

Defense Travel Dispatch

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The DoD Center for Travel Excellence

A Message from the DTMO Director

Are we getting the best prices and quality of service? Even savvy travelers find it hard to stay ahead of the game. In this *travel smart* edition of the Dispatch, we offer a playbook of travel tips and ideas for traveling more efficiently. Learn how to boost Government Travel Charge Card rebates, traps to avoid when renting cars, snags when reserving air travel, tips to avoid the middle seat, and much more.

In this resource-constrained environment, DoD must continue to travel to meet mission. Change is already afoot. DTMO has reviewed statutes, policies, business processes, and the way we source travel services to make it more affordable and efficient. Our solutions are vetted through governance; line up with industry best practices; simplify outdated, complex policies; increase compliance; reduce the cost of travel, and ultimately provide the traveler with an enriched experience. Transforming travel is evolutionary, not an event.

Become a savvy traveler, and/or resourceful travel manager, read more to learn how.

— Harvey Johnson, Director, DTMO

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About the Defense Travel Management Office

The Defense Travel Management Office 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 and station/housing allowances.

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 allowance and entitlement program management.

Are you a savvy traveler?

A guide to traveling smarter while on official travel

It is no secret that travel is not as glamorous as it once was; in fact, it can be rather inconvenient for some. In this edition, we have outlined some helpful hints and tricks of the trade to make official travel a little easier.

AIR

Understand airline fares.

It is important to understand airline fares so that you can be aware of the benefits and limitations of each. In DTS, flights are organized by tab by the type of fares. It is policy that travelers use government contracted fares (i.e., the GSA City Pair Program) when available (tab 1, 2), unless an exception applies, in which case travelers can select flights from tabs 3, 4, and 5. Tabs in DTS are arranged in the following tab format:



1. **GSA Contract Airfare w/ Limited Availability** (also known as “_CA”). Offers the same flexibility as the GSA Contract fares (YCA) but has a deeper discount because these are capacity controlled so the number of seats that the Government can purchase is limited.
2. **GSA Contract Airfare** (also known as “YCA”). Government contracted fares that offer considerable discount and flexibility when compared to commercial fares that are available to the general public. Government contract fares, known as GSA City Pair fares, are refundable/changeable, have no advance purchase/ticketing requirement, and have no capacity controls so there is no limit to the number of seats that the Government can purchase.
3. **Other Gov’t Airfare** (also known as “DG” or “CATZ”). These are non-contract Government fares that include discounted Government fares (DG) or Category Z (CATZ), and constructed City Pair fares. The discounted Government fares and Category Z fares are competitive airfares available to Government travelers on official travel. The cost may be the same or less than a GSA contract City Pair fare, but requires justification and approval during pre-audit section of DTS if a GSA City Pair fare is available but not used. Constructed City Pair fares are displayed under this tab when there is no contract City Pair between the origin and destination but one can be constructed by adding a connection. For example, a flight from Washington, DC to Santa Fe, New Mexico may have no City Pair fares available; however, if seats are available, adding a connection in Chicago will result in a lower fare.
4. **Other Airfare.** These fares are available to the general public. These fares often cost more than Contract City Pair or non-contract fares, and may have advance purchase requirements or cancellation fees. If a City Pair fare is available, selection of a flight under this tab will require the traveler to justify the selection during pre-audit section of DTS.
5. **AltGSA.** In cases where there are no Government-contract flights (City Pairs), DTS will search for an alternate airport within an 80-mile radius of the TDY destination to locate Government-contracted flights.

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Use Restricted Fares, when possible.



Many DoD travelers frequently ask why they can't use low airfares that they find on Internet travel sites. The truth is, under the right circumstances you can purchase lower-cost, restricted airfares for official travel – but DoD policy requires tickets for official travel be purchased through the contracted Commercial Travel Office (CTO). To do so, you must first get approval from your travel Authorizing Official (AO) who must complete the Restricted Airfare

Checklist (as required by the JFTR/JTR). Often, a restricted airfare may be non-refundable, usually has costly change-fee penalties, and has advance purchase and ticketing requirements. The Restricted Airfare Checklist walks an AO through a series of questions to determine if the use of a restricted fare is both cost effective and meets mission requirements. Authorization for use of restricted fares must be obtained on a case-by-case basis; blanket authorization and justification for use of restricted airfares is prohibited.

