

Defense Travel Dispatch

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The DoD Center for Travel Excellence



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A Message from the DTMO Director

As I reach the six-month mark as Director, I continue to be amazed at the breadth of the Defense Travel Enterprise and awed by the effort required to manage it. In addition to my own DTMO staff, I'm aware of the countless dedicated individuals across DoD that work hard to ensure travel is a mission enabler and not a deterrent to readiness. To get a full appreciation of the breadth of our enterprise, take a look at our Strategic Plan for FY17-21 available on our website. In this edition of *The Dispatch*, we provide a snapshot of our plan, outlining our strategic goals, objectives and initiatives. Many of our strategic initiatives are not brand new, but a continuation of work already in progress or the next phases of longer-term initiatives like the Travel Policy Compliance Program, the success of which we highlight on page 4.

As we move forward with our strategy, we will embrace a business operations approach that is cost effective, understands and responds to customer needs, values partnerships and works to strengthen them, adopts leading best practices to become more efficient and stay current, and uses hard data to support business decisions. But I am reminded daily, by your efforts, that people will always be our most valuable resource. Thank you for your dedication in support of our warfighters.

— William Mansell, Director, DTMO

About the Defense Travel Management Office

The Defense Travel Management Office serves as the single focal point for commercial travel within the Department of Defense. DTMO maintains central oversight for commercial travel management, travel policy and implementation, customer support and training, DoD travel charge card program management, functional oversight of the Defense Travel System, and station and housing allowances program management.

DTMO Publishes Its FY17-21 Strategic Plan

DTMO conducts strategic reviews annually to validate, modify, or suspend our strategic initiatives. We conduct a more comprehensive review every five years that includes identifying and validating our products and services, stakeholders, organizational values, mission and vision, and conducting an environmental scan to help determine our overall strategic direction. Our updated FY2017-2021 Strategic Plan serves as our blueprint to more fully realize our vision of a reformed travel enterprise.

Mission & Vision

Our mission, our purpose, has not changed. We continue to serve as the single focal point for commercial travel within the Department of Defense. Establish strategic direction, set policy, and centrally manage commercial travel programs and station/housing allowances. Our vision is the future state we want our strategy to achieve – a Defense Travel Enterprise incorporating government and industry best practices to meet the needs and exceed the expectations of our customers.

Our Strategic Framework

Strategy is cascading. Our strategic goals are high-level end outcomes necessary to achieve our vision. Our strategic objectives are intermediate outcomes that are aligned to and necessary to achieve our strategic goals. Our strategic initiatives are specific projects ensuring progress is made in accomplishing each strategic objective over a period of time. These initiatives translate our strategy into operational terms, representing “how” we will accomplish our strategic objectives. We continue to operate in a time of change and uncertainty. Successful strategy execution requires stakeholder engagement and support, sufficient resources, and mitigating risks of which we have little or no control. We will continue to review and validate our strategic initiatives annually. Some will change, some may be suspended, and others may be added over the five-year strategic plan.

Measuring Performance

DTMO uses performance-based management to improve strategic decision-making. Performance management is a set of integrated processes, which measure the efficiency and effectiveness of the enterprise and act as a driving force for continuous improvement. This approach allows DTMO to:

- Achieve strategic performance objectives through a disciplined, structured approach
- Provide credible, decision-ready business intelligence to leadership
- Provide an analytic mechanism for linking performance and resource allocations
- Provide a mechanism for accurately reporting performance to senior leadership and stakeholders
- Provide an excellent framework for accountability

To track progress and assess performance of travel programs and key initiatives, DTMO is developing measures and supporting dashboards that in turn, provide credible, decision-ready business intelligence to leadership to assist in enhancing accountability, management decisions, reporting, compliance, resource allocation,



and risk management. Strategic initiatives to further advance this capability are prominent in this five-year strategic plan.

DTMO conducts analytical studies using Defense Travel Enterprise data to better understand travel spend, develop program recommendations, inform policy formulation, and identify cost savings/efficiencies. These studies assist program managers with the end-to-end problem solving process and provide analytical rigor which enhance the confidence in decisions and recommendations.

In addition to enabling DTMO to increase cost effectiveness across the Defense Travel Enterprise, maximize visibility into travel spend, and improve program management, benefits include:

- Increased accountability and transparency of expenditure of DoD travel funds
- Audit compliance with established policies
- Enhanced consistency in the quality of supplier products and services
- Ability to drive strategic sourcing decisions and mandate usage of preferred vendors, approved booking, expensing, and payment methods
- Increased visibility into customer behaviors and preferences to drive future requirements

Information is vital to the management of the Defense Travel Enterprise. DTMO's Commercial Travel Information Management (CTIM) tool is integral to the performance management system. CTIM integrates performance data and optimizes performance reporting. It enhances DTMO's analytic capabilities, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of DoD travel processes and the development of business intelligence to reduce overall travel costs.

Strategic Plan Snapshot

Below is a snapshot of our strategy. The full DTMO FY2017-2021 Strategic Plan is available at: www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/DTMO_Strategic_Plan.pdf

Strategic Goal: Maximize Travel Policy Understanding

DTMO will develop simple, comprehensive, and easily-understood travel and allowance policies. Clear and concise policies must facilitate the creation of simple, easy-to-use travel solutions that drive high compliance.

