

# Defense Travel Dispatch

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*The DoD Center  
for Travel Excellence*

## Improvements to Recruit Travel Assistance Program

The Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO) has made a significant change to the program by transitioning the Passenger Standing Route Order (PSRO) Program to the Contract City Pair Program. [Story »](#)

## Military Bus Program Offers Flexible Transportation

DoD's primary commercial transportation mode is air travel, but the flexibility and adaptability of bus transportation often make it a better travel option. With more than 400 carriers participating in the Military Bus Program, DoD offers access to safe and cost effective ground transportation. [Story »](#)

## DTMO Works to Wrap Up Travel Card Transition

DTMO is working with Bank of America to complete closeout activities, while concurrently partnering with Citi to introduce cardholders to the new resources and tools available. [Story »](#)

## DTS Helpful Hints: Common DTS Errors

Avoid common DTS errors by updating estimated expenses approved in a travel authorization and ensuring required receipts are submitted with the voucher. [Story »](#)

## 2009 Defense Travel Administrator Seminar Announced

Annual Defense Travel Administrator (DTA) seminars are designed to assist administrators in their travel-related duties by providing the latest information on DoD travel, the Defense Travel System (DTS), and the system's associated training. [Story »](#)

## Resources Available to Support Travel Instruction

DTMO offer materials to assist Defense Travel Administrators and instructors with presenting travel-related training in both distance learning and classroom settings. [Story »](#)

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

-Pam Mitchell  
Director, DTMO

### Travel Assistance Center

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

1-888-Help1Go

DSN: 312-564-3950

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

Contact your local help desk for local business rules.



If you are calling from overseas, use DSN 312-564-3950 or dial 809-463-3376 (wait for the beep) then dial 1-888-Help1Go (888-435-7146).

### Quick Links

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

## About the Defense Travel Management Office

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

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

# Improvements Made to Recruit Travel Assistance Program



Photo Courtesy of U.S. Navy

The DTMO Recruit Travel and Assistance Program provides mission-responsive air and ground transportation of new enlistees from Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS) to initial training sites. The program assists recruits during each step of their travel—from arranging onward ground transport, providing directions, and coordinating with service organizations like the USO or YMCA, to providing assistance with lodging, meals, or simply moral support, so that an enlistee’s or recruit’s first military travel experience is a positive one. The program is supplemented after-hours by the Travel Assistance Center (TAC).

The DTMO recently made a significant change to the program by transitioning the Passenger Standing Route Order (PSRO) Program to the Contract City Pair Program.

Accession travel requirements had historically fit the mold for traveling on PSROs because of daily travel requirements starting from the same origin. Over the years, airline carriers became less interested in support-



Photo Courtesy of U.S. Air Force

ing these requirements separately from the City Pair Program. The recruit's requirements also changed to predominantly individual instead of group travel. DTMO

determined that GSA’s City Pairs covered over 90 percent of the required routes.

The benefits of using the City Pair fares include eliminating ticketing restrictions, reducing unused reservations, and removing ticketing time limit rules that could not be met for recruit travel. In addition, the abundance of City Pair carriers have increased flight availability in a cost-effective manner by eliminating the need to use full coach unrestricted fares.

While the PSRO still exists for ground transportation, DTMO’s adoption of the Contract City Pair Program for recruit travel has provided needed flexibility and helps ensure that recruits reach initial training on time.

DTMO is continually looking for additional ways to improve the support and movement of recruits. We have partnered with Military Entrance Processing Command (MEPCOM) to collect travel data and revise travel process flows and regulatory guidance. DTMO coordinates with MEPS Commercial Travel Offices to standardize workflow procedures and monitor successful completion of air travel. We are also positioning the Recruit Travel and Assistance Program for the future implementation of MEPCOM initiatives, such as the Hometown Shipping Program. Currently being piloted across the Services in several locations, this program allows enlistees to travel directly from their hometown to initial training, eliminating the need to physically go through MEPS. The Hometown Shipping Program will be well-served under the City Pair Program because of the range of flights across the country.



Photo Courtesy of U.S. Army

# Military Bus Program Offers Safe and Cost-Effective Transportation

While most DoD commercial transportation needs are met through air travel, buses offer a flexible, accessible, and adaptable alternative. With more than 400 bus, van, and limousine carriers participating in the Military Bus Program, DoD offers access to safe and cost-effective ground transportation. Last year, over 1,400 bus moves for approximately 100,000 passengers were arranged through DTMO on behalf of the Military Services.

