures. The rules are good news for airline passengers. They address a variety of issues affecting air travelers, including reimbursement of baggage fees when bags are lost, full disclosure of additional fees, more compensation for passengers bumped from oversold flights, and expanded limits on tarmac delays.

According to DOT, airlines lost more than 2 million bags in 2010, and more than 65,000 airline passengers were unwillingly bumped from flights. U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said the new regulations were designed to make sure airlines treat travelers fairly. Effective in August, 2011, the new rules covers:

Lost Bags and Bag Fees

Airlines will have to refund baggage fees if your bag is lost. Airlines will also have to apply the same baggage fees and baggage allowances for all segments of a trip, including connecting flights with interline and code share partners.

Full Disclosure of Additional Fees

Airlines must now disclose all taxes and potential fees on airline websites and when advertising fares. This includes fees for changing or canceling a reservation, baggage, meals, seat upgrades and other charges.

Bumping

Passengers involuntarily bumped from an oversold flight will be eligible for increased compensation. Airlines will now be required to pay up to \$650 for a short delay, and up to \$1,300 for longer delays. If a government traveler is involuntarily denied boarding on a flight, compensation for the denied seat belongs to the Government. The traveler must request that the carrier lists the "Treasurer of the United States" as payee on the compensation check and forward the payment according to Service directives, Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR), U1200-C.2. and Joint Travel Regulations (JTR), C1200-C.2.

Tarmac Delays

The new rule expands the existing ban on lengthy tarmac delays to cover foreign airlines' operations at U.S. airports. Foreign carriers must release passengers from aircraft delayed at U.S. airports within four hours, or face fines as high as \$27,500. Carriers must provide adequate food and water after two hours, as well as working lavatories and any necessary medical treatment. DOT provides travelers a way to submit airline service complaints and comments at <http://airconsumer.ost.dot.gov/problems.htm>.

The rule will also let passengers cancel reservations within 24 hours of booking a flight without penalty, prohibit price increases after tickets are purchased, and require airlines to notify consumers of delays of more than 30 minutes.

The U.S. Department of Transportation www.dot.gov rule is located in the Federal Register at http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=DOT_FRDOC_0001-0509.





Valid Receipts For Travel Vouchers

Focus on the Traveler

Although a receipt is a seemingly simple item, a great deal of confusion surrounds what qualifies as a valid receipt for travel reimbursements. Recent travel voucher audits conducted by Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) validate these uncertainties, and lack of required receipts was identified as a major concern. Both travelers and Approving Officials (AO) should understand the requirements of valid receipts.

Q: What is the policy on receipts?

IRS Publication 463 requires that records (i.e., receipts) be kept to prove certain expenses. For DoD travelers, the IRS rules are embedded in the DoD FMR with a brief discussion in the JFTR and JTR. The policy states that receipts are required for all lodging expenses, regardless of the amount, and for *each* expenditure of \$75 or more. This \$75 criterion includes, but is not limited to, individual expenses for car rentals, and transportation expenses reserved through DTS, even when paid using an Individually Billed Account Government Travel Charge Card. For lodging at military locations, receipts are always required regardless of if the amount is less than the \$55 default setting in DTS.

Q: What is a valid receipt?

A receipt is a written acknowledgement that a vendor has been paid for providing goods or services. To be valid for substantiating a travel claim, the receipt must show:

- Name of company providing goods or services
- Date the specific services were rendered or articles were purchased
- Unit price of item(s)/service
- Total amount due
- Total amount due was paid

Often, travelers submit documents that are similar to a receipt, but lack all of the required detail for travel reimbursement. Documents that are not considered valid receipts include:

- Charge card statements (personal or Government Travel Charge Card)
- Hotel bills provided before check out
- Rental car contracts provided when a car is picked up
- Travel itineraries/invoices emailed to the traveler before an airline reservation is ticketed and charged
- Electronic records for airline tickets in DTS

Q: What if I don't have a receipt?