If you want to use a restricted fare:

1. Contact your AO to determine feasibility and gain approval.
2. Book restricted airfares through DTS by requesting CTO Assistance. Provide as much information as possible such as airline, flight number, departure time, and the fare quoted. Be sure to indicate that you are requesting a restricted fare.
3. When you receive your itinerary from your CTO, check for guidance regarding advanced ticketing requirements and information regarding penalties/fees for change and cancellation. Immediately contact your AO with your travel authorization number (TANUM) and advise him/her to approve in accordance the advance-ticketing requirement.
4. Then, when you receive your "Approved" email, follow local business rules for notifying the CTO to issue the ticket. When contacting the CTO, provide the six-digit Passenger Name Record (PNR)/GDS locator number. You must contact your CTO to request ticket issuance because the CTO doesn't have the approved reservation for ticketing until three days prior to departure.
5. If your travel plans change, cancel your reservation as soon as possible. It is vital that the ticket reservation is cancelled prior to flight departure.



Avoid the dreaded middle seat.

Ever wonder why you always get "stuck" with a middle seat while on official travel? What you may not realize is that there are several variables, outside of the government's control, that can lead to a middle seat. While the DTS reservation module provides DoD travelers with the ability to view and reserve commercial travel, it does not control airline seating. Commercial airlines control the airline inventory and seating that appears in DTS. Limited supply and high demand of flight inventory make it difficult to obtain a "good" seat assignment in advance.

It's an industry practice to block more and more "preferred" seats such as window, aisle, and bulkhead seats for pre-assignment. These seats are then offered to frequent flyers, handicapped travelers, and unaccompanied minors or sold through upgrade fees or for higher cost fares. Did you know that an airline could provide confirmed reservations without providing specific seat assignments? Whenever possible, make sure you are booked and ticketed with a seat assignment prior to leaving your home or duty station.

Tips for Avoiding the Middle Seat

- **Book reservations as far in advance as possible.** The earlier you book, the more likely preferred seats will be available.
- **Do not rely on the seating charts in DTS.** Select an aisle or window from the dropdown menu.
- **Review the email itinerary received by the CTO** to ensure that an aisle or window seat was confirmed.
- If you can't confirm an aisle or window seat, **check seat availability via airline website or contact airline directly.**
- **Enroll in frequent flyer programs.** Status in frequent flyer programs often gives travelers better seating options.
- **If available, check in on-line the night before your flight.** Many airlines open blocked seating as early as 24 hours in advance of scheduled departure.
- **Arrive at the airport early.** The airline may release pre-assigned and preferred seats the day of the flight, which would allow you to select a seat at no additional cost. Also, fellow travelers may have changed their seat assignments since you last checked seating options, so better seats may be available. Some airlines may also sell preferred seats for a small upgrade fee when you check your baggage. If you chose to take the upgrade, you are responsible for the additional cost (not reimbursable under the JFTR/JTR).

Upgrade your airline seat.

DoD policy requires economy-/coach-class travel accommodations be used when performing official government travel* but you may be able to upgrade your seat if you want to use your frequent flyer miles or purchase an upgrade on your own. However, you should be aware of a few conditions:

- Terms and conditions for upgrades vary by airline. In some cases, certain fare classes aren't eligible for upgrades and the method/process for requesting upgrades vary. Check the terms and conditions on airline websites.
- Upgrades are subject to capacity controls and availability, which may mean that upgrades are limited or not even offered on your flight.
- Upgrades should only be requested after the ticket is formally issued, which is typically three days prior to the flight for approved travel authorizations. Most travelers are unaware of this process because it is seamless to the traveler. If you make an upgrade prior to ticket issuance, the CTO may be required to cancel your upgraded ticket and rebook a coach fare in order to issue the ticket. This may result in a higher cost to the government if the original fare is no longer available and the CTO has to book a higher cost fare. You are able to request that the CTO issue the ticket early, however, it may result in a CTO Assist fee.



If you want to upgrade your seat:

- **Check your local business rules.** Your local business rules may outline policies and procedures for upgrades including advanced ticket issuance.
- **If using your frequent flier miles, contact the airline directly after the ticket has been issued.** CTOs do not have access to your information such as

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pin numbers and personal information to do this for you. Remember, upgrades should only be requested *after* the ticket is issued.

- **Arrive at the airport early.** Airlines may release “preferred” seats the day of the flight so be sure to check the seating options when checking in. Also, upgrades for a fee may be available the day of the flight.

** DoD policy states that Other Than Economy-/Coach-Class Transportation (any travel other than economy-/coach-class) at government expense is permitted on an exception basis only. For more information, see the JFTR/JTR, Appendix H.*

Get through airport security faster.

Did you know that as a Service member or DoD civilian, you are entitled to expedited security screening at over 100 domestic airports? DoD is able to use TSA’s Pre✓™ program, which allows participants to keep on their shoes, belt, and light jacket, and leave laptops and 3-1-1 compliant liquids in their carry-on bag when going through dedicated Pre✓™ airport security lanes. This means faster security lines! The program is currently open to Service members (including Reservists, National Guardsmen, and members of the Coast Guard) and will be expanded to DoD civilians (with a valid CAC) in mid-April 2014.

