

Defense Travel Dispatch

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The DoD Center for Travel Excellence

A Message from the DTMO Acting Director

Managing through disruption is a challenge, but crisis and fiscal uncertainty also creates opportunity. DTMO cannot maintain status quo and also remain relevant if we do not continue to pursue and work travel and allowance initiatives that are/will reduce travel spend. Using a performance based management approach has had a major impact on strategic decision making and has created new ways to gather and analyze travel information to develop new insights to reduce spend, improve service and engineer breakthrough ideas. By considering efforts to promote greater use of the GTCC to increase rebates, pilots to capture saving opportunities for restricted fares and sourced commercial Defense lodging program, modernization of DTS, and policy simplification – DTMO is driving change to improve travel programs, allowances, regulations, and ultimately bring money back to the Department.

As we all resume a normal schedule, I want to take this opportunity to highlight our efforts during the shutdown. Our wide breadth of responsibilities covers several different aspects. During the shutdown, we:

- Provided after hour support to recruits traveling to their training site
- Arranged bus moves
- Calculated station/housing allowances so that members receive accurate benefits
- Provided interpretation and expertise of travel and transportation allowance regulations to determine what was authorized during the shutdown, to include those allowances extending to family members of fallen Service members
- Provided Commercial Travel Office support
- Supported travelers through the TAC

I encourage you to take a minute to peruse our website and learn more about the scope of services we provide.

— Harvey Johnson, Acting 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.

UPDATE: Travel Policy Compliance Tool Pilot

In December 2012, the Department established an operational travel policy compliance program that ensures travel claims do not exceed reasonable or actual expenses and, minimizes inaccurate, unauthorized, overstated, inflated, or duplicate travel claims. The program uses an automated application, known as the Travel Policy Compliance Tool, to review Defense Travel System (DTS) vouchers in near real time and identify potential improper payments. Managed by the Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO), the Travel Policy Compliance Program has grown beyond its Pilot Phase, which included select organizations from the Services and Defense Agencies. Since implementation, the program has incorporated new data queries and has expanded beyond the organizations in the initial pilot. Another change to the program is the new requirement for organizations to use the associated tool by the end of FY14.

Initially, the tool focused on three error queries for OCONUS laundry, foreign OCONUS lodging tax, duplicate airfare and duplicate lodging. Over the course of the year, additional error queries have been added to expand the program. Below is a complete list of the current queries.

- **OCONUS Laundry:** Traveler claimed laundry/dry cleaning as a non-mileage expense while TDY in any OCONUS location.
- **Foreign OCONUS Lodging Tax:** Traveler claimed foreign OCONUS lodging tax as a non-mileage expense.
- **Duplicate Lodging:** Traveler claimed identical lodging costs on the Per Diem Entitlements screen and as a non-mileage expense.
- **Excess Lodging (Commercial Lodging):** Traveler claimed the maximum lodging amount on the Per Diem Entitlements screen and also claimed additional lodging expenses as a non-mileage expense, but the costs were different.
- **New! - Excess Lodging (Government Quarters):** Military traveler claimed the default

Government lodging rate of \$55 on the Per Diem Entitlements screen *and* also claimed additional lodging expenses as non-mileage expenses.

- **New! - Actual Government Lodging Cost Not Updated:** Traveler claimed 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.
- **New! - CONUS Laundry:** Military traveler claimed laundry/dry cleaning expenses while TDY in CONUS, but was ineligible because the TDY was less than 7 consecutive nights or the costs exceeded the maximum \$2/TDY night average.

Additionally, this past August, the program began reviewing DTS vouchers approved on or after October 1, 2012, to identify potential errors of \$100 or more. With the implementation of this query, the program now reaches those DoD organizations that have not yet implemented the tool.

Participation in the Compliance Program is also steadily increasing with the addition of three Defense Agencies, two Joint Commands and expansion within the Services. In July, a USD(C) memo, "Implementation of the Department of Defense Travel Pay Remediation Plan" mandated the use of the Compliance Tool once Components migrate to Internet Explorer 8. Full implementation across the Department is required by the end of FY14.