Most vendors will provide a receipt upon request. If you forget to get a final, paid receipt, contact the vendor directly to have a receipt mailed, faxed or emailed. If you are unable to obtain a receipt or it has been inadvertently lost or destroyed, you must include a written explanation in the travel voucher that outlines the circumstances and contains all of the information that would be included in a valid receipt. In lieu of a lodging receipt, include the facility's name and address, dates lodging was obtained, if the room was shared (and if the other traveler was in official travel status or

not), and the cost incurred. A traveler may not submit a 'lost receipt' statement to substitute for an online booking hotel receipt.

Without a valid receipt, an authorized reimbursement for an individual expense of \$75 or more or a lodging cost may be denied, which means that you will not be reimbursed for that expenses. Further, any payments made for expenses that are not substantiated by receipts may be considered improper payments. If a paid voucher without receipts is chosen for audit, the traveler and/or the authorizing official could be liable for repaying the amount of the improper payment.

Q: How do I submit a receipt?

In DTS, the traveler or the non-DTS Entry Agent (NDEA) must fax or scan and upload receipts to the voucher as a substantiating record on the Expenses screen. If the voucher is created and "T-Entered" by a NDEA, a copy of the DD Form 1351-2 signed by the traveler must be attached to the DTS voucher as well. When attaching a receipt to a voucher, ensure that it is legible and the expense claimed is the same as the amount on the receipt.

Q: Should I keep receipts after I submit my voucher?

Travelers should retain all receipts in the event of an audit, for tax purposes, or to support claims involving reimbursement for expenses which are deemed to be questionable/falsified. Although DTS archives voucher records, travelers are encouraged to keep receipts for three years following the tax year in which the travel occurred.

For more information on receipts, visit the Knowledge Center in TraX.

3rd Annual Connect Seminar a Success

More than 650 Defense Travel Administrators (DTAs) gathered in Alexandria, Virginia seeking professional enrichment and strategies for enhancing their organizations' travel programs. For these DTAs, Connect 2011 did not disappoint. Attendees expanded their professional capabilities through numerous engaging activities such as networking, improving their use of DTS, and learning about current topics pertaining to DoD travel through targeted training and informal round table discussions.

Guest speakers Dr. Jamie M. Morin, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller and Ms. Joan Causey, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Financial Operations, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, addressed the seminar attendees and provided examples of how financial policy and regulations evolve and how they affect DoD travel. Mr. Dave Weinberg, Col., USAF (Ret.), of DaveSpeak© engaged the audience with stories about service through leadership and taking care of customers. Mr. Weinberg concluded with a poignant message about the importance of DTAs as professionals and how their efforts are valued in support of the Department's top priorities.

In response to suggestions from last year's seminar, Connect 2011 expanded to more than 90 sessions with new



Connect 2012

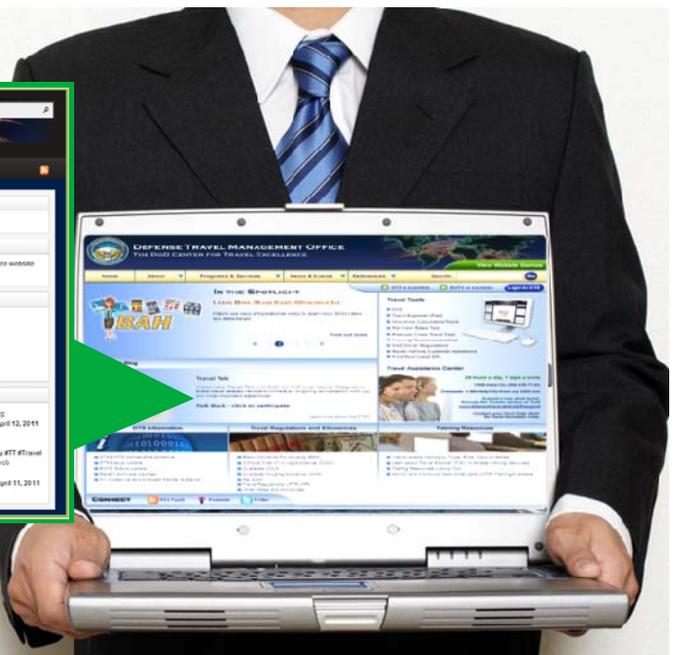
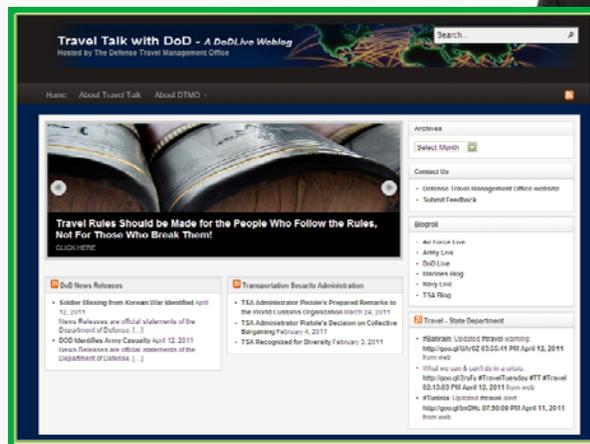
When: April 9-13
Where: Washington, DC