- **Strategic Objective: Simplify travel policy through simple, clear and concise policies**
 - **Strategic Initiative:** Rewrite the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR)
 - **Strategic Initiative:** Explore the issuance of the Government Travel Charge Card (IBA) to all travelers, assessing the current usage policy and its enforcement
- **Strategic Objective: Improve DoD travel processes to reduce confusion for travelers and travel administrators**
 - **Strategic Initiative:** Identify process reengineering opportunities from the DoD Travel System Pilot
 - **Strategic Initiative:** Expand and improve the DoD Travel Policy Compliance Program
 - **Strategic Initiative:** Develop resources to enhance comprehension and compliance for station/housing allowance data submissions

Strategic Goal: Improve Delivery of Travel Services

DTMO will pursue innovative ways to enhance the customer travel experience by providing user-friendly, value-added travel products and services to DoD travel customers and stakeholders.

- **Strategic Objective: Understand and respond to customer needs**
 - **Strategic Initiative:** Assess and strengthen Defense travel governance & stakeholder engagement

(Continued on page 4)

- **Strategic Initiative:** Complete enterprise-wide collection and analysis of travel program customer satisfaction surveys
- **Strategic Objective: Leverage industry leading technology solutions**
 - **Strategic Initiative:** Assess the results of the DoD Travel System Pilot to make recommendations on the feasibility for procuring and implementing a Commercial-off-the-shelf/Software as a Service solution DoD-wide
 - **Strategic Initiative:** Redesign the DTMO website using US Web Design Standards to enhance mobile access and enable an effective social media strategy
- **Strategic Objective: Improve travel programs and program management**
 - **Strategic Initiative:** Develop and implement a strategy to improve the DoD Recruit Assistance Program
 - **Strategic Initiative:** Expand the Travel Certificate Program to include additional travel management/administration roles
 - **Strategic Initiative:** Develop the SmartPay 3 requirements and Plan of Action & Milestones to improve GTCC program management

Strategic Goal: Optimize Cost Effective Travel

DTMO will continue to examine and track travel expenditures and program costs, and implement process efficiencies to achieve cost savings.

- **Strategic Objective: Maximize visibility into DoD travel spend to better understand supplier and traveler behavior**
 - **Strategic Initiative:** Leverage program area Super Users to expand the deployment of DTMO's data visualization and dashboard application in support of Defense Travel Enterprise Performance Management
 - **Strategic Initiative:** Institute a quarterly Defense Travel Enterprise Performance review
 - **Strategic Initiative:** Integrate new sources of Government and commercially available travel data into DTMO's Commercial Travel Information Management (CTIM) operational and business intelligence platform
- **Strategic Objective: Adopt industry best practices to leverage strategic sourcing opportunities**
 - **Strategic Initiative:** Expand and formally institutionalize the DoD Integrated Lodging Program
 - **Strategic Initiative:** Conduct a Dining Program Pilot
 - **Strategic Initiative:** Develop an acquisition strategy for Travel Management Company (TMC) services that supports DoD Travel System Modernization
 - **Strategic Initiative:** Expand and manage the use of restricted airfares

DTS Error Trends as Identified by the DoD Travel Policy Compliance Program

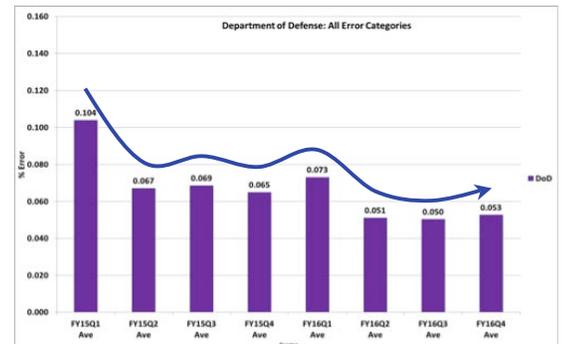
One of DTMO's strategic initiatives is to expand and improve the DoD Travel Policy Compliance Program. In 2012, DTMO established a Travel Policy Compliance program to ensure travel claims do not exceed reasonable or actual expenses, and to minimize inaccurate, unauthorized, overstated, inflated or duplicate travel claims. The program relies on an automated application known as the Travel Policy Compliance Tool, which reviews all DTS travel vouchers in near real time and identifies duplicate or incorrect payments for twelve common improper payments, and notifies the traveler, the Non-DTS Entry Agent (NDEA), and the Authorizing Official who approved the voucher. DTMO conducts an annual analysis of error rates to identify trends. Analysis of error rates for FY2015 through FY2016 indicate a significant overall reduction in improper payments for the errors identified by the DoD Travel Policy Compliance Program and varied changes for individual error categories.

While the overall error rate decreased, the change in specific error rates varies. There were significant reductions in several errors that can be directly attributed to technical changes made in DTS and to travel policy changes, either in the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) or other federal regulations. For instance, **OCONUS and CONUS Laundry** errors decreased significantly since laundry is no longer allowed. Prior to this policy change, travelers were confused as to when they could claim laundry. We also saw a decrease in **Actual Government Lodging Cost Not Updated** errors. This decrease is mostly due to the integration of government lodging in DTS. Because it is now bookable in DTS, vouchers are automatically updated to match the per day costs of the reservation. It was also slightly reduced due to changes in on-base lodging rates to amounts greater than the \$55 DTS default amount.

There were moderate reductions in a few errors that can be correlated to changes in traveler and AO behavior unrelated to changes in DTS or travel policy including:

- **Personal & Mission Related Expenses** – It seems there is improved understanding of what may be claimed on a travel voucher versus what must be claimed outside the system or what is considered a personal expense. The average error rate for FY15-16 is 0.1%, about 10 errors per 10,000 vouchers.
- **Duplicate Rental Vehicle** – Users are becoming more aware of how to identify duplicate rental car improper payments; however, there is still room for improvement.