To participate, save your DoD ID number (10-digit number found on the back of your Common Access Card (CAC) as the “Known Traveler Number” in your DTS profile. If making a reservation through a CTO, provide your DoD ID number when asked to verify your Secure Flight Information (name, date of birth, gender). Ask the CTO to save your DoD ID number as part of your permanent profile. [See the article on page 14 for more information.](#)

Be aware of the 72-Hour Auto Cancel Policy.

Last year, the airlines instituted a policy that requires all travel authorizations that include air travel (international and domestic) be approved and ticketed at least 72 hours in advance of the scheduled flight departure to avoid airline reservations from being cancelled. If you are making travel plans WITHIN 72 hours of departure, ensure your authorization is approved and tickets issued within 24 hours of creation to avoid cancellation. If making plans WITHIN 24 hours of departure, authorizations must be approved and ticketed at least 6 hours prior to flight departure time to avoid cancellation.

It is important to note that while a reservation may exist, it is not purchased (known as “ticketed”) until the Authorizing Official (AO) approves the travel authorization and the Commercial Travel Office (CTO) tickets the reservation. This means that if a travel authorization is not approved at least 72 hours in advance of travel, you could arrive at the airport without a ticket or a reservation in the airline’s system.

If airline reservations are cancelled, you will be notified via email or phone by your Commercial Travel Office and should follow your normal ticketing process to rebook the flight. Travelers are not advised to rebook at the airline counter because counter agents are often not familiar with GSA’s City Pair Program and may book you on a full priced fare at a much higher cost.

Tips for Avoiding Cancellation

- Take your travel itinerary with you to the airport because it provides contact information for your Commercial Travel Office, as well as, reservation details to help you rebook.
- Monitor the status of travel documents and ensuring that travel authorizations are approved.

RENTAL CAR



Look for “GARS” to receive all of the benefits.

When renting a car for official travel, be sure that you receive all the benefits that come with participating in the US Government Rental Car Program. Even though you may be on official business travel and booked the government rate, you must ensure that “Government Rate” or “Government Administrative Rate Supplement (GARS)” (a \$5.00 per day fee) is listed on the rental contract at the time of pick-up.

This qualifies you for program benefits such as insurance at no additional charge. Even if you present or pay with a Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) or book your car through the Defense Travel System (DTS)/ Commercial Travel Office, the rental contract needs to contain the \$5 per day fee.

While booking through DTS or a CTO is recommended, travelers can also participate in the program by going directly to a participating rental car company counter. However, to be covered under the terms of the program, you must show proof of being on official travel, and ensure the government rate is booked and “government rate” or “GARS” fee is listed on the rental contract.

If GARS is *not* listed on the contract, verify that you are renting through an approved vendor at a participating location because not all locations of a participating company may participate in the program. If the vendor and location participate and the official government rate is available for the reserved vehicle, ask that “GARS” be added to your contract. Under the program, rental car companies must change the rate to an official government rate at the request of the traveler at any time prior to picking up the vehicle. Be prepared to show official documentation to prove that you are in official travel status. Additionally, Government rates may not be offered for all types of vehicles at participating program locations, so you should also verify with the agent that an official government rate is applicable for the vehicle reserved.

Share a ride to get a larger car.

Although travel regulations state that travelers must select a compact rental car, the Authorizing Official may authorize an appropriately sized vehicle, IAW mission requirements, when a compact car does not meet the requirement. This means that multiple travelers sharing a single vehicle is sound justification for the approval of a larger vehicle. Ride sharing may not always be possible due to schedules or the location of lodging, but in the current fiscal environment where travel budgets are constrained, ride sharing is a cost effective option that results in a more comfortable ride.



US Rental Car Program Benefits

- Collision/damage waiver
- Liability insurance
- Unlimited mileage (except for one-way rentals)
- Confirmed reservation will be held for a minimum of 2 hours after renter's scheduled flight arrival time (during business hours)
- No fee for additional authorized drivers
- No fee for underage drivers
- No blackout periods
- If size/class reserved is not available, company will offer an upgraded vehicle at the same cost

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LODGING

Use tax exempt forms.

Did you know that in some states Government Travel Charge Cards (GTCC) are exempt from paying hotel lodging taxes?

State laws dictate if a location charges state tax. In some locations, state forms are required to be completed by the traveler and submitted to the hotel upon arrival while in others, no form is necessary.