offerings such as: Exercising Ethics during Official Travel, Checklist for Excellence, In-Depth Look at Global Settings, and Taking Care of Customers. Other enhancements for this seminar included Learning Tracks, which helped attendees make the most of their seminar experiences by attending recommended sessions based on their own travel management responsibilities. Another new addition was DTA JumpStart, a collection of courses tailored to educate new DTAs who have less than six months of experience in their positions.

The highlight of the final official day of the seminar was the ceremony in which the Excellence in Practice awards were presented to honor those who have achieved excellence in travel program management.

For more information about this and other events, visit the DTMO Web site: <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/seminar.cfm>.

Check out our blog and see what we're talking about!



www.defensetravel.dod.mil

Congratulations to the 2011 Excellence in Practice Award Winners



The Champion: Best Mentor and Coach Award

Mr. Daryl Carter
Marine Corps Base
Hawaii
(includes Headquarters
Battalion and Marine
Corps Air Station
Kaneohe Bay)

The Champion is awarded to a Lead Defense Travel Administrator (LDTA) who has demonstrated commitment to his or her Organizational DTAs' (ODTA) success through mentoring, training, and implementation of performance improvement strategies. Mr. Carter is well known among his ODTAs for acknowledging exceptional performance, providing constructive feedback, and motivating his personnel to higher levels of performance. While his training program and his hard work are commendable, his ODTAs are particularly impressed by his spirit of service, which is evident in the way he interacts with his ODTAs and the 2,400 personnel he supports. His strength as a coach was recently exemplified in addressing Marine Corps Base Hawaii's Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) delinquency rate. At a respectable .13 percent, Mr. Carter thanked his personnel for their hard work and dedication – but he also felt that with an extra push, they could bring all their GTCCs out of delinquency. In less than two months, his encouragement and direction resulted in a zero percent delinquency rate. It is this type of dedication and mentoring that exemplify the Champion award, and we are pleased to honor Mr. Carter for his leadership, communication, and support at Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

The Elite: Team Excellence in Customer Service Award

Redstone Arsenal
DTS Helpdesk

The Elite is awarded to a local help desk team that is a model for team excellence in customer service. The Redstone Arsenal DTS Helpdesk's main goal is to make DTS as simple as possible for its customers. One notable way the team has done this is through the development of an administrative travel support system – which allows DTAs and site management to track permission levels, review local business rules, and even automate the DD577 signature process. They have also developed a messaging system, which allows them to send targeted messages to their user community, such as notifications reminding travel cardholders of their expiration date and to notify personnel of upcoming training opportunities. The training that the helpdesk team offers is frequent, hands-on, addresses DTS processes as well as local policies, and is continuously improved based on customer feedback and a rigorous course evaluation process. Finally, their customer service sets the standard, with the written helpdesk policy that all customers receive a response within two minutes of contact and, as much as possible, that all issues are resolved within the same day. Because of their systematic processes and strong customer focus, the Redstone Arsenal DTS Helpdesk exemplifies an elite support team.