Minor reductions or increases in errors correlate to policy misunderstanding or difficulty of understanding how to use DTS to correctly file for reimbursement in certain areas. These areas represent opportunities for increased training, policy revision, and/or technical changes to DTS. Lodging is an area that has



Over time, there has been a significant reduction in improper payments for the errors identified by the DoD Travel Policy Compliance Program.

AO Tip: To identify duplicate rental vehicle charges, look at what is claimed in the Non-Mileage screen. Is anything typed into the open text field such as, “rental car, Hertz, Avis, etc.?” Those expenses are shown as “Other” in the accounting screen and review screen. If there is an amount showing in the Rental Car position of those screens, then it is likely a duplicate. The amount claimed in the Non-Mileage screen should be deleted and the amount in the Rental Car portion of the Accounting screen will still show the amount to be reimbursed. If that amount doesn't match the amount that should be reimbursed, the amount should be changed on the Travel screen under the rental car portion.

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seen improvement in individual errors, but collectively has seen little improvement or increases, especially in these errors:

- **Government Quarters Used Max Lodging Rate Claimed**
- **OCONUS Foreign Lodging Tax**
- **Duplicate Lodging**
- **Excess Lodging**

By the Numbers
 To date, the DoD Travel Policy Compliance Program identified over \$19.9M in potential errors and collected over \$8.5M in overpayments to travelers.

Claiming lodging expenses properly in DTS can be complicated and confusing for travelers. Under most circumstances, lodging expenses should only be claimed on the Per Diem Entitlements screen and not on the Non-Mileage screen. Actual Expense Allowance (AEA) for lodging is claimed by using the “Actual Lodging” option in the Per Diem Entitlements screen. Several errors have been identified where travelers just claimed the amount over per diem on the Non-Mileage screen, which does not provide visibility when AEA for lodging is needed or used. Some of these errors may also be attributed to the differences between how GSA and DTMO determine the lodging rates for CONUS and non-foreign OCONUS locations compared to how the State Department determines max lodging in foreign locations. If it is a foreign location, lodging taxes are added to the daily lodging rate and claimed as one amount for each day lodging is being reimbursed in that foreign location. For CONUS and non-foreign OCONUS locations, lodging taxes are reimbursed separately in the Non-Mileage screen. By far, the biggest trend the Compliance Tool identified is Authorizing Officials failing to validate lodging costs by reconciling receipts with what is claimed.

While the Travel Policy Compliance Program is not an audit program, nor does it replace the Defense Finance and Accounting Service's post payment review, it does assist those efforts by identifying errors that can be corrected before being identified through audit processes. DTMO’s strategic initiative will further expand and improve the DoD Travel Policy Compliance Program by automating current manual processes and implementing additional queries in order to reduce travel improper payments and improve usability for DOD Components.

DTS Errors As Identified by the DoD Travel Policy Compliance Program

<p>Personal & Mission Related Expenses</p>	<p><i>What it means:</i> The traveler claimed reimbursement for a personal expense or a mission-related (but not travel-related) expense.</p>	<p><i>How to Prevent:</i> Reference the JTR to ensure that all claimed expenses are authorized. If the traveler incurred a mission related expense and the component agrees that it should be reimbursed, work with your component’s finance/resource management unit to file for reimbursement via wide-area workflow.</p>
<p>Duplicate Rental Car</p>	<p><i>What it means:</i> The traveler was paid incorrectly for their rental vehicle. Either the traveler was paid twice for the same rental vehicle – once because they claimed it as a non-mileage expense, and another time because they made a rental vehicle reservation in DTS (which automatically added the cost of the rental vehicle to the voucher), OR the traveler was overpaid because the rental vehicle costs claimed on the voucher were more than what they actually paid to the rental car vendor.</p>	<p><i>How to Prevent:</i> Total all rental car expense entries and ensure that the entries match the rental car receipts. Reference the Reservation Module AND the Non-Mileage screens to ensure that reimbursement is only claimed in one of the screens.</p>