DTMO manages the Military Bus Program, which ensures that commercial bus, van, and limousine companies offering charter service provide safe vehicles that consistently meet DoD-prescribed standards of service. The Military Bus Agreement is the foundation of the program. It establishes the specific terms, conditions, and standards that a carrier must meet and abide by



when providing transportation for DoD passengers. Transportation Coordinators and individuals arranging DoD-sponsored passenger travel must use the DoD-approved carrier list to arrange for transportation within their routing authority.

DoD ground transportation requirements are extensive

and can range from interstate transportation, transfer to and from airports, and movement between facilities, as well as for military exercises, redeployments, and special events. The Military Bus Program was established to help meet these needs. It offers an adaptable form of transportation that reaches remote locations, and meets mission requirements that cannot otherwise be accommodated by other types of transportation. Carriers offer special equipment and baggage capabilities, and can operate directly from military installations. This is a significant advantage that is often more cost-effective.

To be considered for the program, carriers must have one year of passenger transportation experience and successfully pass a pre-qualification safety inspection. Participating carriers must also undergo rigorous onsite safety inspections that include facility, terminal, and equipment inspections by the Passenger Safety Inspection Program (PSIP) personnel every two years. Un-scheduled safety inspections are also conducted as part of DTMO's monitoring process for continued compliance. With fewer than sixty percent of applicants passing pre-qualification inspections, the PSIP has helped establish a core base of highly qualified passenger carriers.

For more information on the Military Bus Program visit DTMO's website at [www.defensetravel.dod.mil](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil) or send questions to [Milbus@dtmo.pentagon.mil](mailto:Milbus@dtmo.pentagon.mil).

*Did you know...*  
 Carriers participating in the Military Bus Program were requested to transport Washington Air National Guard Band members to the 2009 Presidential Inauguration.

## DTMO Works to Wrap Up Travel Card Transition

Although the Government Travel Charge Card Program (GTCC) officially transitioned to a new vendor at the end of November, significant coordination is still taking place behind the scenes. DTMO is actively working with Bank of America® to complete closeout activities, as well as working with Citi® to introduce cardholders to the new resources and tools now available.

### Reminders for Cardholders

While cardholders were directed to activate new cards last year, some cards remain un-activated and are in danger of not being activated at all. To activate your card, please call 1-888-514-2922 or visit [www.citimanager.com/DoDTravel](http://www.citimanager.com/DoDTravel).

In addition, cardholders should take the necessary steps to settle any credits or balances on their Bank of America account. To obtain an account balance, contact your Agency Program Coordinator (APC) or Bank of America Customer Service. Payments can be made online through *My Easy Payment*, by calling customer service, or by mailing directly to Bank of America. Bank of America has the right to turn account information over to collection bureaus if the account balance remains unpaid. This

**Bank of America**

- **Customer Service:**  
1-800-472-1424
- **Online Payments:**  
[www.MyEasyPayment.com](http://www.MyEasyPayment.com)
- **Mail payments to:**  
Bank of America  
P.O. Box 15732,  
Wilmington, DE 19886-5732

# FOCUS on the Traveler

could adversely affect the cardholder's credit report and could have a potential adverse impact on future security clearance determination.

If accounts have a credit, cardholders should contact Bank of America Customer Service to request a refund. If, after 150 days, a refund is not requested, Bank of America will automatically send it to the address on file. If all attempts to refund the credit balance are exhausted, the balance will be turned over to the state of the address on file with Bank of America.

### New Vendor Brings Innovative Tools and Resources

Citi offers numerous resources and tools that make it easier to manage and use the new card. As a previous SmartPay provider, Citi has ten years of experience in serving over 200 government organizations. Citi's excellent customer service and innovative solutions for cardholders and program managers are now available to the DoD travel community.

- **CitiDirect** - Citi offers cardholders the flexibility to manage their travel card accounts online. Through a single sign-on web portal, CitiDirect, cardholders can easily review account information, update their profiles, view statements, and make payments online. Through CitiDirect, cardholders can subscribe to receive email alerts from Citi that help them stay abreast of any changes to the use of cards.

### • Customer Service - To

accommodate the large number of cardholders within DoD, Citi opened a state-of-the-art facility dedicated to supporting DoD. It is staffed by dedicated customer service representatives providing support 24 hours a day, 7 days a

**Citi**

- **Customer Service:**  
1-800-200-7056
- **Online Account Management via CitiDirect:**  
<http://home.cards.citidirect.com>
- **Mail payments to:**  
Citi Government Card Services  
P.O. Box 6575  
The Lakes, Nevada 88901-6575

week, available to cardholders worldwide.