It is a good idea to call your hotel ahead of travel to verify state tax law compliance. If your hotel does not comply with state tax law, it is recommended that you chose an alternate hotel. For more information and to download tax-exempt forms, go to: <http://smartpay.gsa.gov/about-gsa-smartpay/tax-information/state-response-letter>.

Tax Exempt Locations

No Form Required	Form Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alaska • Delaware • Kansas • Massachusetts • Missouri • Oregon • US Virgin Islands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Florida • New York • Pennsylvania • Texas • Wisconsin • Puerto Rico

Try a government or commercial preferred lodging program.

Instead of booking directly with a hotel, try one of these programs that offer cost savings since rates are at or below per diem. (*Note: These programs are not considered Government quarters.*)

- **FedRooms** - DoD travelers are permitted to use the General Services Administration (GSA) FedRooms program, which offers specially negotiated government hotel rates *at or below* per diem. The program also offers benefits such as no early checkout fees, no deposits, no hidden fees and travelers can cancel a reservation until 4pm on the day of arrival without penalty. For more information on GSA FedRooms log on to: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/105396> or <http://www.fedrooms.com>. To obtain these benefits, you must reserve a *FedRooms rate*, not a government rate that is usually at per diem. Hotels offering FedRooms rates can be reserved through DTS.
- **The Lodging Success Program (LSP)** - When traveling to Fort Lee, Fort Sam and Charlottesville, LSP provides DoD official travelers with quality commercial hotels when installation lodging is unavailable. On average, room rates are 20% below per diem. Additional program information is available at: http://www.armymwr.com/travel/lodging/lodging_success.aspx.
- **The Navy Elite Lodging Program** – Offers hotels with rates that are at or below the local per diem rate. In general, all locations are within a 5-mile radius or a 15-minute driving distance during rush hour to the DoD facility of assignment. Navy travelers can contact their CWTSato Travel agent for reservations.
- **The Privatized Army Lodging (PAL)** – This program is a partnership between the Army and private industry to improve the condition of on-post lodging facilities and provide for their long-term sustainment. The Army has initiated the program at 22 installations. Hotel rates at the converted facilities are below per diem for official travel. Reservations can be booked at www.ihgarmyhotels.com.



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Use an extended stay lodging facility.

If you are going to be TDY at one location for more than 3 nights, consider an extended stay lodging facility. Accommodations are normally larger in size, but the cost per night is cheaper, saving your organization's travel funds. Additionally, in many locations, long-term stays are exempt from certain lodging taxes. Requirements vary by state so be sure to inquire when you reserve your room.

Service members must check Military lodging facilities first.

With a few exceptions, Service members TDY to a military installation are required to check availability with the military lodging facility. If a room isn't available, Service members should receive a certificate of non-availability number so you get a proper reimbursement for staying in commercial lodging. Use the link in the left side of the DTS homepage for easy access to military lodging facilities.

Ensure your lodging costs match your receipt.

When completing your TDY voucher, make sure your actual lodging costs match your hotel receipt. If necessary, update the costs or the Per Diem Entitlement screen. Remember, taxes for CONUS and non-foreign OCONUS locations are a separate non-mileage reimbursable expense. Taxes in foreign OCONUS locations are already included in the cost of lodging that was entered on the Per Diem Entitlements screen. All hotel receipts are required to be submitted as a substantiating document with your voucher.

Government Travel Charge Card

Use your GTCC for all travel-related expenses including meals!

Policy: The DoD Financial Management Regulation (DoD FMR), Vol. 9, Chpt. 3 states that the GTCC must be used by all DoD personnel (military or civilian) to pay for ALL costs related to official Government travel (for a list of exemptions, refer to the DoD FMR, Vol. 9, Chpt. 3, Para 0306), which is defined as travel under official orders while performing duties such as, temporary duty (TDY) and permanent change of station (PCS) (where applicable).

Build a playground just by using your GTCC.

It is true that the GTCC provides you with many benefits, but what you may not know is that your organization also benefits from its use – far beyond the typical benefits you would think. DoD receives rebates based on usage/sales volume and how quickly charges are

Did you Know . . .

The GTCC provides you with lots of benefits and valuable safeguards including:

- No out of pocket expenses
- No over limit fees
- No annual fee
- Extended payment terms up to 180 days
- Additional insurance for rental car collision damage

and much more!

paid. These rebates are redirected back to your organization and have been used to offset the cost of travel to your organization, support other travel-related activities or fund other initiatives, all of which are critical in today's resource constrained environment. For example, some Services use their rebates to fund projects such as purchasing new fitness equipment for fitness centers, updating scoring equipment at bowling centers, construction projects for marquees, picnic areas, and playground equipment. Rebates have also been used to make updates to

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technology like by providing new computers, printers and software, prior to the three-year average turnaround.