<p>OCONUS Foreign Lodging Tax</p>	<p><i>What it means:</i> The traveler was overpaid because they claimed foreign OCONUS lodging tax as a non-mileage expense.</p>	<p><i>How to Prevent:</i> When OCONUS hotels charge taxes (usually called “VAT”) ensure that the nightly taxes are totaled with the nightly rate and enter one value on the Per Diem screen.</p>
<p>Duplicate Lodging</p>	<p><i>What it means:</i> The traveler was paid twice for the same room – once because they claimed it as a non-mileage expense, and once because they claimed lodging on the Per Diem Entitlements screen, AND both lodging amounts were the same.</p>	<p><i>How to Prevent:</i> Total all lodging expense entries and ensure that the entries match the lodging receipts. Also, ensure that lodging costs are only entered on the Per Diem screen.</p>
<p>Excess Lodging – Government Quarters</p>	<p><i>What it means:</i> A military traveler went TDY to an installation that has Government quarters, which prompts DTS to set the lodging costs on the Per Diem screen and the traveler claimed lodging as a non-mileage expense.</p>	<p><i>How to Prevent:</i> Total all lodging expense entries and ensure that the entries match the lodging receipts. Also, ensure that lodging costs are only entered on the Per Diem screen.</p>
<p>Actual Government Lodging Cost Not Updated</p>	<p><i>What it means:</i> The traveler went TDY to an installation with Government quarters. By default, DTS populated a Government lodging rate of \$55 on the Per Diem Entitlements screen but the Government lodging rate at the installation is less than \$55, resulting in an overpayment to the traveler.</p>	<p><i>How to Prevent:</i> Ensure that the lodging costs that are entered on the Per Diem screen match the lodging receipt.</p>
<p>Gov’t Quarters Used But Max Lodging Rate Claimed</p>	<p><i>What it means:</i> The traveler claimed the maximum locality lodging rate on the Per Diem Entitlements screen but actually stayed in Government quarters at a lower cost.</p>	<p><i>How to Prevent:</i> Ensure that the lodging costs entered on the Per Diem screen match the lodging receipt.</p>
<p>Excess Lodging</p>	<p><i>What it means:</i> The traveler was paid twice for the same room – once because they claimed lodging as a non-mileage expense, and another time because they claimed lodging on the Per Diem Entitlements screen, AND the amounts were different. This query also covers a handful of irregular situations such as, a) a traveler who paid for the room of another official traveler; b) a traveler who was not authorized Actual Expense Allowance (AEA) for lodging, so they entered a non-mileage expense for the lodging costs that exceeded per diem; or c) a traveler whose itinerary is wrong and cannot enter lodging on the Per Diem Entitlements screen.</p>	<p><i>How to Prevent:</i> Total all lodging expense entries and ensure that the entries match the lodging receipts. Also, ensure that lodging costs are only entered on the Per Diem screen.</p>
<p>OCONUS Laundry</p>	<p><i>What it means:</i> The traveler claimed reimbursement for laundry/dry cleaning while TDY at an OCONUS location.</p>	<p><i>How to Prevent:</i> Ensure that the voucher does not include reimbursement of dry cleaning, alterations, or laundry on the Non-Mileage screen.</p>
<p>CONUS Laundry</p>	<p><i>What it means:</i> The traveler claimed reimbursement for laundry/dry cleaning while TDY at a CONUS location.</p>	<p><i>How to Prevent:</i> Ensure that the voucher does not include reimbursement of dry cleaning, alterations, or laundry on the Non-Mileage screen.</p>

More information on the program is available at: www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/compliance.cfm.

2017 Excellence in Practice Award Winners



Excellence in Practice Awards are designed to recognize DoD travel professionals who have excelled in travel program management and successfully addressed issues with exemplary professional skill, creativity, and resourcefulness. This year's award winners demonstrated an exceptional level of service, resulting in more efficient and effective travel programs.

The Champion: TSgt Chris Moore, Osan Air Base, Korea, USAF

The Champion Award recognizes a Lead Defense Travel Administrator whose wisdom, guidance, and commitment to their Organization DTAs has made a fundamental and long-term positive impact on their travel program. This year's recipient is TSgt Chris Moore for support of Osan Air Base, Korea, USAF.

As the primary Lead Defense Travel Administrator (LDTA) for Osan Air Base, Korea, TSgt C. Moore oversees a team that provides support for more than 9,500 civilian, military and foreign nationals. His oversight extends to over 50 Organizational Defense Travel Administrators (ODTAs), over 150 Approving Officials (AOs), and 20 Finance DTAs (FDTAs). His expanded scope extends to all 51st FW, 7th AF, and 123 Geographically Separated Units (GSUs). TSgt Moore's professionalism, knowledge, and attitude ensure the continued success of the base DTS program.

TSgt C. Moore's invaluable knowledge and leadership was evident when he resurrected the base DTS program. He created new standard operating procedures, establishing a coalition between AOs, FDTAs, and First Sergeants to streamline all voucher approval processes. This created a more efficient and timely response to outstanding travel orders, eliminating a yearlong backlog for unsubmitted vouchers and military pay entitlements. He had a clear vision when he built a six-man team specifically designed to ensure accurate and timely travel voucher approval within 48 hours of voucher submission. He was also instrumental in authoring the local DTS policy, and redefining Approving Official standard operating procedures, which led to averting \$55k in DTS travel debts. Within a matter of months of arriving at Osan, his team was supporting, guiding, and validating more than 200 AOs and providing extraordinary customer service. His team has been lauded countless times for their efforts, knowledge, and professionalism.

TSgt Moore is truly dedicated to ensuring the success of the DTS program. He ensures quarterly training is conducted for all AOs, holding in-person training sessions and training via email and phone.

His efforts culminated in his team being named PACAF Team of the month and the 51st Comptroller Squadron being named Organization of the year, 2016. His professionalism and countless hours dedicated to the success of the DTS program and to Team Osan's AOs have been vital in the continued improvement of the program. From solving the toughest questions to ensuring that his team is fully compliant and knowledgeable, TSgt Moore has shown that customer service is the top priority of being an LDTA.

The Elite: Quantico Travel Support Branch Tier 2 Help Desk

The Elite Award recognizes a local help desk team whose superior efforts resulted in continuous improvement and outstanding customer care. This year's recipient is the Quantico Travel Support Branch Tier 2 Help Desk.

The Quantico Travel Support Branch serves as the Lead Defense Travel Administrator and the DTS Tier 2 Help Desk for Marine Corps Base Quantico and the National Capital Region. The staff of seven analysts provides help desk support, permission management, classroom training and troubleshooting support to a population of over 22,000 travelers and administrators.

Telephone, email and walk-in support is available to all travelers and administrators during business hours. The team also serves as the HL3 Agency Program Coordinators for the Marine Corps Combat Development Command's Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) Program.