The DoD Travel Policy Compliance Program not only ensures travel claims are paid in accordance with regulations and assists the Department with recovering funds, but mitigates budget cuts for travel, improves post pay audits, educates travelers and administrators on travel policy, identifies travel trends, and training needs/opportunities for greater controls in the future.

To date, the tool has identified over **\$1.6M** in potential errors and users have corrected over **\$600K** worth of errors.

Want to learn more about the Compliance Tool?

Take the Distance Learning Webinar – P300: Travel Policy Compliance Tool Administration
Go to [TraX](#) to view the class schedule and to register.

Indicating Conference Travel in DTS

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) outlined a series of new policies and practices for conference sponsorship, hosting, and attendance in order to ensure that Federal funds are used appropriately, and that Agencies continue to reduce spending on conferences, where practicable, as directed in OMB memo M-12-12, “Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations.” In response, the Office of the DoD Deputy Chief Management Officer (DCMO) facilitated changes to the Defense Travel System (DTS) that will assist in tracking and reporting conference attendance and spend in order to meet this requirement.

Additional information on conference/event reporting within a DTS document is available at: http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/Training/Conference_Reporting.pdf. For information on conference guidance, hosting and approval, contact your component representative.

New DTS Functionality

When creating an authorization (or group authorization), the Trip Overview screen now displays a Conference/Event Name section (Figure 1). This section must be completed regardless of the Trip Purpose selected. If travel is not related to a conference/event, select **Not Applicable**.

To indicate a conference/event, select **Search Conference/Event** button. A pop-up window will open and display a list of conferences with dates that correspond with your trip dates. This allows the user to locate the name of the conference and select its **event ID** or select **Other** if the conference is not listed. (Note: A conferences/events will appear on this list only after it is included in the DoD Conference Tool managed by the DCMO and uploaded into DTS.) Imported authorizations and authorizations created using the Trip Template feature will have **Not Applicable** selected as a default.

For local vouchers, the Local Voucher Date screen includes a conference attendance field (Figure 2).

The conference/event name will appear on the Preview Trip Screen. Upon signing, if a voucher has

Conference Attendance selected as the Trip Purpose but the Conference/Event Name field is set to “Not Applicable” or “Other”, a message will display during the signature or approval process (Figure 3).

Figure 1: Trip Overview Screen – Create Authorization/Group Authorization

Figure 2: Local Voucher Date Screen

Figure 3: Message at Voucher Signing

Training for Accountable Officials & Certifying Officers

WHY IS TRAINING REQUIRED?

Public Law 104-106, Certifying Officers Legislation (COL), mandates all Authorizing Officials (AOs) and Certifying Officers (COs) complete specialized training* annually, such as the *Training for Accountable Officials and Certifying Officers (TAOCO)* course DTMO offers through Travel Explorer (TraX). TraX also offers courses on travel policy and the Defense Travel System (DTS). These courses are recommended to ensure that AOs and COs understand the policies that regulate travel expenditures and the approval process.

WHO NEEDS TRAINING?

AO and COs are accountable for the correctness of documents that they authorize or certify. They are responsible for verifying that the Federal Government payments they certify are legal, proper, and correct. If any payment is found to be illegal, improper, or incorrect, the individual may be held personally liable for reimbursing the Government for the amount of the payment.

WHAT'S THE RECOMMENDED PATH FOR CO ELIGIBILITY¹?

1. Read the [Desktop Guide for Authorizing Officials and Certifying Officers](#).
2. Complete mandatory Certifying Officers Legislation (COL) training.*
3. Complete at least one recommended training course on travel policy.
4. Complete at least one recommended training course on DTS.
5. Provide a copy of the completion certificate to your supervisor and the organization's POC.
6. Complete and submit DD Form 577. (To your organization's designated POC.)

¹: Please consult your component or organization's business rules for requirements to be an authorizing official in DTS, as this recommendation may vary slightly by component

WHAT COURSES ARE AVAILABLE?

