

Defense Travel Dispatch

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The DoD Center for Travel Excellence

A Message from the DTMO Acting Director

The Department is well positioned to identify opportunities to simplify and improve travel in today's fiscally constrained environment. Implementation of travel initiatives will be incremental and thoroughly vetted through governance boards to ensure no harm is done. As we welcome the New Year, I wanted to spotlight a few Transformation initiatives that are underway.

Policy and Allowance Simplification – We will continue to review regulations to identify opportunities to reform policies and simplify computations. DTMO will also publish a concise multi-volume issuance for commercial travel programs to reduce the quantity, diversity, and dispersion of policy and guidance. Additionally, we will complete the consolidation of the JFTR/JTR, reducing redundancy and where applicable, standardize rules for military and civilian travelers.

Next Generation Travel Solution – We will continue to identify functionality that improves the user experience. Our goal is to reduce reliance on legacy systems, and provide a more flexible and intuitive user interface. As policies are simplified, we will explore opportunities to leverage smart technologies for incorporation into our next generation travel solution.

Integrated Data and Business Intelligence – We continue to integrate data from multiple sources to provide the Department with a holistic view of the enterprise, conduct sophisticated analysis, and use business intelligence to manage the travel enterprise, and identify opportunities to reduce travel costs.

Lodging Program Pilot – We will complete our analysis of the potential to strategically source and establish an enterprise lodging program to effectively leverage our total spend for maximum savings.

I look forward to sharing with you the progress we're making in future editions.

— 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.

Travel Policy Compliance Tool Pilot Scheduled for Kick Off

The 2012 National Defense Authorization Act required the Department of Defense to create and maintain a compliance program as well as minimize inaccurate, or duplicate claims. In mid-December, DTMO will launch a pilot of the Travel Policy Compliance Tool, which is at the heart of the Department's new program.

The automated tool reviews all DTS travel vouchers in near real time and identifies duplicate or incorrect payments in an effort to ensure travel claims are paid in accordance with regulations and recoup funds for erroneous payments.

As part of the Travel Policy Compliance Tool pilot, the tool will be implemented for a limited user group that includes DLA, DISA, Marine Corps, and select organizations within the Army, Navy, and Air Force. The tool is expected to be implemented across the Department early next year.

DTMO has been collaborating with the Services and Agencies to ensure the Compliance Program and supporting tool meets their needs, and to help define roles and responsibilities in regards to the Travel Policy Compliance Tool. The Service and Agencies have determined which administrators will have access to the tool for the pilot program. Based on the results of the pilot, Service and Agencies will determine how the tool will be implemented within their organizations.

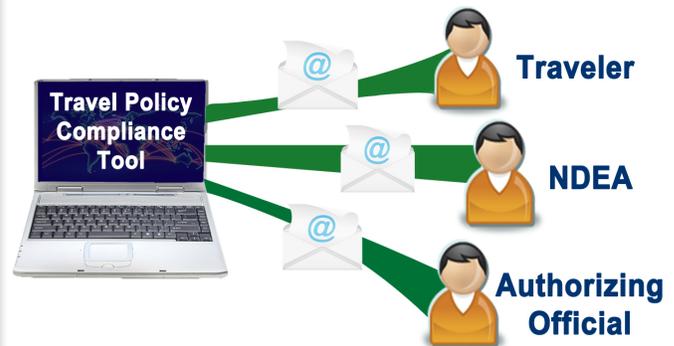
This new compliance program not only assists the Department with ensuring travel claims are paid in accordance with regulations and recouping funds from erroneous payments, but also serves as a learning tool. By being alerted to these errors, travelers and administrators will be better able to recognize and prevent errors prior to the approval of future claims. Further, the Travel Policy Compliance Tool will identify trends and training needs, and identify opportunities for greater controls within the next generation travel solution.

For more information on the program and the compliance tool, visit www.defensetravel.dod.mil.

About the Compliance Tool

The Travel Policy Compliance Tool is an automated application that reviews all DTS travel vouchers in near real time and identifies duplicate or incorrect payments.