The Quantico Travel Support Branch focuses on excellent customer service. They actively work reports and contact organizations to provide training when errors are discovered. For example, they run the approved status report to check for TDYs that meet the flat rate per diem requirements, then look at the authorizations to verify that the flat rate is computed correctly so travelers are not overpaid in scheduled partial payments. If they discover something was approved incorrectly, the team reaches out to the organization to explain the error, provide the JTR reference, and assist with correcting the authorization.

The Quantico Travel Support Branch sees communication as a key to effective and efficient customer service. They established an email distribution list to widely disseminate important information on upcoming releases or new program information (Integrated Lodging Program Pilot expansion, for example) along with links for further information or attachments. The team takes advantage of any DTMO-provided communication toolkits for major changes and requests that the Quantico Sentry publish newsletter articles. They also manage a website that is kept up-to-date with important travel information.

The Quantico Travel Support Branch created a lengthy internal troubleshooting guide that analysts can refer to when providing assistance. It is kept up to date with fixes and workarounds that travelers and administrators may encounter. It also serves as a good refresher when correcting issues that may not occur on a regular basis. They have also created how-to guides that they provide to both travelers and administrators.

An important part of any successful travel program is training. The Quantico Travel Support Branch offers classroom training several times a month, one-on-one deskside training, and small group or all-hands training on-site. The team holds an average of six classes per month with additional classes added based on demand. Attendees that require additional training or have more questions are given the opportunity for one-on-one deskside training immediately following class or at a later time. They review training materials and the training curriculum at least monthly, and update it whenever policy changes occur.

The Quantico Travel Support Branch received over 26,000 requests for assistance during calendar year 2016. Of these requests, less than 1% had to be escalated to the Travel Assistance Center; 99% of all requests were satisfactorily assisted during the initial request for assistance. Each traveler receives not only the answer to their question, but also a thorough review of their entire travel document for other potential issues. Travelers and administrators that called about more complex issues were provided with feedback during each step of the resolution. They were contacted one last time when resolution was complete and no further action was required to close the loop.



The Icon: Defense Logistics Agency Travel Services

The Icon is a military service major command or Defense agency team that has, with exemplary professional skill, successfully communicated and provided guidance for travel-related updates, plus facilitated a visible enhancement in travel program capabilities for its subordinate sites. This year's recipient is Defense Logistics Agency Travel Services.

Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Travel Services supports DoD's largest logistics combat support agency, providing worldwide logistics support in times of peace and war to the military services, civilian agencies, and foreign countries. DLA Travel Services consists of 18 employees organized into four teams, with each focusing on a different travel program area - Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC), Travel Compliance, Defense Travel System (DTS), and Permanent Change of Station (PCS).

Operating in a virtual environment, DLA Travel Services uses innovative solutions to manage and enhance its program. They use two secure centralized email inboxes; one inbox serves as a platform to communicate DTS, compliance, and GTCC information and as a helpdesk for all DLA customers, and another for PCS inquiries and to proactively communicate PCS-related information. The inboxes are managed and monitored by multiple team members crossed-trained in all travel areas to avoid a single point of failure. Use of these centralized email inboxes has proven to be successful with at least 95% of the DTS, compliance, and GTCC questions answered on the spot and a 2.5-hour average response time for PCS inquiries.

To enhance its travel program, DLA Travel Services centralized and streamlined the COL Training certificates process to ensure proper AO permissions and DTS access. The team conducts random sampling of DTS profiles and corrects any non-compliant profiles. These internal management controls, proactive efforts, and accountability reviews reduce the risk of inappropriate granting of permissions and access within DTS.

Travel Compliance Post Pay Audit Review (PPR), DD577 and COL Compliance, and Agency Program Coordinator Mandatory Reports are three unique enhancements developed to increase auditability and ensure DLA travelers are compliant with travel policies and regulations. The DLA internal PPR conducts a monthly 15% random audit of all approved vouchers from the DTS "Expense Report by Document Name" report. Compliance Officers use a streamlined checklist that mirrors the DFAS audit checklist as well as the DTMO Compliance Tool and work with LDTAs to correct the issues. This team utilizes trend analyses to quickly spot compliance weaknesses across the enterprise, providing a better way forward in audit sustainment.

To help ensure APC compliance with GTCC Regulations, DLA Travel Services developed a GTCC Mandatory Reports Form to validate that APCs are running the eight mandatory reports and two optional reports at least once per cycle. The team generates the Special Features Info, Basic Traveler, and Account Info listings monthly supporting the current employee profile checks to identify and correct invalid emails, specific role(s), and/or missing or expiring GTCCs.

To assist communicating with customers, the team manages a DLA Travel webpage, ensuring it is kept up-to-date with current travel information and links to pertinent travel resources, travel help aids, points of contact, DLA policy memoranda, and DLA Impact Notices. There is also a DLA Travel Hot Button that highlights important, timely information.

The team maximizes the use of all available resources to promote learning including hands-on experience, teleconferences, quick references and online demonstrations. To support travelers requiring one-on-one assistance with technical issues, the team uses screen sharing to assist DLA customers and provide personalized DTS support. The team also presents at all New Hire Orientations, instructing on the DTS basics, steps for in-processing, and provides key travel links and points of contact for assistance.

DTMO Co-Sponsors GovTravels 2017 Symposium

In late February, the National Defense Transportation Association held its annual GovTravels Symposium at the Hilton Mark Center in Alexandria, VA. GovTravels serves as a forum where passenger travel professionals from government and industry gather to meet, learn, and collaborate on regulations, technology, challenges and best practices in government travel. This year, the Defense Travel Management Office co-sponsored this event for the first time.