	Topic	Course Name
Required	COL	• Training for Accountable Officials and Certifying Officers (Web-Based Training)
Recommended	Policy	<i>Choose at least one:</i> • Travel Policies (Web-Based Training) • Travel Policy While TDY (Distance Learning)
Recommended	DTS	<i>Choose at least one:</i> • AO/RO - DTS Approval Process (Web-based Training) • Approval Process for TDY (Distance Learning) • Route and Review (Narrated Demonstration)

Courses are available in Travel Explorer (TraX)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

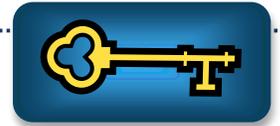
- *ALL COL training options listed at: [Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation \(DoDFMR\), Volume 5, Chapter 33](#)* Initial and annual refresher required.
- [Desktop Guide for Authorizing Officials and Certifying Officers](#)

Training Updated to Focus on Improper Payment Errors

The Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General (DoD IG) determined that in fiscal year 2012, DoD was non-compliant with the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act of 2010, in the area of Travel Pay. According to the DoD IG, DoD reported a 5 percent Travel Pay improper payment rate, which exceeded the mandated target rate of 3.27 percent. To reduce the number of improper payments, it is important that travelers and authorizing officials (AOs) be more aware of the common errors that cause them. To assist with this, DTMO has added key icons throughout the travel training resources below to highlight those key concepts that will help prevent improper payments.

*(*Travel Pay, as it is reported in the annual Agency Financial Report, includes DFAS-disbursed DTS and WinIATS travel, and Navy-, Army, and Air Force-disbursed travel that occurs outside DTS.)*

Look for key icons in the following resources:



- **Programs and Policies: Travel Policies**
Available 24/7 through Travel Explorer (TraX). Select “view all” if class is not listed.
- **Authorizing Official Checklist (Quick Reference, Trifold version)**
Available at: http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/Training/Tri-fold_AO_Checklist.pdf
- **Desktop Guide for DTS Authorizing Officials (Checklist included in Appendix)**
Available at: http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/Training/AO_CO_Guide.pdf

The Travel Policies web-based training is especially beneficial for both travelers and AOs, while the checklists are valuable quick reference tools for AOs who work with DTS.

Help Earn Rebates

It's true that the Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) provides many benefits to the traveler including ease of use, wide acceptance by merchants, longer payment terms when compared to personal credit cards, and split-disbursement direct payment. Did you know that DoD saves costs normally associated with issuing travel advances and also receives rebates based on usage/sales volume and depending on how quickly charges are paid? These rebates are redirected back to your organization and are used to offset the cost of travel to your organization, and support other travel-related activities or other organization initiatives, all of which are critical in today's resource constrained environment.

To ensure travelers realize the benefits and optimize the amount of rebates organizations receive, it is the responsibility of travel administrators, commanders, and supervisors at all levels to ensure travelers comply with the mandatory use policy.

Policy

The DoD Financial Management Regulation (DoD FMR), Volume 9, Chapter 3 states that the GTCC will 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, Volume 9, Chapter 3, paragraph 0306](#)). Official Government travel is defined as travel under official orders while performing duties pertaining to official Government assignments such as, temporary duty (TDY) and permanent change of station (PCS) (where applicable).

And the Winners Are

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.



The Champion

Recognizes a LDTA whose wisdom, guidance, and commitment to his or her ODTAs has made a fundamental and long-term positive impact on their travel program.

This year's recipient is [Air Force SSgt J. LeRoy](#) for his support to the 14th Comptroller Squadron at Columbus Air Force Base, MS. SSgt LeRoy demonstrates a strong commitment to training and mentoring his ODTAs, Authorizing Officials (AOs), and travelers through his training strategy. In addition to providing initial and refresher training, he also conducts quarterly ODTA training that addresses issues identified in his monthly audits, which have increased his ODTAs' confidence and significantly increased the travel program's compliance with DoD travel policy and Air Force DTS business rules.

SSgt LeRoy is also responsible for developing clinics for infrequent travelers to increase their confidence when entering authorizations and vouchers. These clinics have resulted in a significant reduction in the troubleshooting workload of his ODTAs, AOs, and the Finance Customer Service Center. Additionally, SSgt LeRoy demonstrates a commitment to information and knowledge sharing. He recently earned an Air Force Best Practice recognition for developing two SharePoint sites that quickly disseminate information to his customers and short training videos targeting travelers and AOs. SSgt LeRoy's efforts to improve the performance of his ODTAs demonstrate what it means to be a *champion*.