When an error is identified, the tool will automatically notify 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.



The tool includes a user interface that provides Service and Agencies points of contact with access to a reporting and records management capability that allows for tracking and monitoring of vouchers that have been identified as having an error.

Initially, the tool will focus on identifying three of the most common and clear cut policy compliance errors: OCONUS laundry expense, OCONUS foreign lodging tax, and duplicate lodging payments. Data queries that identify additional errors will be added in the near future.

COMMON MISTAKES WITH MEAL RATES



meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner or any combination) were provided. Depending on the selection(s), the traveler's M&IE allowance is reduced according to established rates. For example, a traveler who selects one or two deductible meal(s) is allowed the Proportional Meal Rate, which is based on location and includes an incidental portion of per diem. However, if a traveler states that all three meals were provided as deductible meals, the traveler only receives the incidental portion of per diem, which does not provide for any meal allowance. Further, the Incidental Rate is based on whether the traveler is at a CONUS or OCONUS location. For CONUS travel, the incidental rate is \$5.00 per day. For OCONUS travel, the incidental rate is based on the location or it is \$3.50 per day if the Authorizing Official (AO) determines in advance that \$3.50 is adequate for anticipated incidental expenses.

According to DFAS Post Pay Review findings, incorrect meal rates are often selected in DTS, which result in improper payments to travelers. To reduce errors, it is important to understand the various meal rates applicable and how these rates are reflected in DTS.

On the Per Diem Entitlements Meals screen (Figure 1) in DTS, there are several ways to indicate meal rates. The most frequently selected rates are Full Rate, Provided, and Special Rate.

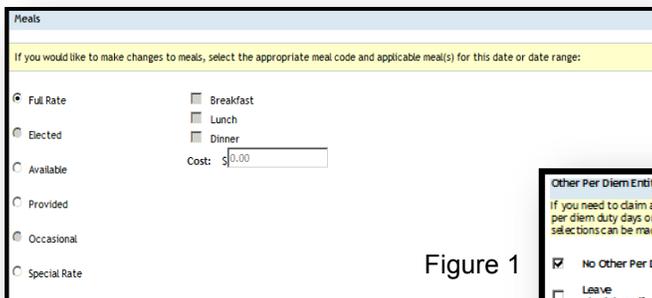


Figure 1

Full Rate: When “Full Rate” is selected, the traveler is authorized the full locality meal rate which is based on the location. This rate applies when government meals are not directed or deductible meals are not available, provided or required in accordance with the Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR) and Joint Travel Regulations (JTR).

Available Rate: When government meals are available on an U.S. installation where a Service member is TDY, the Authoring Official can direct the Government Meal Rate to be paid on any day all three meals are available. The Proportional Meal rate is paid on any day one or more meals are available.

Provided Rate: If the “Provided Rate” is selected, the traveler must indicate how many ‘deductible’

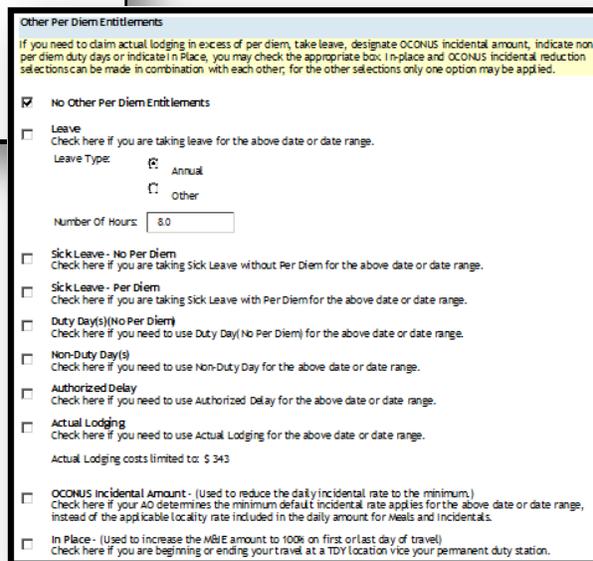


Figure 2

Special Rate: This rate is used only for unique travel situations such as when the Service Secretary

authorizes a contingency flat per diem for travelers assigned to a Contingency Operation for more than 180 days, in which case, the traveler receives the Contingency Operation flat per diem equal to 55% of the applicable locality per diem rate. It is also used in those situations when the

Secretary Concerned authorizes a lower per diem rate under JFTR (par. U4177) or JTR (par. C4550). In this case, the document authorizing the reduced per diem rate must be attached to the authorization in DTS for this rate to be approved.