GovTravels 2017's agenda included many noteworthy guest speakers and information sessions that focused on this year's theme, "Optimizing for Smarter Travel." Of particular interest was keynote speaker, Jonathan Mostowski, a member of the U.S. Digital Service (USDS) supporting the DoD Travel System Pilot. He talked about the challenges of implementing a Commercial-off-the-Shelf Software as a Service solution (COTS/SaaS) for Defense travel. Mr. Mostowski also led a panel of government and industry executives in a wide-ranging discussion on modernizing travel management.

Representing the Department, Mr. Bill Booth, Director of the Defense Human Resources Activity and Mr. Bill Mansell, DTMO Director, provided more insight into the challenges, opportunities, and overall direction the Department is going with regards to travel modernization. Other guest speakers included Tim Burke, GSA who serves as the Government-wide Category Manager for Travel & Lodging and presented his thoughts on Category Management for travel. For those unable to attend this year's event a video recap of Mr. Mostowski's keynote address and panel discussion as well as Mr. Burke's presentation are available at: www.ndtahq.com/multimedia-archive/videos.

Save the Date for
GovTravels 2018

March 5-7
Alexandria, VA



Provided courtesy of NDTA

"GovTravels provides a unique opportunity to gain a better understanding of the challenges facing travel managers across the federal government and the travel industry. It provides a relevant backdrop to help inform the strategic direction of the Defense Travel Enterprise as we consider new technologies and adopts applicable industry best practices,"

*- Mr. Bill Mansell,
Director Defense Travel
Management*



As part of this year's GovTravels, DTMO hosted several information sessions including an Overview of Commercial Travel Programs, The New Joint Travel Regulations, Defense Travel System Modernization and Sustainment Initiatives, DoD Lodging, and Maximizing Visibility into DoD Travel Spend. A copy of the presentations are available at: www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/news.cfm?ID=78.

We look forward to co-sponsoring this event next year and further expanding our presence in the years to come. Additional information on GovTravels can be found on the National Defense Transportation Association's website at: www.ndtahq.com/events/gov-travels.



Understanding the Differences Between Station and Housing Allowances

When Service members are assigned to a permanent duty station they are entitled to housing, either provided by the government or paid as an allowance for housing costs. Each Service member may also receive a cost-of-living allowance. There are distinct differences between the allowances members receive depending on if it is an assignment in the Continental United States (CONUS) or one outside the Continental United States (OCONUS). Let us explain.

DTMO performs analysis and prescribes rates for Overseas Cost of Living Allowance (COLA), CONUS COLA, Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) and Per Diem for overseas non-foreign areas.

Basic Allowance for Housing

Service members stationed in CONUS receive a Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) in lieu of government-provided housing. BAH is paid to members serving on active duty and is based on duty station, pay grade, and dependency status. It is not intended to cover the entire cost of housing for all members.

- **How it is determined:** BAH rates are set based on median civilian rent amounts for specific housing profiles in each Military Housing Area. Utility costs are obtained from the American Community Survey, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for each area, and are set based on average civilian expenditures. Median rent plus average utilities (total housing cost) are the basis for computing BAH rates in each CONUS location.
- **How it is implemented:** Changes to location allowances are implemented annually on 1 January. If members choose to spend more than their allowance amount on housing, they must pay out-of-pocket for the difference. If Service members choose to spend less than their allowance amount, they keep the difference.

Overseas Housing Allowance

Service members stationed overseas receive an Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) in lieu of government-provided housing. OHA partially offsets housing expenses at overseas duty locations when Service members live in privately leased housing on the local economy. It is based on duty station, paygrade, and dependency status and is not intended to cover the entire cost of housing for all members.

- **How it is determined:** Rent, utilities, and move-in expenses are used to compute OHA rates. Rental allowances are computed using actual rental payments reported through the finance system and are designed so that 80% of members with dependents have rental payments fully reimbursed. Utility and move-in costs for OHA are established based on actual member expenses. Service members receiving OHA are asked to participate in an

annual Utility and Recurring Maintenance Survey and in a Move-in Housing Allowance Survey every three years to capture actual expenses.

- *How it is implemented:* Service members are free to choose their housing and can choose to rent at, above, or below the rental allowance ceiling. Members are paid the entire allowance rate if they rent at the allowance rate. If they rent under the allowance rate they only receive the actual amount spent on rent. Unlike the BAH program, Service members receiving OHA cannot keep any portion of the allowance if they rent under the prescribed rate. If members choose to rent over the allowance rate, they must pay out of pocket.



But there is more . . .

If their duty location qualifies, Service members will receive a cost-of-living allowance (COLA) to compensate for higher costs experienced at certain CONUS and OCONUS duty stations.

CONUS Cost of Living Allowance

CONUS COLA is designed to help offset higher prices in high-cost locations in CONUS that exceed the costs in an average CONUS location by 8 percent or more.

- *How it is determined:* CONUS COLA is measured by comparing the prices of specific goods and services, referred to as a “market basket,” at each U.S. location to the same goods and services for an average CONUS benchmark. If the location-specific cost data indicates prices are greater than 8 percent than average CONUS prices, a CONUS COLA index will be prescribed for that location. DTMO collects CONUS data each year.
- *How changes are implemented:* DTMO implements changes to location allowances annually.

Overseas Cost of Living Allowance

If serving OCONUS, Service members may receive Overseas COLA, which is designed to offset the higher overseas prices of non-housing goods and services. For COLA purposes, Alaska and Hawaii are considered OCONUS.