The Icon: Excellence in Travel Program Guidance and Communication

The Navy
Postgraduate
School
Travel Office

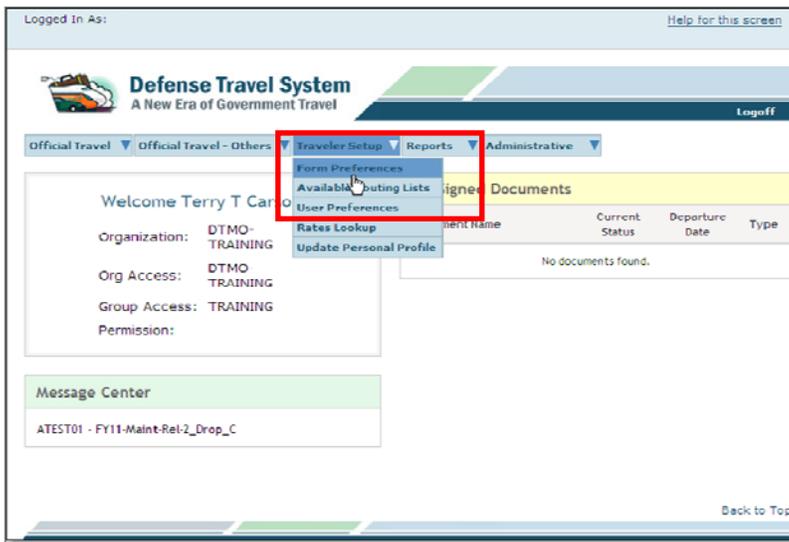
The Icon is this year's most prestigious honor, and is awarded to a major command or agency that has attained the highest level of achievement and is considered to be the "best of the best." The Naval Postgraduate School Travel Office has built an effective travel program because its highest priority is creating a knowledgeable travel community among its many students, faculty, and staff. Its training process has been proven effective and follows a well-honed model – it starts with introductory training for all new personnel, continues with recurring training classes, and is sustained by regular deskside assistance to travelers and DTAs alike. Personnel at the Naval Postgraduate School are particularly impressed by the timeliness of the team's communication and their offerings of training classes that address the latest system and policy topics. For exemplifying what it means to be an icon in supporting its personnel and building a successful training program, the Naval Postgraduate School stands as a symbol of excellence in Defense Travel.

DTS Update

New Option to Mask Social Security Number

In April, DTS was modified to better protect a traveler's Social Security Number (SSN). Now, the first five digits of traveler's SSN are automatically masked on printed authorizations and vouchers unless the traveler selects a "Print Full SSN" option. Users can easily modify the settings by following these steps.

1. After logging in to DTS, mouse over the "Traveler Setup" tab on the top menu bar.
2. Select "Form Preferences" from the drop-down list.



3. Find the option for "Print Full SSN" and select appropriate setting. Select "No" to mask the first five digits of the SSN (XXX-XX-4108); select "Yes" to display the full SSN (999-22-3333).

Any change to this setting will take effect immediately for a user's own printed documents.

When an authorized user with permission level 5, such as a DTA, prints a DTS document for a traveler, DTS will apply the user's setting for the **Print Full SSN** option instead of the traveler's. For an authorized user without a permission level 5, DTS will automatically mask the SSN on printed documents belonging to travelers.

For more information, refer to the Document Processing Manual, Appendix A (http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/Training/DP_App_A.pdf).

Supporting the Traveler



In wake of the recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan, DTMO worked with U.S. Transportation Command, Pacific Command, and Commercial Travel Offices to provide travel and transportation support, as well as allowance guidance to over 8,000 family members who were traveling out of and back to Japan.

Premium Class Travel Reporting Change

A policy change implemented on April 1, 2011, eliminated the requirement to report other than economy/coach-class tickets when the cost is less than the economy/coach-class fare or the lowest unrestricted economy/coach-class fare.

The Department's Premium Class Travel policy still requires economy/coach-class travel accommodations to be used when performing official government travel. However, if the premium class fare is less than the economy/coach-class fare, purchase of that ticket is permitted and does not need to be reported as premium class travel. When the premium class ticket fare is more than economy/coach-class, requests for premium class travel must be fully justified in accordance with the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) or the Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR). The request must be authorized in advance of the travel unless an extenuating circumstance or emergency prevent it. Blanket authorization and justification for premium travel is prohibited. Authorization must be obtained on a case-by-case basis.