Often, in error, travelers select “Special Rate” in an attempt to apply the OCONUS Incidental Amount of

(Continued on page 4)

Using the New Pending Airline Cancellation Report

72-Hour Auto Cancel



(Continued from page 3)

\$3.50. In DTS, the correct way to select the OCONUS Incidental Amount is to select the OCONUS Incidental Amount under 'Other Per Diem Entitlements' (Figure 2) and select all meals as provided.

For more information on meal rates and when they are applied, refer to the JFTR/JTR Chapters 4, Parts B.

On October 1, 2012, a new policy was implemented by the airlines under the FY13 GSA City Pair contract where any airline reservation not ticketed at least 72 hours prior to flight departure will be cancelled. To assist Defense Travel Administrators (DTAs) with identifying airline reservations in jeopardy of being cancelled under this new policy, a report titled "Pending Airline Cancellation Report" has been added to the DTS Report Scheduler.

The Pending Airline Cancellation report provides a list of authorizations containing airline reservations in a confirmed status (CTO Booked) that still need to be approved prior automatic reservation cancellation.

The report search criteria screen includes an "Hours to Departure" field (Figure 1). Users can generate the report based on a select number of hours (minimum selection 24 hours; maximum selection 150 hours), which is based on the flight departure date and time.

The report results contain the following information (Figure 2):

- Organization
- Traveler Name
- SSN (first 5 digits masked)
- Traveler Email Address
- PNR Locator
- Departure Date (earliest flight only)
- Departure Time (earliest flight only)
- Document Name
- Document Status

Defense Travel System
A New Era of Government Travel

Reports
> Report Scheduler Home > Request New Report

The Pending Airline Cancellation Report will provide the user with a list of travel authorizations containing airline reservations that have pending routing actions. The report will assist the user in identifying authorizations requiring action (e.g. REVIEWED and APPROVED) to prevent the cancellation of airline reservations. The Pending Airline Cancellation Report will be generated according to the given DTS organization and number of clock hours (minimum 24 maximum 150), which is based on the flight departure date and time. Included in the report is the organization, traveler name, SSN, email, PNR locator, departure date, departure time, document name and document status.

Pending Airline Cancellation Report Search Criteria

Please Note: A Red Star (*) indicates a field is required.

* Organization: (Start typing to get Organizational Access)
(minimum of 2 characters)

Include Sub Organizations:

Number of Hours to Departure:

The report data requested will consist of current data when the search criteria organization field is an organization of 4 characters or more (regardless of the include sub-organization selected). If search criteria is for an organization with less than 4 characters, regardless of the include sub-organization selected, the report data requested will consist of the most recent data as of the time of the last data extraction.

Figure 1: Report Search Criteria

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	Report Title: Pending Airline Cancellation Report											
2	Report Run Date: Thu Sep 20 12:38:45 EDT 2012											
3	Search Criteria:											
4	Organization=DTMOTEST-AA IncludeSubOrgs=Y HoursToDeparture=72											
5												
6	For Official Use Only - Contains Personally Identifiable Information covered by the Privacy Act of 1974.											
7	Organization Traveler Last Traveler First Traveler Middle Traveler Suffix Traveler Email PNR Locator Flight Depart Flight Depart Document ID Document Status											
8	DTMOTEST-Fedrigo	Eric	T		xxx-xx-6643ericfedrigo@NSMLIO			9/21/2012	08:30AM	EF SANDIEG	CTO	BOOKED
9												
10												

Figure 2: Report Results

With this information, the DTA can take action to ensure that the reservation is not automatically cancelled. For more information on the new 72-Hour Auto Cancellation policy, go to <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/news.cfm?ID=14>.