- *How it is determined:* Overseas COLA is measured by comparing the prices of a market basket of goods and services at an overseas location to the same market basket of goods and services for an average CONUS benchmark. Unlike the CONUS COLA program, there is no threshold required for Overseas COLA. Higher OCONUS costs indicate a COLA payment is authorized. DTMO collects Overseas COLA data annually on a rotational schedule, which varies by country.
- *How changes are implemented:* Changes to overseas location allowances are implemented differently, depending on the result. If an increase or no change is prescribed, the change is implemented the next pay period; if a decrease is prescribed, it is implemented no sooner than 45 days after the analysis is approved. Decreases larger than 6-points are implemented over time, to ensure members have time to adjust their budgets to accommodate the change.

Why the differences? Each allowance program is authorized by a separate law, authorized at different times in history and each with its own criteria. The implementation for each specific program is further refined and authorized in the Joint Travel Regulations and Service policy.

DTMO will host its annual Station and Housing Allowance training session on **June 19-20, 2017** at the Mark Center, Alexandria, VA. Country and Locality Allowance Coordinators are encouraged to attend. For more information or to register, visit www.defensetravel.dod.mil.



Travel Managers in Action

Real tips and best practices from the field

Each year DTMO recognizes top performers in DoD travel for the value and services they provide to their travel programs through the Excellence in Practice Awards. Below is a selection of tips and practices from this year's runners-up.

- **Susan Harrison, Army** – She not only completes required training but exceeds the standard by improving her knowledge and understanding of all changes to the regulations that govern travel and DTS.
- **Adam Fuller, Army** – In addition to providing training for all AOs on post, he holds an informative four-day DTS training for new ODTAs.
- **Mary Jo Stremcha, Army** – She uses an inclusive teaching technique and presents training in an easy to understand manner.
- **Peter Phelan, Army** – He builds strong partnerships and always passes along any relevant travel-related information, ensuring those not familiar with travel are able to understand it.
- **Ashley Garland, Army** – She ensures DTAs have the most current information and provides reports necessary to correct any issues they encounter.
- **Pierre Chease, Army** – He attends all training events and provides valuable support to the ODTAs located in six battalions at locations throughout the European theater. He proactively shares DTS tips and relays problem-solving details when the information becomes available.
- **Erin Mullis, Navy** – She created numerous internal standard operating procedures that provide standard, repeatable guidance for current and future DTAs. She cultivates a mentality among the DTAs that is committed to success and a willingness to surpass leadership expectations. She also requires a DTA assist during her AO and traveler training sessions, which enhances the DTAs' level of understanding and increases confidence in their ability to conduct future training sessions.



- **Jontell Platts, DLA** – She is dedicated to reducing voucher errors through educating ODTAs on allowable expenses, motivating them to strive for 100% compliance.
- **Raymond Finch, DLA** – He worked with ODTAs to identify and remove 708 surplus and invalid traveler accounts amounting to nearly 40% of total traveler accounts, and addressed problems with the DTS approval process routing lists.
- **Sheila Rhett, DTSA** – She provides on the job training and helps DTA peers keep up-to-date on changes to the Defense Travel System and travel regulations.
- **SSG Sharma, Joint Staff** - Published guidance for DTAs and APCs that standardized front-end business process controls necessary to reduce improper payments. She oversees a rigorous regimen of monthly voucher sampling that serves as a vital feedback mechanism for DTAs and Routing Officials to correct errors and prevent future errors.
- **ICO USMC DTS Help Desk** – Strives to resolve issues expeditiously. During fiscal year 2016, the DTS Team’s monthly calls grew from 125 to 1,042, a 734% increase, and the team was able to decrease the average response time by 48.6% (18 to 9:14 minutes), with the addition of only one team member.
- **Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Northwest Travel Team** – Relies on key DTS reports to achieve and maintain organizational travel goals. They use the Depart Status Report three times a week to ensure that travel authorizations are moving through the approval chain. Each week, they also use the Unsubmitted Voucher Report to touch base with travelers to ensure they meet the 5-business day submission requirement and offer their assistance, as needed. Every month, they use the Approved Status report to conduct post payment reviews on vouchers submitted the previous month. This allows them to identify any trends and address them appropriately.
- **USMEPCOM** – Implemented a help desk ticketing system that is used by the field when problems arise or clarification is needed. Tickets go to each member of the team so if their ordinary point of contact is not available, someone else can address the issue.
- **Joint Staff Travel Office** – Conducts quarterly meetings with DTAs to work on improving processes, discuss ongoing issues and develop solutions.
- **732 Air Mobility Squadron, USAF** – Always shares pertinent information in user-friendly terms via email, in person, and during weekly staff meetings. Ensures members are informed of any regulation changes and explains how it affects the unit.
- **1109 TASMCG CTARNG, Army** – Disseminates any new policies or procedures to Unit Level Administrators. The local business rules are updated as the State SOP is updated. This keeps the whole unit up to date with current operations.
- **JCAB, Navy** – All DTS documents are routed to the team, which serves as a first-line training/support/help desk facility. They maintain a centralized file for all required DTS and GTCC training certificates for members of the OJAG/NLSC enterprise.
- **The Naval Special Warfare Group TWO (NSWG-2) Travel Program** – Created a travel dashboard that is updated daily to show a quick overview of travelers and the status of vouchers.
- **NAVAIR LDTA Team** – Identified avenues to communicate pertinent information within the workforce and developed ways to manage multiple distributions that target the specific needs of DTS User without overwhelming the community.