The Elite

Recognizes a local help desk team whose superior efforts result in continuous improvement and outstanding customer care.

This year's recipient is the [Marine Corps' Pacific Region DTS Tier II Help Desk](#). The Pacific Region Help Desk's motto, "The Traveler Always Comes First," is personified by exemplary customer service to its 21,000 travelers. The Pacific Region is the home to the most frequent travelers in the Marine Corps, yet this help desk team is able to balance customer support while providing a comprehensive training program for its customers.

The heart of the team's training program is its DTS Assist Visit Program, which allows members of the team to visit local organizations to perform informal inspections and conduct on-the-spot training to correct deficiencies. Prior to conducting an assist visit, the team conducts a post-payment audit of the organization's vouchers, develops recommendations, and then conducts desk-side training for the organization's ODTAs. This targeted training has increased compliance throughout the Pacific Region and has reduced trouble tickets for the Help Desk. As a result of its strong customer focus and targeted training, the Pacific Region DTS Tier II Help Desk demonstrates what it means to be an *elite* help desk team.

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Constructed Travel Calculation Change

Constructed travel occurs when a traveler deviates from the directed/authorized mode of transportation. Two recent policy changes have altered the use of constructed travel. Last year, the Service representatives eliminated the need for a traveler to complete a cost comparison for travel less than 800 miles round trip (400 miles or less each way for multiple TDY locations) of the traveler's Permanent Duty Station and gave Authorizing Officials (AOs) discretionary authority to limit reimbursement to the cost of other common carrier or special conveyance, when warranted. Recently, DoD further changed the requirements for constructed travel by simplifying the means of calculating a constructed cost when one is required.

The new 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 AO to additional cost avoidances to help them decide whether to allow full reimbursement for the traveler's transportation expenses. Commonly considered items that are not part of the constructed cost include the avoided cost of a rental car at the TDY location and transportation costs for other official travelers riding in the same vehicle. The Constructed Travel Worksheets (CTWs) available through DTS provide an "Additional Comments" section specifically designed for the traveler to input comments such as these for AO consideration.

This regulation change appeared in paragraphs U3050-E1 and C3050-E1 of the August 2013 printed editions of the JFTR and JTR.

CTWs are available through DTS and at the following links:

- [CTW for Authorizations](#)
- [CTW for Authorizations – Instructions](#)
- [CTW for Vouchers](#)
- [CTW for Vouchers – Instructions](#)

The Icon

Recognizes a major command or agency whose strategies and tactics enhance their travel program capabilities for their subordinate sites.

This year's recipient is the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). USSOCOM's two LDTAs and 70

ODTAs service more than 3,000 customers spread across a diverse geographical area. The USSOCOM LDTAs adeptly manage their travel program through standardized processes and proactive travel training. In FY 2012, this group successfully conducted a DTS reorganization from the Air Force/MacDill AFB DTS organizational hierarchy to the Joint Command DTS organizational hierarchy. They simultaneously drafted and published USSOCOM's local business rules, which incorporated input from USSOCOM's leadership and the most common items found in audits conducted by the LDTAs and the USSOCOM Inspector General. Further, the USSOCOM DTA team employs training strategies compatible with the diverse needs of its customers. Through a hybrid-training model of classroom and virtual training, DTAs are able to offer regular training for AOs and travelers across the globe through its USSOCOM DTS Portal. Through its superb management of a complicated travel program, the USSOCOM exemplifies what it means to be an *icon* in the Department of Defense.

DTMO awards the Excellence in Practices Awards annually. The next nomination period will begin in late fall 2013. If you are interested in nominating a fellow travel professional or team, monitor the [Excellence in Practice webpage](#) for additional information and nomination forms.