Travel Policy Update:

Elimination of Cost Comparison

When travelers deviate from the directed/authorized mode of transportation they must perform a complicated and speculative cost comparison to determine reimbursement. Numerous complaints from the field requested the elimination of cost comparisons where it is obvious that it is less expensive to pay travelers Privately Owned Conveyance (POC) mileage than it is to pay for airfare and other associated costs for taking commercial air. In response, the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowances Committee (PDTATAC) voted to alter this requirement.



A review of DTS constructed travel worksheets revealed that mileage claimed for travel less than 250 miles one way was always less expensive than the constructed cost of travel by commercial air. Further, an analysis of GSA City-Pair fares showed that of 5,747 routes, only 2 routes less than 400 miles one-way, were less costly to fly than drive. In FY11, 83% (550K vouchers) of all POC travel in DTS was for 800 miles round trip or less.

The recommendation put forth before the PDTATAC was to eliminate the requirement to perform cost constructions for all travel 800 miles round trip (or 400 miles or less each way for multiple TDY locations) and retain the approving officials' discretionary authority to limit reimbursement to the cost of other common carrier or special conveyance when warranted. Eliminating the requirement to limit POC travel to the cost of airfare if one-way travel is 400 miles or less and would eliminate the vast majority of cost comparisons with a significant indirect savings in labor and travel overhead need to do the necessary cost constructions. As of September 26, 2012, the PDTATAC voted to accept this change.

Although this determination is 'cost-neutral' to travel budgets, it provides savings to the traveler and travel administrators at all levels by eliminating the requirement to potentially create and review a constructed travel worksheet for ~83% of TDY travelers.

This regulation change appeared in the November 1 printed edition of the JFTR and JTR.



TSA Expands Pre-Check Program

TSA has expanded its Trusted Traveler program known as Pre-Check (Pre✓), to Service members flying out of Dulles International Airport (IAD), Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT) and Honolulu, Hawaii (HNL). The program is already available to those members flying out of Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA).

Service members, active drilling Reservists, National Guardsmen, and members of the Coast Guard, who go to a dedicated Pre✓ security checkpoint and present a valid Common Access Card (CAC) 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.

For more information on TSA's Pre✓ program, visit: http://www.tsa.gov/what_we_do/rbs.dod.shtm.

Roadside Assistance

Many travelers are unaware that renting a car through the U.S. Government Rental Car Program includes basic roadside assistance. However, in the event of a vehicle failure, it is important to understand what is included in the basic roadside coverage.

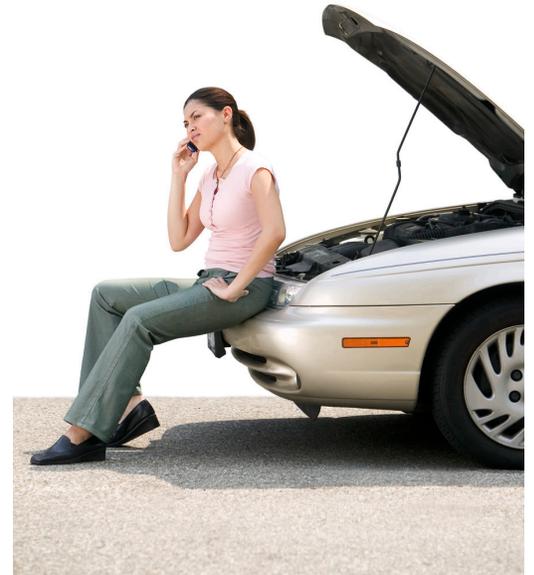
Under the program, basic roadside assistance only covers service or repair for mechanical defects. It provides towing service, assisted flat tire change for defective tires, and battery jump start for mechanical defects. Mechanical defects can be defined as a problem that was not the result of a user error. Leaving the interior light on, driving over glass or hitting a curb is considered to be a user error. Assistance does not include fuel delivery, lockout assistance, or key replacement.