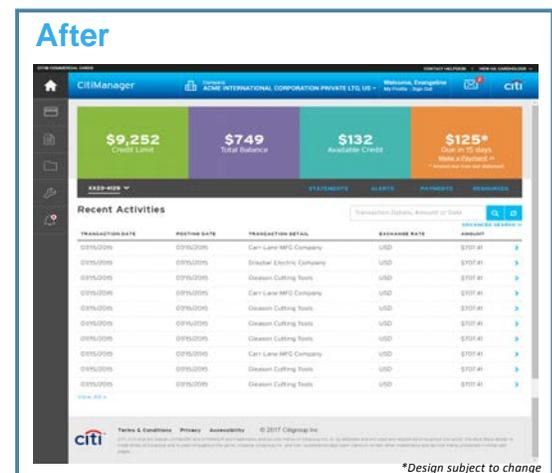
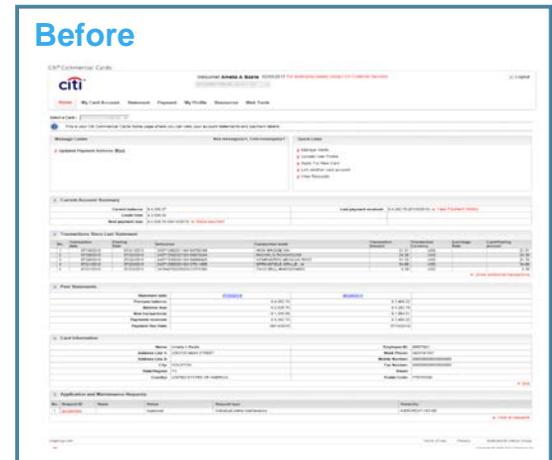
Improved CitiManager to Launch in May

To better serve DoD travel charge cardholders, Citibank is releasing an improved CitiManager website. The redesigned CitiManager homepage will have a whole new look and feel and feature a clean, intuitive new design that will make it easier to use. The redesigned CitiManager will be available this month for cardholders and a version for Agency Program Coordinators (APCs) will be released later this year.

At a glance, Cardholders will be able to:

- Access and download statements;
- View unbilled transactions (recent activity that has not yet been included on the statement);
- Check credit limit and view remaining credit;
- See when the next payment is due and how much is owed;
- Dispute invalid/authorized transactions

Citi will communicate these enhancements to APCs and cardholders and will also update existing training materials to reflect the new design.



Summer is Coming. Are you ready?

TSA Precheck is a voluntary, expedited security screening process offered at over 180 domestic airports that allows participants to keep on their shoes, belt, and light jacket, and leave laptops and 3-1-1 compliant liquids in their carry-on bags. The program is open at no cost to DoD civilians and Service members (including Reservists, National Guardsmen, members of the Coast Guard, and students at the U.S. Military Academy, the U.S. Naval Academy, the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, and the U.S. Air Force Academy). To participate:

1. Locate your 10-digit DoD ID number on the back of your Common Access Card (CAC).
2. If you are a DoD civilian, opt into the program through MilConnect. Login to www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect and click on the "My Profile" tab. Select "Update and View My Profile", then click on the "CIV" tab. In the Personnel Status Information box, click the "TSA Precheck

Program" checkbox and scroll to the bottom of the page and click "submit."

3. Save your DoD ID number in the "Known Traveler Number" field in your DTS profile (see [How to Enter your DoD ID Number and Update Your DTS Profile](#)) and your frequent flier account profiles.
4. Ensure your DoD ID number is included in the "Known Traveler Number" field when making airline reservations. This field appears when prompted to verify/enter your name, DOB, and gender. If making a reservation through a Travel Management Center, ask the agent to include your DoD ID number in your reservation.

More information on the TSA Precheck program is available at www.tsa.gov.



Saving Travel Funds through Airfare

Do you want to be a more prudent traveler? You can save your organization's travel funds by exercising the following strategies.

Use Restricted Airfares when practical. Under the right circumstances, travelers can purchase lower-cost, restricted airfares for official travel. Restricted airfares may be non-refundable, have change fee penalties, and advance purchase and ticketing requirements.

When a city-pair fare is available, an Authorizing Official must use the Restricted Airfare checklist in the Joint Travel Regulations to determine if a restricted airfare is advantageous to the Government.

When a city-pair fare is **not** available, the traveler and Authorizing Official must consider 1) the chance the flight will be changed or cancelled; and 2) applicable charges and fees that may be incurred, when determining if the savings is worth the risk that the trip will change. Use of the Restricted Airfare checklist is not required but travelers must follow their Service and Agency guidelines for using restricted airfares.

Increase use of the City Pair Program, specifically lower _CA fares. The GSA City Pair Program has two fares, YCA and _CA. The cost difference between the two can be significant with the _CA being the lower of the two. Both YCA and _CA fares show on the Discount Government fares tab. _CA fares are limited. Book flights as early as possible to ensure availability.

Utilizing restricted airfares when it makes sense and using _CA discount government fares can go a long way in conserving your organization's travel funds. For more information on using restricted airfares, go to:

www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/restrictedfares.cfm.

Coming Soon - Live Chat for DTS and Passport Login



In an effort to improve the customer experience, the Travel Assistance Center will soon launch a live chat capability to resolve DTS and DTMO Passport login issues. Users will be able to click on a link on the DTS homepage or on the Passport login help screen to connect directly to a TAC analyst who will work with users to resolve login issues. Live chat will be available Monday through Friday, 8am-5pm EST.

The tool is currently configured to only field questions related to login issues. Analysts will direct users with all other questions to go through traditional TAC channels – by submitting a helpdesk ticket via Passport or by calling the TAC directly. The live chat capability may be expanded to provide other types of assistance in the future.



About the Defense Travel Dispatch

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