Annual Training Requirement for All Authorizing Officials and Departmental Accountable Officials

In August 2010, the DoD Financial Management Regulation, (FMR) Volume 5, Chapter 33 was changed to require both initial and annual refresher training for Authorizing Officials (AOs) and Departmental Accountable Officials. To satisfy this requirement, DTMO offers a web-based course, *Training for Accountable Officials and Certifying Officers*. The course is available in two versions; as an initial version and a refresher version that serves as annual training.

- **Initial Class** — familiarizes new Certifying Officers and Departmental Accountable Officials with their duties and responsibilities. The class takes an average of 90 minutes to complete.
- **Refresher Class** — provides a way for experienced Certifying Officers and Departmental Accountable Officials who work in DTS to satisfy the requirement for annual refresher training. You can expect to take an average of 30 minutes to complete this class.



You may complete these courses in more than one sitting. Travel Explorer (TraX) does not retain a record of your progress after you exit a training module, so if you wish to return to the module, navigate directly to the page last viewed and proceed from that point; there is no need to start the module over.

To access the course, log in to [TraX](#) and select the "Training" icon at the top of the page. Select the radio button for "View All" and navigate to the course "AO/RO - Training for Accountable Officials/Certifying Officers (COL)."

Worldwide Task Order QAE/COTR Training Now Available



The Worldwide Task Order Quality Assurance Evaluator (QAE)/Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR) Instruction is now available. This course familiarizes the QAE/COTR with the Performance Work Statement (PWS) scope of work, definitions for transactions fees, forms and methods of payment, PWS requirements and the Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP), which provides guidelines for performing duties as a QAE/COTR.

To access the course, log in to [TraX](#) and select the "Training" icon at the top of the page. Select the radio button for "View All" and navigate to the course "Programs and Policies - Worldwide Task Order QAE/COTR Instruction."



...to an Inbox Near You!

As part of our ongoing effort to improve DoD's travel training resources, DTMO will be emailing a short questionnaire to all Defense Travel Administrators (personnel with DTS permission levels 5 and/or 6) in June. If you receive an invitation to participate, please provide feedback about the training programs offered at your site. Your input is important to us!

Some Service Members See Change in Overseas COLA

This spring, approximately 280 Service members stationed at a number of overseas locations will see their Overseas Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) adjusted. COLA will increase for Service members in Haiti, Norway, and Portugal, indicating that the cost of goods and services at these locations has increased in comparison to average prices in the Continental United States (CONUS). Five other duty stations in Canada, Croatia, Ireland, South Africa and Australia will see decreases, indicating that the prices of goods and services have declined in comparison to CONUS prices. Canada has the largest population with 61 members stationed in Ottawa.

Overseas COLA is not a fixed amount, and adjustments based on data are either immediate or made incrementally, depending on whether the payment will increase or decrease. Increases in COLA are made immediately, whereas COLA reductions are phased in over time in two point increments to help minimize the impact of the adjustment.

Service members can calculate their COLA rate at: <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/colaCalc.cfm>.

The calculation tool is updated with the current COLA amounts each pay period. Learn more about COLA, and other allowances at: <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/cola.cfm>.

Did You Know . . .

Travelers can access destination reports using Travel Explorer (TraX), DTMO's centralized source of travel information. Click on the Trip Tools feature to review location reports that include travel advisories, health and safety considerations, local customs, entry/exit requirements, embassy phone numbers and weather forecasts.



Learn More About Basic Allowance for Housing

Watch a short animated video that explains the purpose of the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) program, and discusses how BAH rates are determined.



BAH is a U.S. based allowance prescribed by geographic duty location, pay grade, and dependency status. It provides Uniformed Service members equitable housing compensation based on housing costs in local civilian housing markets within the United States when government quarters are not provided. Visit the DTMO website, <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bah.cfm>.

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

Contact your local help desk for local business rules.

Defense Travel Dispatch

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