GSA ANNOUNCES FY14 CITY PAIR PROGRAM

The General Services Administration (GSA) announced that it is offering cheaper prices, adding new routes and more non-stop service routes, as well as service to new markets as part of its FY14 City Pair Program, which went in to effect October 1, 2013.

As part of the FY14 program, the average one-way domestic ticket prices have dropped four percent and international rates have dropped seven percent. This year, GSA will offer 6,396 city pair routes; 4,953 domestic and 1,443 international city pairs, which includes 1,312 new routes. This is a 25 percent increase over last year's total routes. Additionally, the number of markets with both YCA and _CA fares increased to 2,855 from 1,776, up 60 percent and non-stop markets expanded to 1887, up 20 percent.

When awarding City Pair contracts to airlines, GSA considers criteria such as availability on non-stop service, average flight time, flight availability throughout the day, total number of flights, available seats, price, and more. GSA works with federal agencies, such as DoD, to understand the requirements and ensure travel needs are clearly understood.

For more information about the City Pair Program, visit GSA website at www.gsa.gov/citypairs.

The CPP provides benefits unique to the government, including discounted airfares, flexibility to book one-way, multi-leg and round trip airfare at the lowest cost possible, while retaining the ability to change or cancel flights at no additional cost, as well as last seat availability and no blackout periods.



DOD POLICY

Travelers must utilize a City Pair carrier unless a specific exception applies in the Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR)/Joint Travel Regulation (JTR) Appendix P and Defense Travel Regulation 4500.9-R, Part I, Chapter 103. One notable exception is when the city pair carrier offers a lower restricted airfare to the general public. The traveler must purchase the ticket from the city pair contract carrier. The utilization of frequent flyer accounts, ability to upgrade seats, and traveler carrier preferences are not considered valid exceptions to this policy.

New! 72-Hour Auto Cancellation for International Flights

The FY14 City Pair program further expanded the 72-hour Auto Cancellation policy to cover international flights. This means that as of October 1, 2013, any travel authorization that includes international air travel must be approved and ticketed at least 72 hours in advance of the scheduled flight departure to avoid airline reservations from being cancelled. This policy is already in effect for domestic flights. This policy applies to city pair and non-contract government flights booked through DTS or through a Commercial Travel Office (CTO). For more information, visit <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/news.cfm?ID=14>.

TSA Further Expands Pre✓



TSA has recently announced that its Trusted Traveler program known as Pre-Check (Pre✓), is now available at Ted Stevens Anchorage (ANC), making it the tenth airport to offer expedited security screening to Service members.

Service members, active drilling Reservists, National Guardsmen, and members of the Coast Guard, who present a valid Common Access Card (CAC) to be scanned and verified at dedicated Pre✓ security checkpoints will receive expedited security screening.

As part of the program, members will not be required to remove their shoes, outerwear, belts, laptops or small liquid containers from carry-ons when going through security. Eligible Service members do not need to be on official travel or in uniform to participate.

Pre✓ is available at the following airports:

- Baltimore-Washington International (BWI)
- Charlotte Douglass International (CLT)
- Denver (DEN)
- Dulles International (IAD)
- Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International (ATL)
- Honolulu International (HNL)
- Ronald Regan Washington National (DCA)
- Seattle-Tacoma International (SEA)
- St. Louis (STL)
- Ted Stevens Anchorage (ANC)

Future Pre✓ Program Enhancements

In the next week, TSA and DoD will be announcing big changes to the Pre✓ program. TSA will begin phasing out its current Pre✓ eligibility process that requires participants to present their CAC to a TSA agent in dedicated Pre✓ lanes. As of December 20, 2013, Service members will use their DoD ID number found on the back of their CAC as the Known Traveler Number (KTN) when making reservations in order to participate in the program. TSA will also expand the program to 100 airports by the end of this year and is scheduled to offer the program to DoD civilians employees next year. DoD travelers can prepare now by entering their DoD ID number in the Known Traveler Number field of their DTS profile.

Continue to monitor the DTMO website for information on these program enhancements. Information will be updated as we receive additional details.

About the Defense Travel Dispatch

The Defense Travel Dispatch is a quarterly publication issued by the Defense Travel Management Office, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel & Readiness).

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