- **Training** - DTMO provides travel card training and has partnered with Citi to provide training on CitiDirect. Training courses include:
  - **Travel Card 101** - For cardholders, Component Program Managers (CPMs), and APCs
  - **Travel Card Program Management** - for APCs, CPMs
  - **CitiDirect Electronic Access System (EAS) Training** - for APCs

For more information or to register for courses, visit DTMO's Travel Explorer (TraX), [www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Passport](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Passport).

The DTMO staff is enthusiastic about working with Citi in providing the most useful tools and resources for cardholders and program managers. We share the common goal of improving the DoD travel charge card program and improving choice and control for the traveler.



## DTS Helpful Hints

### Common DTS Errors

Upon return from a TDY trip, travelers must submit a travel voucher (or claim) to update the estimated expenses approved in the travel authorization. An updated voucher should be submitted within 5 business days of return. In addition, you must electronically (by scan or fax) attach your receipts. The Internal Revenue Service requires that a receipt for all lodging costs and any individual expense totaling \$75 or more (this includes rental car, airline, and rail tickets, even if arranged thru DTS). Be sure to check your local business rules as they may require receipts for purchases less than \$75. The authorizing official must review the receipts and

### DTS Update

Over the next year, DTS will incorporate several software enhancements, including new trip types and a Permanent Duty Travel (PDT) module, and address several high-priority software issues.

**Release 6** will introduce several Special Circumstance Travel trip types. Many of the trip types will improve reporting, while others introduce restrictions on the normal DTS process. The restrictions on transportation and per diem enforce the regulations for certain special leave, visitation, and dependent student travel situations. The release will also incorporate enhancements to the current

verify the claim before approving payment.

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) audits paid travel vouchers. The most common lodging mistakes include:

- Claiming lodging costs on both the Per Diem Entitlements screen and as a non-mileage expense
- Failing to update the estimated daily lodging cost with actual daily cost
- Failing to split the total cost of lodging when sharing a room with another traveler also on travel orders
- Claiming OCONUS lodging taxes as a non-mileage expense when they should be part of the daily total entered on the Per Diem Entitlements screen

The most common rental car mistakes include:

- Not updating the estimated total cost with actual cost
- Claiming rental car expenses while on leave in conjunction with

travel reservation function, such as:

- Using the traveler's preferred airport instead of the one closest to the starting location
- Allowing the use of frequent guest and rental car programs, similar to the current frequent flyer features
- Including "Other Transportation" in the flow control when indicated in the original itinerary

**Release 7** will incorporate new functionality to facilitate military members' Permanent Duty Travel (PDT). It will provide members and families an online interface to make PDT and lodging reservations. The functionality will support most facets of PDT to include leave, temporary duty en-

TDY/TAD (this also violates the agreement DoD has with rental car companies)

- Claiming rental car costs as a non-mileage expense when the car was reserved through DTS
- Claiming non-reimbursable expense items (e.g., optional insurance while on CONUS TDY or a GPS)

DFAS estimates that 89 percent of total incorrect payments could be prevented by reviewing the required receipts submitted with the voucher. Several resources are available that provide guidance on how to properly review and submit vouchers through DTS, including demonstrations, quick reference guides, and FAQs located in Travel Explorer (TraX).

The General Services Administration (GSA) has decreased the mileage reimbursement rates for privately owned automobiles, motorcycles, and airplanes when used for official travel.

As of January 1, 2009, the following new rates are in effect:

- Privately Owned Automobiles: \$0.55
- Motorcycles: \$0.52
- Airplanes: \$1.24

Please ensure the expenses on your documents reflect the updated rates. Previously approved documents may need to be amended.

route, advances, partial settlements, final payments, and debt collection. With the improved interface, travelers will be able to enter itinerary information to calculate PDT allowances and receive timely payments via split disbursement. The process will support the current accounting structures and provide specialized routing of the PDT documents for review and approval.

## Why Fly America?

The Fly America Act (Section 5 of the International Air Transportation Fair Competitive Practices Act of 1974 (49 U.S.C. 1517)) requires that, with limited exceptions, all foreign air travel that is federally funded be performed on U.S.-certified air carriers.

The law requires that foreign air travel, including transportation of personal effects or property, that is funded by the Federal Government be performed on U.S. flag air carriers to the extent service by these carriers is available. Non-availability of a U.S.-flag air carrier must be documented or the costs for a foreign-flag air carrier will not be reimbursed. Foreign flag carriers may be used if done under a code-share arrangement with a U.S. airline.

General exceptions to the act are as follows: use of foreign air carrier service is necessary if a U.S. flag air carrier that is otherwise available cannot provide the air transportation needed; or use of U.S. flag air carrier service will not accomplish the agency's mission.