Ensure your GTCC is ready to go when you are.

Did you know that some organizations deactivate cards when travelers are not authorized for official travel? When you get ready to book travel, ensure your card is authorized to accept charges by calling the Citi customer service number on the back of your card. Simply follow the prompts and the automated system will advise you if your account is activated for use or if it is deactivated and transactions will be declined. If it is deactivated, contact your Agency Program Coordinator (APC) immediately as your Commercial Travel Office (CTO) will be unable to ticket your reservation. This could result in booking delays or worse, arriving at the airport to find that your ticket wasn't purchased and/or your reservation no longer exists.

Sign up for a CitiManager account.

CitiManager, the online interface for GTCC account management, gives you access to your account so you can see recent account activity including unbilled transactions, view monthly statements (current and past), make payments, update contact information, manage email/alert notifications and much more. When you're unable to access a computer, CitiManager Mobile allows you some of the same account access right from your mobile phone.

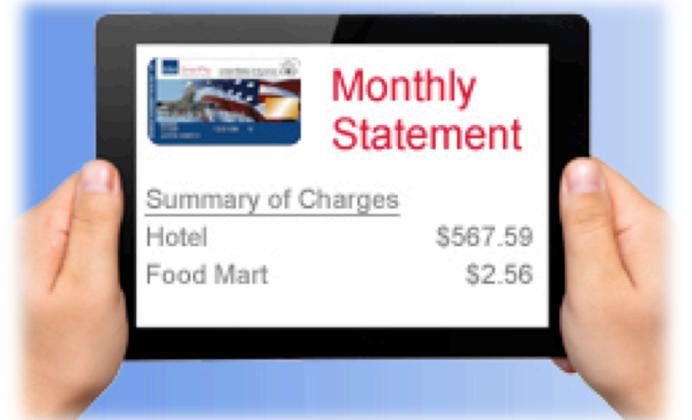
Online and mobile capabilities afford you the ability to access your account information at any time, from anywhere in the world.



- **Citi text and email alerts.** It is also a good idea to add your cell phone number to your CitiManager profile and elect to receive email and/or text alerts (SMS alerts). Citi will send you notifications when your monthly statement is ready, when payments are due, past due, or received as well as other relevant information about your card. (*Note: Text message fees are not a reimbursable expense*)
- **Paperless statements.** Through CitiManager, you can elect to receive your monthly statement online instead of waiting on a paper statement to arrive in the mail. Monthly statements are available within 48 hours of the close of the billing cycle and Citi will send a text or email notification when it is ready to be viewed online. This eliminates the potential for delayed payments due to paper statements getting lost in the mail. You can also assign an alternate person like a spouse to access your account (not authorized to transact) and receive statement notifications, which can be helpful if you need to make a payment and are on extended TDY.

CitiManager helps travelers manage their GTCC accounts and is a useful tool for savvy travelers. To sign up for an account or to access CitiManager, go to:

<https://home.cards.citidirect.com/CommercialCard/Cards.html>. Additional information is available on the DTMO website at: <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/cardholder.cfm>.



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Modify your split disbursement.

Currently, DTS automatically sends a portion of your travel reimbursement (split disburses) to GTCC account for purchases related to air, hotel and rental car. DTS will also split disburse any expense identified as an expense. When you complete your travel voucher in DTS, make sure you have “GOVCC” as the form of payment for all expenses you charged to your GTCC. This will ensure Citi receives sufficient funds to pay your account balance. If you are unsure of what you charged, you can check your GTCC account transactions online through CitiManager or go to the Non-Mileage Expense screen tab and click on the charge card link.

Other

Review your DTS profile.

It is very important that the information in your DTS profile is up-to-date. If it isn't, your travel itinerary may be sent to the wrong email address or your travel reimbursement could be affected. To review or update your profile, log in to DTS and go to Traveler Setup>Update Personal Profile. While it is recommended that you review all sections of your profile, pay particular attention to these fields:

- **GTCC expiration date and card number** – If you've recently received a new GTCC, you must update the card number and/or expiration date in your profile. This is not done automatically.
- **Email address** – Without a current email address on file, you will not receive your trip details (confirmations) or updates on the status of your authorization/voucher.
- **Banking information** – If you recently closed an account, your reimbursement will be delayed.
- **Phone numbers** – In case there is a problem with your travel reservations, your CTO must have a good number to reach you.
- **Billing address**
- **Emergency Contact information**

Monitor the status of your travel documents.

Savvy travelers know that it is necessary to monitor the status of travel documents. Approving Officials (AO) often go on leave or are deployed without arranging for a back up to process travel documents. Knowing the status of your travel documents ensures you'll arrive at the airport with a ticket and that you will receive your reimbursement in a timely fashion.



