Defense Travel
Dispatch
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The DoD Center for Travel Excellence

Travel Explorer: New Web Solution

DTMO is proud to announce the launch of Travel Explorer (TraX), a user-friendly web solution that provides a centralized source of travel information. **Story »**

New Resources for Travelers

Today's Government traveler faces many options and unknowns associated with an official business trip. The *Travel Assistance Center (TAC)* and the *Knowledge Center* are key resources offering competent, helpful, and comprehensive support to travelers to reduce travel complexities and encumbrances. **Story »**

New Travel Card Transition Information

Starting November 30, 2008, at 12:00 a.m. EST, Citi® will officially replace Bank of America® as the new DoD travel card vendor. As of that date, all travel cards issued by Bank of America will expire. **Story »**

Top Frequently Asked Questions

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DTMO and PDTATAC Merge

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Director's Message

Welcome to the fall issue of the Defense Travel *Dispatch*. DTMO is focused on transforming the Defense Travel Enterprise by implementing better solutions for the traveler. That focus is illustrated in this issue with articles on the launch of Travel Explorer and enhancements to our Travel Training Program. In addition, you will find the latest information on the Government Travel Charge Card transition and DTMO/Per Diem Travel and Transportation Committee (PDTATAC) merger.

We hope that you find the *Dispatch* useful and informative. As always, DTMO encourages your feedback so that we provide you with the most relevant travel information in future issues.

-Pam Mitchell
Director, DTMO

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The Defense Travel Management Office

The 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.

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

Travel Explorer: New Web Solution Enhances Travel Experience

The DTMO is proud to announce the launch of Travel Explorer (TraX), a user-friendly web solution that offers a centralized source of travel information. TraX provides travel assistance, training, access to trip tools, and other useful information.

Travel Assistance

TraX provides assistance to DoD travelers by functioning as an extension of the Travel Assistance Center (TAC). The *Travel Assistance* section gives users access to the Ticket Management System, an on-line connection to the TAC. Users have the ability to submit a question, and track the progress of open tickets, while TAC representatives conduct research, or search and review responses to previously submitted questions.

Before submitting a help ticket, users are encouraged to use the *Knowledge Center* which provides instant access to hundreds of frequently asked questions and corresponding answers. Users can search, rate, and receive automatic notifications of updates related to questions.

Training

The *Training* section provides access to all travel training currently offered by DTMO. TraX will recommend courses based on the role selected by a user. TraX can also provide a full listing of available courses including web-based, distance learning, and instructor-led formats. Once the desired course has been selected, users can launch a web-based course or register for upcoming sessions. In addition, TraX maintains a user's class schedule and keeps a record of completed training.

Trip Tools

TraX also serves as a valuable resource by providing trip planning information on airline City Pairs, per diem rates, rental car ceiling rates and destinations. *Trip Tools* has the capability to estimate costs of an upcoming trip, provide maps, and location reports that include travel advisories, health and safety considerations, embassy phone numbers, as well as weather forecasts.

TraX is open to all members of the DoD travel community. Additional functionality will be implemented through a phased approach over the next fiscal year. Future TraX functionality will include the ability to download support documents and select topic-specific DTS demonstrations which provide automated step-by-step instructions for completing functions. Users will also be able to gather hotel information, find rental car locations, as well as review rail schedules.

To access TraX, users must register through Passport, DTMO's web portal, at https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Passport. We encourage you to use the *Feedback Form* in TraX to provide us with recommendations on making this exciting new tool as helpful and useful as possible.

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Travel Assistance Center and Knowledge Center Offer New Resources for Travelers

Today's Government traveler faces many options and unknowns associated with an official business trip. DTMO is dedicated to reducing these complexities and encumbrances by offering competent, helpful, and comprehensive assistance to the DoD travel community. The *Travel Assistance Center (TAC)* and the *Knowledge Center* are key parts in providing travelers this support.

Travel Assistance Center

Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week (including federal holidays), the TAC offers travel assistance to members of the DoD components. The TAC is supported by a team of analysts that bring a wealth of knowledge on subjects including DTS, government travel charge card, and other travel-related topics.. All analysts are required to attend a rigorous training program before becoming TAC representatives, and continue to attend training sessions to ensure they are providing the most current and complete information.