Some companies participating in the program may offer enhanced roadside assistance programs that cover non-defective types of issues. For an additional fee, most rental car companies offer optional enhanced roadside service programs for user-caused issues that cover flat tire service, jump starts, fuel delivery and even lockout service and key replacement as part of this optional service. While this optional service is a non-reimbursable expense, rental car agents may attempt to “sell” these services to the traveler. There is no provision under the U.S. Rental Car Agreement that states they cannot do so because some government travelers may wish to purchase these services at their own expense.

In the event of a mechanical failure that is not the result of a driver error, the rental location is required to provide assistance up to and including, replacing the vehicle, towing the disabled vehicle to a repair location or repairing the vehicle where it has been disabled. If the repair cannot be completed within two hours of initial notification, the rental location will provide a replacement vehicle. So that the traveler is not penalized for a mechanical failure, time spent waiting for the replacement vehicle or for repairs must be deducted from the total amount of rental time for which the rate is based.

Basic roadside assistance is provided at no additional charge if the rental car is booked under the U.S. Government Rental Car Program using DTS or a Commercial Travel Office (CTO) and “GARS” is listed on their rental car contract.

Travelers should be familiar with the roadside assistance coverage and take note of the 24/7 toll-free number before leaving the rental car lot. Understanding what costs are covered will make it easier in the event of a problem with a rental vehicle.



Tips

- 1 Contact the rental location immediately.**
It is important to notify the location where you rented the vehicle. Ask if the repair is covered under the basic roadside assistance program.
- 2 Ask about additional charges for service.**
Depending on the issue, travelers may be responsible for the repair. Often a rental car company may offer to fix the issue however, there may be an additional charge for service if the repair is not covered under the basic roadside assistance.
- 3 Request a replacement vehicle if necessary.**
While the rental car company is required to replace the car if the repair cannot be completed within 2 hours, it does not hurt to ask for a replacement before the repairs take place. Some companies will provide a replacement even if the repair can be made quickly.

Recent Changes to Travel Explorer



In November, the software behind the Help Tickets and the Knowledge Center in Travel Explorer (TraX) was upgraded. The new version includes features that allow for enhanced customer feedback, and the ability to improve future capabilities for help desk support and searching the Knowledge Center.

Users will notice that the screens in both of these sections look slightly different. In the Knowledge Center, a list of the most common frequently asked questions now appears under the search box. This allows users to quickly scan the list instead of searching through search results to find a topic that is commonly requested.

Additionally, the upgraded software allows for additional functionality to be added to the system. Over time, users will see incremental changes geared to enhance the user experience and access to information.

DTMO MAILBOX

Question: I often see "GARS" listed on my rental car contract. What is it and what does it cover?



The U.S. Government Rental Car Program is managed through the U.S. Government Rental Car Agreement, which outlines the terms and conditions of the program. This Agreement explains the purpose of the government administrative rate supplement (GARS) and what it covers under the program.

GARS is intended to address those costs incurred by the rental car company that are peculiar to doing business with the Government, which include providing special rental benefits and applying the terms and conditions of the Agreement on a worldwide basis. Benefits such as insurance and liability coverage, renting vehicles to employees under age 25, and no fee for additional drivers, are usually an additional cost for all travelers. Under the program, the \$5 GARS fee covers those benefits as well as, provides some level of cost control for rates.

GARS is a fee that all authorized personnel renting vehicles for official travel should pay as it ensures that travelers receive the benefits of the Rental Car Program. If the rental car is booked through the Defense Travel System (DTS) or a contracted commercial travel office (CTO), then the rental is covered under the program and GARS should be listed on the rental car contract. While it is the rental car company's responsibility to charge the GARS fee, travelers should ensure that the \$5/day (or foreign currency equivalent) GARS fee is indeed listed on the rental contract at the time of pick-up. Paying for the rental car using a Government Travel Charge Card does not guarantee that the traveler is covered under the terms and conditions of the Agreement.

Travelers should also be aware that not all locations of a participating rental car company might participate in the U.S. Government Rental Car Program. In fact, there are some OCONUS locations where there are no rental car companies participating in the program. If traveling to one of those locations, travelers should opt for the insurance as it is considered to be a reimbursable expense (for one of those locations only). Before accepting the insurance, travelers should double check the contract to ensure that the GARS fee is not listed.