Take a copy of your travel itinerary with you.

Your travel itinerary contains important information such as flight arrangements, travel reservations/confirmations, as well as, CTO contact information. Be sure to take a copy with you in case you need to make a change or rebook while on travel.

Let your Commercial Travel Office know about other reservations.

If you have a flight booked and contact a CTO to add a rental car, be sure to let the agent know that you already have a reservation in the system. Creating another reservation that is not associated with the first reservation may result in an additional, unnecessary CTO fee.

New Queries added to Travel Policy Compliance Program

Since its inception in 2012, the DoD Compliance Program continues to expand. Initially, the program focused on identifying three of the most common and clear-cut policy compliance errors but over the course of the past year, several queries have been added. Below is a complete list of the queries that are currently part of the program.

- **New!** Government Quarters Used but Maximum Lodging Rate Claimed- identifies when a traveler claims the maximum locality lodging rate on the per diem entitlements screen but stayed in Government quarters at a lower cost.
- **New!** Personal & Mission Expenses – Identifies when a traveler claims a personal or mission related item as a travel expense on the non-mileage expense screen.
- *OCONUS Laundry* – Identifies when a traveler claims laundry/dry-cleaning expenses while TDY in any OCONUS location.
- *Foreign OCONUS Lodging Tax* – Identifies when a traveler claims foreign OCONUS lodging tax as a non-mileage expense.
- *Duplicate Lodging* – Identifies when a traveler claims identical lodging costs on the per diem entitlements screen and as a non-mileage expense.
- *Excess Lodging (Commercial)* – Identifies when a traveler claims additional lodging costs as a non-mileage expense when full locality rate is claimed as per diem.
- *Excess Lodging (Government Quarters)* – Identifies when a Military traveler TDY to an installation with Government quarters claims the default Government Lodging rate of \$55 on the per diem entitlements screen and also claims lodging as a non-mileage expense.

To date, the DoD Travel Policy Compliance Program has identified over **\$3.7M** in potential errors and has collected over **\$900K** worth of overpayments to travelers.

- *Actual Government Lodging Cost Not Incorporated* – Identifies when a traveler claims the default Government lodging rate of \$55 on the per diem entitlements screen but the Government lodging rate at the installation is less than \$55.
- *CONUS Laundry* – Identifies when a Military traveler claims laundry/dry-cleaning expenses while on TDY in CONUS, but was ineligible because the TDY was less than 7 consecutive nights or they exceeded the maximum \$2 per TDY night average.

For more information on the program and the DoD Travel Policy Compliance Program, visit: www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/compliance.

About the Compliance Tool

The Travel Policy Compliance Program relies on an automated application, known as the Travel Policy Compliance Tool, that reviews all DTS travel vouchers in near real time and identifies duplicate or incorrect payments. When an error is identified, the tool automatically notifies the traveler, the Non-DTS Entry Agents (NDEA), and the Authorizing Official who approved the voucher, via an email that includes instructions for correcting the error. The tool will continue to send reminder emails until action is taken.

A Second Look: The Cost Comparison Process



According to the Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR) and Joint Travel Regulations (JTR), when travelers plan to – or have completed – travel over 400 miles one-way (or 800 miles round-trip) by a mode **other than the authorized transportation mode**, they are required to use the cost comparison process. The complete process must be followed to ensure correct reimbursement for travel costs. The following example helps explain the process.

Situation: Harry wants to drive his privately owned conveyance (POC) (i.e., his car) instead of using the standard authorized transportation, which is commercial air for this trip.

1. After using DTS to enter all cost associated with his request to drive his POC, Harry calculates the constructed transportation cost, which:
 - a. Is the amount the Government would have paid for airfare to, from, and between TDY locations, including tax and fees.
 - b. Does not include transportation at TDY locations, such as a rental car.
 - c. Sets the maximum amount Harry can be reimbursed for using a mode **other than the authorized transportation mode** [JFTR, par. U3050-E1 and JTR, par. C3550-E1].
2. To determine if Harry's POC use would benefit the government, his AO considers many things, including whether his use of POC is more economical [JFTR, par. U4775-B7 and JTR, par. C4775-B7] than the total cost of using commercial air. Allowing Harry to drive his car may turn out to be more economical, for example, if the mandate to fly would also require Harry to rent a car at the TDY location.
3. The result of step 2 determines the AO's next action:
 - a. **If POC use does not benefit the Government**, his AO limits Harry's transportation reimbursement to the constructed travel cost. **Note:** As of December 2013 the AO must also deny reimbursement for other en route transportation-related reimbursable expenses such as parking and tolls [JFTR, par. U4710-C and JTR, par. C4710-C]. **OR**
 - b. **If POC use does benefit the Government**, his AO authorizes its use. Since POC is now Harry's authorized transportation mode, regulations requiring reimbursement limitation for travel by **other than the authorized transportation mode** no longer apply.