Travelers can contact the TAC by calling 1-888-Help1Go or by submitting a help desk ticket through the Ticket Management System (TMS), a key feature of TraX. The TMS maintains a record of a user's help desk tickets and provides the capability to track the progress of open tickets, as well as allowing users to view completed tickets.

(*Please note: For local business rules, travelers are encouraged to contact their local help desks. For local help desk contact numbers, visit www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Sections/HD_Main.cfm.*)

Besides providing overall travel support, the TAC offers a weekly DTS Outreach Call designed to inform and educate the DoD travel community about the latest DTS topics. Calls are held every Tuesday at 0800, 1300, and 2200 EDT and last approximately two hours. New topics are presented every week. Additional information, including participation instructions, is available under the TraX announcement, "DTS Weekly Call Details."

To help improve the service provided by the TAC, questionnaires are emailed to registered users who have had "closed" tickets. Users will be chosen at random and will not receive a survey more than once in a 60 day period.

Knowledge Center

Travelers can also visit the Knowledge Center in TraX (see Travel Explorer: New Web Solution Enhances Travel Experience) to seek assistance. Here, users have access to hundreds of frequently asked questions and resource documents that can be searched by key word or by topic. Travelers can also consult numerous manuals and guides on the DTMO website under *Resource Library*. As TraX expands, these documents will be relocated to the Knowledge Center.

In attempting to achieve its goal of offering excellent customer service, the DTMO will continue to expand and enhance user friendly tools and resources for federal travelers.

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Travel Assistance Center

Submit Help Tickets online at:

www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Passport

1-888-Help1Go

***DSN:* 312-564-3639**

24 Hours a Day, 7 Days a Week

New Travel Card Transition Information

Starting November 30, 2008, at 12:00 a.m. EST, Citi will replace Bank of America as the new DoD Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) vendor. On that date, all Bank of America cards will expire and Citi cards will be ready for use.

All cardholders with an account in good standing will automatically receive a new Citi GTCC account and card. If you have not received your new GTCC, please contact your Agency Program Coordinator (APC).

While Bank of America no longer processes requests for the new GTCC, Citi will commence accepting paper applications for new accounts on November 10, 2008. Anyone without a GTCC and doing official business prior to November 29, 2008, should contact their Component Program Manager (CPM). DoD personnel with a *suspended* or *charged-off* Bank of America GTCC account will need to reapply with Citi.

Did You Verify Your New Card?

To ensure your new Citi card is activated and ready for use on November 30, 2008, please verify receipt **immediately**. Log on to the website or call the phone number provided on the sticker affixed to the *front* of the card. To customize a Personal Identification Number (PIN) for access to an ATM, call the toll-free customer service phone number on the *back* of the new card. Place your new card in a safe place and do not dispose of your old card until after November 29, 2008.

Travel During Transition

If traveling during the transition period, November 29-30, 2008, it is critical that you carry both your Bank of America and Citi GTCCs. All official travel expenses incurred up to 11:59 p.m. EST on November 29, 2008, must be charged to your current Bank of America GTCC. Official travel expenses starting 12:00 a.m. EST on November 30, 2008, must be charged to the new Citi GTCC.

Airline and Rail Reservations: All official travel reservations being ticketed on or before November 29, 2008, must be charged to a Bank of America GTCC. As a general rule, DoD contracted CTOs issue tickets 3 business days prior to the reservations departure date. If your *approved* DoD travel authorization has a reservation departure date of December 3, 2008, or earlier, then your CTO will issue the airline/rail ticket on or before November 28, 2008, and therefore charge your Bank of America account. However, if your reservation departure date is *after* December 4, 2008, your CTO will issue your ticket on December 1, 2008; therefore, the charge must be placed on your Citi account. DTS will automatically assign these charges. However, the traveler should ensure the correct vendor is paid when payment is disbursed.

Hotel Reservations: Hotel reservations being confirmed (e.g., *late arrival guarantees or deposits*) on or before November 29, 2008, should be placed on your Bank of America card. If your hotel visit straddles the transition period (e.g., *check-in is on or before November 29 and checkout is on or after November 30*), you will need to check-in using your Bank of America GTCC but, upon departure, settle ALL hotel charges using your Citi GTCC account. *Note*: if using an express check-out option, be sure your new Citi GTCC is on file with the hotel.