Booking travel through the Commercial Travel Office ensures compliance with the Fly America Act.

For the most current information on the Fly America Act, refer to the Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR)/Joint Travel Regulations (JTR).

## About Premium Class Travel

DoD policy requires coach (economy)-class accommodations for all official government travel. Travel in premium class (first & business) at government expense is permitted on an exception-only basis when fully justified and approved by the appropriate premium class authority, as stated in the Joint Federal Travel Regulation (U3125) and Joint Travel Regulation (C2204).

It is the traveler's responsibility to receive proper approval for premium class travel ticket issuance. The Commercial Travel Office (CTO) will not issue premium class travel tickets without proper authorization. Additionally, CTOs must report the issuance of premium class tickets in accordance with applicable commercial travel contracts.

For additional information regarding premium class travel, contact your Transportation Office.

Online check-in is the fastest and easiest way to check-in for airline flights. To avoid long lines at the airport, travelers can check-in from their home or office computer and print a boarding pass. For more information about online check-in, please visit airline websites.

## What's New @ DTMO

### 2009 Defense Travel Administrator Seminar Announced

DTMO is pleased to announce the 2009 Defense Travel Administrator (DTA) seminar. DTA seminars, to be held annually, will provide the latest information on DoD travel, the Defense Travel System (DTS), and training tools to assist DTAs with their travel-related duties. This year's seminar will be held in Washington, D.C. on April 14-16, 2009.

The 2009 seminar will feature several general sessions, including:

- DTS Functionality (current/planned)
- Customer Support Services
- Commercial Travel Office Services and Programs

In addition, several more detailed breakout sessions will be offered, including:



- New Training Resources
- Overview of DTS Troubleshooting Course
- Debt Management
- General DoD Travel Questions
- DTS Change Requests
- DTS Lines of Accounting & Budget
- Reorganization in DTS
- Travel Assistance Center

Seats are limited. If you are interested in attending, please contact your DTS Service/Agency Program Management

Office. Additional information about the event is available at [www.defensetravel.dod.mil](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil).



## Using Hotel Tax Exemption Forms

Government travelers on official business receive considerable advantages in comparison to their corporate counterparts. However, official travelers may not always be aware of all the benefits that are available. Savings range from discounted air fare and competitive car rental rates, to exemption from the payment of hotel lodging taxes.

Some states offer tax exemption for hotel lodging. To receive this exemption, present a completed state tax exemption form to the hotel clerk upon arrival and ensure that state taxes are not included on your bill upon departure.

The forms are located at: [www.gsa.gov/statetaxforms](http://www.gsa.gov/statetaxforms). Click on the link, access the form for the state to which you are traveling, and bring the form with you on your next trip to take advantage of these savings.



## Resources Available to Support Travel Instruction

DTMO plays an active role in providing an integrated DoD travel training program on a range of travel-related topics. We offer materials to assist Defense Travel Administrators and instructors with presenting travel-related training.

Conveniently formatted for formal classroom or web-conferencing presentations, instructor materials include instructor guides and supporting PowerPoint presentations. Student guides are also available for training held in a classroom setting. All materials can be customized for teleconferencing or desk-side presentations.

- **Instructor Guides (for classroom and distance learning settings)** – useful for guiding an instructor through presenting a course. Guides for use in a classroom setting include exercises, relevant examples, and guidance on whether a discussion or using a flip chart may be most helpful in explaining a point. Other useful features include definitions, acronyms and abbreviations, and approximate duration for each section. Additionally, the guide includes references to slide titles and numbers of the accompanying PowerPoint presentation that allow an instructor to display the relevant slides when discussing various sections of the course. Instructor guides for distance learning include a script and guidance on using the accompanying slide presentation, as well as, suggestions on when to use online highlighting tools.
- **Supporting PowerPoint Presentation (for classroom and distance learning settings)** – can be enhanced



to emphasize command, or organization-specific procedures and unique travel situations.

- **Student Guides (for classroom settings only)** – provide relevant examples and activities that will test participants’ understanding of the subject matter in a classroom setting. The guide also includes useful features such as important notes, a list of acronyms and abbreviations used, and additional pages for taking notes.

Instructor materials can be accessed through the Knowledge Center in Travel Explorer (TraX) ([www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Passport](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Passport)). Select the Search feature in the Knowledge Center and enter “instructor” for a complete listing of instructor materials. If you do not have a TraX account, please register for easy access to travel support instruction materials, and other travel resources and tools. Instructor materials are updated when new functionality is implemented in DTS. Users can select the “Notify Me” button at the bottom of the TraX page to be notified when new or updated materials become available.

**Defense Travel Dispatch**

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