The Fall 2013 issue of the Dispatch included an article on cost comparisons. In it, we stated that "The new [constructed transportation cost] calculation allows only the cost of the approved transportation mode and the organization's usual Commercial Travel Office (CTO) fee; no other costs are permitted. However, the traveler may alert the Authorizing Official to additional cost avoidances to help them decide whether to allow full reimbursement for the traveler's transportation expenses." This statement was made to highlight a regulatory change in the constructed transportation cost calculation and not to explain the entire cost comparison process. By noting the number of questions we received from our travel community, we realize that this explanation was not the best approach. We offer the following example in hopes that it helps expand the understanding of the cost comparison process. Please note that should apparent conflicts or misunderstandings occur, the authoritative source is always the JFTR/JTR.

Quick Process Summary

A trip has two potential costs:

A= The Government's (constructed) cost, which cannot include a rental car at the TDY site.

B= The cost of the trip the way the traveler wants to do it, which may include a rental car at the TDY site.

Step 1: The traveler creates A and B.

Step 2: The AO decides whether A or B is cheaper.

If A is cheaper = the reimbursement is capped at A.

If B is cheaper = the reimbursement is for full cost of B.

Q: *Why did I pay a higher CTO Fee for a DTS reservation?*

DTMO MAILBOX



A Commercial Travel Office (CTO) Assist Fee is charged when manual intervention is required by the CTO to complete a transaction. Below are some common situations where a CTO Assist fee would be charged for a DTS transaction. In each of these examples, the Passenger Name Record (PNR) was originated in DTS, but the CTO was required to intervene or touch the reservation.

- Traveler used the “Request CTO Assistance” link(s) in lieu of making their reservation.
- Traveler contacted the CTO directly for assistance to change an existing DTS reservation. Assistance may include reservation changes, seat assignments, adding a frequent flyer number or changing the form of payment.
- Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) was suspended, expired, cancelled or inactivated, which resulted in the CTO contacting the travelers or Authorizing Official (AO) /Defense Travel Administrator (DTA) for an alternative form of payment.
- Travel was between an origin and destination where there is no government-contracted City Pair. A CTO is required to perform an additional quality check for alternate routings/fares and to advise the traveler/AO of potential cost savings in the DTS comments.
- An authorization was not approved, which resulted in the traveler, AO or DTA requesting CTO intervention for ticket issuance. For example, if a traveler contacts a CTO over the weekend to have ticket issued on an unapproved DTS authorization, the CTO must manually intervene to obtain DTS or verbal authorization approval.
- DTS PNR remarks (W, X, Y, T, A, and R) to the CTO were not transferred to the PNR.
- Secure Flight Passenger Data (SFPD) did not pass to the PNR.
- Airfare is no longer valid, which requires the CTO to change class of service or assist with alternate flights. This happens with non-contract fares or fares available to the general public.
- There is a DTS system problem, which requires CTO intervention to assist with a temporary workaround solution.
- If a reservation is on Foreign Flag Carrier the CTO is required to perform a quality control procedure to ensure reservations are booked in coach class.



In each of these situations, a CTO Assist fee was charged because the CTO had to manually intervene with the reservation. For more information, contact your local transportation office.

Expedited Airport Security Screening for DoD Personnel



On April 15, 2014, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) will expand its expedited airport security screening program, Pre✓™, to DoD and U.S. Coast Guard civilians. The program is already open to Service members including Reservists, National Guardsmen, and members of the Coast Guard who are traveling on official or leisure travel. Offered at over 100 domestic airports, TSA Pre✓™ allows participants to use dedicated Pre✓™ security lanes where they can keep on their shoes, belt, and light jacket, and leave laptops and 3-1-1 compliant liquids in their carry-on bags.