Rental Car Reservations: If the rental is over the transition period (e.g., *pick-up on or before November 29 and drop-off is on or after November 30*), use your Bank of America GTCC at the time of rental. Upon returning the car, present your new card to settle charges. Be sure NOT to use the "Express" drop-off since you will need to change your method of payment to your Citi GTCC account.

Please be sure to pay all Bank of America bills in full for those charges incurred on or before November 29, 2008. If you have an existing balance, call the phone number located on the back of your card to request a statement. After the transition, Bank of America will continue to accept payments. All vouchers for travel using a Bank of America card should be filed by December 5, 2008.

Available Training

Travel card transition training is available for cardholders, APCs, DTAs and CPMs. Courses are offered at no cost to users and are available in a variety of formats. For more information including course descriptions and registration instructions, please visit the announcement section in TraX.

What to Expect

To accommodate the change in vendors, a DTS software enhancement, known as Release 5, was implemented on November 1, 2008. The release contains modifications in support of the GTCC transition including a data upload of new GTCC accounts (CBA and IBA), and the creation of interface connections, reports, as well as changes to the application software to facilitate the appropriate selection of the new card. For additional information on the impact of this software upgrade on your DTS travel voucher, please visit the DTMO website.

Your primary contact for the transition is your APC. For more information, visit the DTMO website or Service-specific websites: Army - www.asafm.army.mil; Marine Corps- www.marines.mil/units/hqmc/pandr/gtcc; Navy- www.navsup.navy.mil/ccpmd; Air Force- www.my.af.mil/afknprod/afgtc.

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Travel Assistance Center Top FAQs

Question: Why does DBsign look for a soft token (certificate on a floppy disk) when a hard token (Common Access Card (CAC)) is used?

Answer: The user needs to register his/her CAC card with the Middleware.

- Insert your CAC into the reader.
- Double click on the ActivCard (or whatever Middleware software your site uses; process may vary slightly for different Middleware) icon in the System Tray to start the ActivCard Gold Utilities.
- Enter the PIN for your CAC when prompted.
- Wait until the card activates, then select the Register Certs option under the ActivCard Gold Tools menu.
- Click on Yes to register your certificates.
- Click ok.
- Click on Close.

You can verify if your certificates were successfully registered by following the following steps:

- Launch Internet Explorer and selecting "Internet Options" under the Tools menu.
- Click on the Content tab, then click on the "Certificates" button to access your certificate.
- You should see your certificate(s) listed under the Personal tab.

If this does not work, you may need to change your DBSign settings to Microsoft CryptoAPI, or re-install CAC middleware.

Question: Where can I find assistance with document reject codes?

Answer: DTS and Global Exchange (GEX) Error Codes can be found in Appendix G of the DTA Users Manual. This appendix can be found online by using the following URL: http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Training/DTS/TrnMat.cfm

Question: If I make my reservations with a CTO, do I need to make them again in DTS?

Answer: No, you will not have to make reservations again in DTS. If you make reservations with a CTO, be sure to select "Other" in box B on the Trip Overview screen in DTS when you create your authorization. This will bypass the reservation module and ensure that no duplicate bookings are created.

Question: How do I check the status of my documents in DTS?

Answer: Your document status can be verified by opening the most recent version of the document and selecting *Digital Signature* in the top menu bar. On this screen, review the section *Pending Routing Actions*.

Question: My document is stuck at CTO submit. What do I do now?

Answer: Contact the TAC with your full name, last 4 digits of SSN, TDY location and departure date.

Question: What do I need to do to get my profile detached?

Answer: This varies from Service to Service, but in general you should contact the organization that you are attached to and request that they detach your profile. The TAC can assist in locating POCs for the various organizations.

Question: My document has been rejected by the accounting system. How do I fix this?

Answer: Contact the TAC with your full name, last 4 digits of SSN, TDY location and departure date.

Question: How do I split my reimbursement?

Answer: Adjustments to the method of reimbursement can be made on the *Payment Totals* screen found under the Additional Options tab on the top menu bar. Scroll to the bottom of the page and review the Entitlement Summary section. Here you can make any changes to the split reimbursement by adding funds for ATM advances, adding additional costs such as meals and other expenses or subtract funds if you have a credit balance. After making adjustments to the amounts, click "calculate" and you will notice that the reimbursement amounts to the GTCC and electronic funds transfer (EFT) have adjusted.

Additional frequently asked questions are available in the *Knowledge Center* in TraX.