Common Questions about the Role of Non-DTS Entry Agents



A Non-DTS Entry Agent (NDEA) is a military member, DoD employee, or contractor who is authorized to enter trip requests and claims for reimbursements in DTS on behalf of travelers who may be without reasonable access to the system. Those serving in this role can digitally sign vouchers (using the T-ENTERED stamp) but are considered to be non-accountable officials. Learn more about the role of NDEA with these frequently asked

Q Does a NDEA need to be appointed?

Yes. A local command authority must appoint a NDEA in writing. As a non-accountable official, the appointment should not need to be documented on a DD Form 577; any locally approved form is sufficient. Once appointed, a DTA must update the NDEA's DTS profile to allow access to the DTS group that contains all the travelers the NDEA will support and select the "Yes" radio button next to "Non-DTS Entry Agent (T-Entered)." The DTA does not need to grant permission levels to NDEAs; a PL-0 is sufficient.

Q How does the NDEA get travel claim information from the traveler?

The traveler must provide the NDEA with a manually prepared and signed paper claim form (e.g., DD Form 1351-2 or SF 1164) before the NDEA can create the DTS voucher. In lieu of a paper claim form, the NDEA may accept an electronic document (e-form) and a CAC-verified electronic signature instead of a written signature.

Q What does the NDEA do with the paper claim form?

The NDEA must electronically attach it via fax or scan/upload to the DTS voucher. This requirement precludes the requirement to maintain the paper form after filing.

Q May a NDEA create a voucher in DTS, print it, have the traveler sign it, and attach it to the DTS voucher?

No, this is not an acceptable practice. It is the traveler's responsibility, not the NDEA's to create

the original claim form.

Q In order to complete a CBA reconciliation, a NDEA amends a DTS voucher to include or correct an item that is not reimbursable. Is it necessary for the traveler to sign a new claim form, and does the NDEA need to electronically attach the new form to the voucher?

No. An administrative change to accommodate the CBA reconciliation process does not affect the traveler's payment, so a new claim form is not necessary.

Q What responsibility does the NDEA have for the information included the DTS voucher?

The NDEA is only responsible for the ensuring the information entered into DTS matches the data included in the traveler's manually prepared and signed paper claim form.

Q Is the NDEA held pecuniary liable for entering an expense in a voucher that is not on the signed claim form and it is found to be non-reimbursable?

No. As a non-accountable official, a NDEA is not pecuniary liable. A NDEA may only enter information that is included on the signed, electronically attached claim form into a DTS voucher.

Treasury Announces Mandatory EFT for All Payments



The U.S. Department of the Treasury has announced that as of March 1, 2013, all payments from the federal government must be made by electronic funds transfer (EFT) and not by paper check. In accordance with these regulations, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) is urging travelers to set up direct deposit to their bank accounts prior to the deadline.

Those travelers who still receive paper checks as reimbursement for travel costs, must save bank account information in their DTS profile, or submit for a waiver through the Treasury Department before the deadline. To qualify for a waiver, payees must meet one of the following conditions: 1) have a mental impairment (doctor's note recommended but not required); or 2) live in a remote location where the infrastructure does not support use of electronic payment products. As of March 1, those travelers who have not saved bank account information into their DTS profile or who have not qualified for a waiver will automatically be issued their reimbursement through another form of payment such as a Direct Express Debit MasterCard®.

For more information on mandatory EFT requirement including information on submitting a waiver, go to: <http://www.dfas.mil/MANDATORYEFT.html>



2013 Excellence in Practice Awards Announced

The DTMO is pleased to announce its annual Excellence in Practice awards. The awards are designed to recognize those who have excelled in travel program management and have successfully addressed issues with exemplary professional skills, creativity, and resourcefulness. We encourage you to nominate yourself or a peer who demonstrates these characteristics.

Qualifications and entry forms will be available December 17, 2012 on the DTMO website at: <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/award.cfm>.

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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