To participate:

- 1 Locate your DoD ID number.** Your DoD ID number is the 10-digit number found on the back of your Common Access Card (CAC). If your CAC doesn't have a DoD ID number, find it by signing in to the milConnect website (<https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect>) and selecting "My Profile."
- 2 Opt-in to the program through milConnect.** (*Applies to DoD civilians only*) **After April 1,** log in to <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect> and click on the "My Profile" tab. At the top of your profile, click on the "CIV" tab and look for the Personnel Status information box. Click on the TSA Look for the Pre✓™ box and scroll to the bottom of the page and click "submit."
- 3 Add your DoD ID number to your DTS profile.** Log in and select *Traveler Setup > Update Personal Profile* from the tabs at the top of the DTS Welcome screen. Then, select *My TSA Information* from the profile update from the links at the top. Add your DoD ID number as the Known Traveler Number and click "save."
- 4 Ensure your reservation contains your DoD ID number.** If your DoD ID number is part of your DTS profile, it will automatically be part of all of your future TDY airline reservations made through the system. If making a reservation through a Commercial Travel Office, provide your DoD ID number as the "Known Traveler Number" when asked to verify your Secure Flight Information. If making leisure airline reservations, use your DoD ID number as the "Known Traveler Number."

Service members do not need to be in uniform to use the program. Accompanying family members ages 12 and under can be processed through expedited screening as well.

For more information including frequently asked questions, go to www.defensetravel.dod.mil or TSA's website, www.tsa.gov.

DTMO is pleased to announce the

2014 Excellence in Practice Awards

DTMO is pleased to announce the 2014 Excellence in Practice awards, which recognizes top performers in DoD travel for the value and the services they provided during the FY13 year.

This year, the following awards will be given: Awards will be given in the following areas:

- **The Champion** – recognizes a Lead DTA who goes above and beyond in providing monitoring and training to their organization
- **The Elite** – recognizes a local help desk team whose superior efforts result in continuous improvement and outstanding customer care
- **The Icon** – recognizes a major command or agency whose strategies and tactics enhance their travel program capabilities for their subordinate sites

Nomination forms are available at:

<http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/award.cfm>

The 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, which resulted in more efficient and effective travel programs.

**NOMINATIONS DUE
APRIL 30, 2014**



Have a new
@mail.mil
email address?

As the Department transitions to the generic mail.mil email address, it is important to remind travelers to update any travel profiles including:

- **DTS Profile** – This is the most important travel profile to update. Information including flight information is sent to the email address on file. It is also a good time to remind travelers to ensure that their emergency contact information and Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) numbers and expiration dates are up to date.
- **TraX Profile** – An updated email address ensures you'll be able to log in to the system. To update, sign in using your old email address, and click on "User Profile" icon in the top left corner.
- **GTCC CitiManager Account** – CitiManager, Citi's online portal, allows users to access account activity, view monthly statements, make payments and much more. Notifications including payments due, payments past due, payment receive and other relevant information is sent to the email address on file. To update, log on to CitiManager and click "My Profile."



DTMO Launches RSS Feeds

On April 15, 2014, DTMO will launch a series of Rich Site Syndication Feeds, better known as RSS Feeds. RSS feeds provide timely information in an easy to read format that can be delivered directly to your desktop.

We are currently offering the following feeds:

- [General DoD Travel Information](#) – includes travel-related news and information such as, DTS/EWTS downtime, travel program news, transformation initiative updates, and much more.
- [Defense Travel Toolkit for Travel Administrators](#) – offers key messages that should be shared with travelers and Authorizing Officials, as well as, provides information that DTAs need to improve DTS maintenance and training strategies at their organization.
- [Travel Regulations Update](#) – provides updates on changes to the JFTR/JTR and applicable travel regulations.

To access a feed, go to the DTMO website and click on the RSS Feed icon at the bottom of homepage.

To get updates delivered directly to your Outlook inbox, click on the “RSS Feeds” folder in your left folder navigation pane and follow the instructions.

For more information, go to: www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/rss.cfm

Subscribe to stay abreast of the latest Defense travel news and information!

Brush Up On Your Troubleshooting Skills



Defense Travel Administrators (DTAs) are often required to provide troubleshooting for travelers, Authorizing Officials, and for other DTAs. To help address the most common troubleshooting situations, DTMO is pleased to announce a new distance learning class, *Troubleshooting & Prevention for DTAs*.

Description: This class provides DTAs with practical solutions to common troubleshooting situations, such as authorizations stuck at CTO SUBMIT, what to do when a traveler is at the airport without a ticketed reservation, and how to handle personal profiles that cannot be received into a DTS organization. This class also places a strong emphasis on preventative maintenance by recommending best practices, DTS report options, and training strategies.

Format: The class is offered through the DTMO Distance Learning Program via Defense Connect Online (DCO). To register, log in to TraX, go to the Training Center, and select the class titled “*Troubleshooting and Prevention for DTAs*.” If you do not see the course listed, select the **VIEW ALL** radio button at the top. Once you select the **SCHEDULE** button, the listing of available dates will appear to the right.

For a complete listing of upcoming classes, review the 3-month Distance Learning schedule at: <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/Training/DLearningSchedule.pdf>.

About the Defense Travel Dispatch

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