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U.S. Government Rental Car Program Provides Many Benefits

In the day-to-day performance of official business, many of us must travel. Part of the traveling process may involve renting a vehicle. Fortunately, there's a car rental program especially designed to meet the needs of the federal government traveler. The U.S. Government Car Rental Program provides quality rentals and special rental benefits for federal government employees while on official business.

Program History

Originally, the Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC) served as the manager and administrator of the DoD car rental program. The benefits of this program were exclusive to DoD.

With encouragement from the General Services Administration, this program was extended to other federal agencies, as well as the Navy Exchange, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service and other federally created organizations. As part of DoD's effort to create an organization that serves as the single focal point for commercial travel both within the Department and with industry, the rental car program was realigned to the Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO) in October 2007. DTMO manages the program for the federal government, develops and maintains the U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement, serves as the interface to rental vendors and customers, approves rates, and assists renters with claims and disputes.

Rental Benefits

The special rental benefits provided by this program consist of rates that include airport access fees, fixed daily and weekly rental rates, unlimited mileage, and no fees for liability insurance at approximately 7,000 participating rental locations. Rates are offered for up to 60 days from the time of the reservation with no blackout dates or minimum rental period. In addition, these rates do not require advanced reservations. Travelers must present a travel authorization or Government Travel Charge Card as official business identification to be covered under the terms and conditions of the program.

Program Terms and Conditions

DTMO administers the program through an agreement with the rental car companies that outlines the terms and conditions that govern the program. Specifically, it covers the procedures for establishing and charging rates and additional fees including the Government Administrative Rate Supplement (GARS), which covers the cost of additional program benefits. Additionally, the agreement addresses reservation procedures, employee identification requirements, vehicle pick-up procedures, insurance, damage liability, billing for damages and data reporting requirements. The agreement is available on the DTMO website at www.defensetravel.dod.mil.

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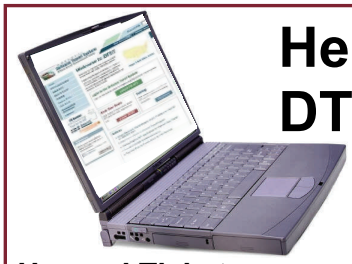
Additional Rental Benefits

- Off-terminal locations must be in close proximity of airport
- Drivers 18 and over are allowed to rent vehicles
- Additional drivers may be added at no additional cost
- If travel is delayed, the reservation will be held for a minimum of two business hours
- Vehicle must be available and contract must be ready when traveler arrives
- If size/class of car reserved is not available, the company must offer an upgrade vehicle at no additional cost or smaller car at reduced rate only with renter's consent



Helpful DTS Hints

Unused Tickets

All unused tickets (e-tickets or paper tickets) must be returned to the Transportation Office (TO) or the travel agent at your Commercial Travel Office (CTO) as soon as possible for rapid processing of a refund.

If a trip is cancelled **before** travel begins and the authorization has been approved and ticketed by the travel agent, cancel the authorization by using the new *trip cancel* feature on the DTS Document List. If the auto generated voucher is not pre-populated, record any travel agent fees.

If the *trip cancel* link is not available, create an amendment to the authorization by removing reservations and all expenses that were not incurred. Change the trip duration on the Itinerary screen to 12 hours or less (overall ending point date should be the same as the depart date). Ensure lodging and/or M&IE allowed are all equal to zero. If there are no reimbursable expenses or travel agent fees, add remarks to your routing officials to cancel the authorization and sign the authorization. If there are expenses, add remarks to that effect and sign the authorization. Once the authorization is approved, create the voucher.

If travel has commenced, create an amendment to the authorization and change your itinerary dates by canceling any remaining reservations in Travel Summary and sign the document. Notify the travel agent that a portion of the tickets should be refunded and get the new cost *(Note: Verify hotel cancellation policy in case penalties apply)*. Create a voucher, change the trip duration to match your itinerary, then update your ticket cost. If a travel agent fee is not present in the travel document, enter the fee as an expense item along with any other expenses incurred for the trip. Remove all other expenses not incurred and add a remark indicating reason for canceling the trip and sign the voucher. **Home »**

DTS software Release 5, version 1.7.1.14, was implemented on November 1, 2008. The release contained modifications in support of the Government Travel Charge Card transition including data upload, creation of interface connections, reports, and changes to the application software. Release 5 also includes improvements to Centrally Billed Account (CBA) processes and the addition of a "continue button" on the Reservation Module Trip Summary Screen. For more information, visit the DTMO website. **Home »**

Training Available Worldwide

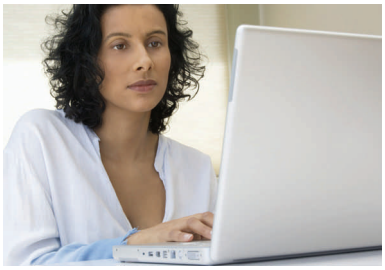
DTMO offers an integrated travel training program that is available from anywhere in the world and has reached travelers and administrators from Korea, Italy, and Belgium, as well as Hawaii and other states.

Our travel training program complements training programs offered at the organizational level and is no cost to users. Courses provide an interactive environment for learning and cover many travel-related topics geared to help users at all levels. Our program also offers courses to prepare organization-level trainers for constructing their own travel training program.

Supporting the objective of providing choice and control to the traveler, courses are presented in two delivery methods.

Web-based training provides self-paced instruction from your desktop. **Distance Learning** provides an online interactive environment using a combination of PowerPoint presentations and live demonstrations. Sessions include system functionality highlights, simulated demonstrations, and a chat room to communicate with the instructors.

In addition, DTMO provides supporting documentation including user manuals and guides, instructor manuals, and other helpful resources necessary for navigating the world of DoD travel.



Training Moves to TraX

All travel training currently offered by the DTMO is now available in TraX. Users can choose from a variety of training topics or follow training course recommendations based on a specific role. The Training section maintains a user's class schedule and keeps a record of completed training. As TraX is enhanced, all of the supporting resources and DTS demonstrations will move to the *Knowledge Center*. For instructions on accessing training, please visit TraX. **Home »**

New Course

A new distance learning course is now available for trainers and travel administrators, **"Expanding your Training Toolkit with the Enterprise Web-Based Training System (EWTS)."** This course provides an overview of EWTS, an online practice tool that mirrors DTS software. The course gives information on gaining access, tailoring training for your organization, and building teaching scenarios.

State and Local Taxes on Travel Expenses

Some state, county, and city taxing authorities have elected to waive some or all local taxes for federal travelers on lodging but few will waive them for rental cars. Since there is no overarching federal law to preclude such local taxes, each jurisdiction is able to set their own rules. Some locations require the traveler to provide a tax exempt form. DTS contains a link to a General Services Administration (GSA) website that has local state, county, and city forms if they have been published.

Remember to claim hotel taxes in CONUS and non-foreign OCONUS locations (AK, HI, Guam, etc.) as a non-mileage expense when you file your travel claim. Hotel taxes in foreign OCONUS locations are part of the per diem rate and must be included in the total daily hotel expense you claim on the Per Diem Entitlements screen in DTS. Rental car taxes do not have to be itemized and can be claimed as one expense item with the basic rental cost.

If your organization contracts directly with the hotel or rental car company for the services (i.e., the bill is actually paid by the Government through a purchase order or CBA card), taxes should be waived.

For tax exempt forms visit, **www.gsa.gov** and search for "Tax Exempt Forms."

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What's New @ DTMO

DTMO and Per Diem Travel and Transportation Committee Merge

As of October 1, 2008, DTMO and the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee (PDTATAC) staffs and responsibilities have merged. The PDTATAC staff shares the DTMO vision of Reshaping the Defense Travel Enterprise and improving travel across DoD. Combining our organizations will streamline central management of commercial travel policy for DoD.

The primary purpose of PDTATAC is to ensure uniform travel and transportation regulations are issued pursuant to applicable laws and policies. In addition, the PDTATAC staff coordinates with points of contact at major commands, GSA, the State Department and outside agencies to establish per diem rates for all non-foreign OCONUS locations (Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam and American possessions). PDTATAC also oversees several programs such as Continental US Cost of Living Allowance (CONUS COLA), Overseas Cost of Living Allowance (OCONUS COLA), and Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA).

DTMO and PDTATAC have been partners in the effort to determine and implement the best strategies to effectively change travel policy and related regulations. Now in one organization, we will aim to shape the travel policy landscape and verify adherence to policies, ensure areas of interest identified by the travel policy review are addressed and identify areas where training is required.

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