



DEFENSE TRAVEL MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Termination of DoD's Flat Rate Per Diem Policy – Frequently Asked Questions

Effective August 13, 2018, the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, section 603, "Prohibition on Per Diem Allowance Reductions Based on the Duration of Temporary Duty Assignment or Civilian Travel," includes a repeal of the authority to prescribe a reduced flat rate per diem for long-term temporary duty (TDY) travel. Below is a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) addressing process and administrative concerns that may arise because of the termination of this policy.

I. FAQs

1. Why is flat rate being terminated and what is the effective date?

The NDAA for FY 2019, section 603, included a repeal of the authority to prescribe a reduced flat rate per diem for long-term temporary duty (TDY) travel. The repeal of the authority to prescribe flat rate per diem was effective the day the President signed the NDAA. The last day the traveler is paid flat-rate per diem is August 12, 2018. Beginning August 13, 2018, the traveler's per diem transitions to the Lodging Plus computation method. This means that per diem for lodging, meals, and incidental expenses may not be reduced to 75 or 55 percent based on the length of TDY.

2. Are there any resources that I can reference about this policy change?

Yes. Travelers, AOs, and travel administrators may reference:

- Flat Per Diem Transition Examples 1-5 [insert link]
- Guidance for Updating a DTS Authorization or Voucher When Flat-Rate and Lodging Plus are Computed [insert link]
- The DTMO website: <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/>

3. What if I am paying monthly for the rental of an apartment and flat-rate per diem ends in the middle of the month?

Effective August 13, 2018, per diem is paid using the Lodging Plus computation method – the monthly apartment rent plus appropriate utilities added together and divided by the number of days in the month. This computation provides the daily lodging rate used for the lodging plus computation. Travelers are paid actual lodging expenses up to the maximum locality rate, and full per diem for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE).

4. Will I have to provide lodging receipts after flat-rate per diem ends?

Yes, the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) paragraph 010301 specifies that an itemized receipt is required for each lodging expense regardless of the amount.

5. Will I have to create an amendment to my authorization in the Defense Travel System (DTS) when flat-rate per diem ends?

No. However, travelers must adjust the per diem information on the voucher. The last day the traveler is paid flat-rate per diem is August 12, 2018. Beginning August 13, the traveler's per diem transitions to the Lodging Plus computation method.

6. If I am staying in commercial lodging that does not comply with the U.S. Fire Administration guidelines when flat-rate per diem is eliminated, may I be reimbursed lodging?

Yes. The traveler may remain in the original lodging throughout the TDY. However, the JTR, paragraph 020303 specifies that travelers should reserve lodging compliant with the U.S. Fire Administration guidelines. If the traveler moves after the flat-rate per diem policy ends, the traveler must comply with the JTR on making lodging reservations through DTS or the Travel Management Company (TMC).

7. If the TDY was considered "more advantageous" under flat-rate per diem, but not under full per diem, can the AO curtail the number of days of my TDY?

The AO determines the mission requirements and can adjust the TDY accordingly.

8. Will the TMC assist me in finding TDY lodging at a different facility once flat-rate per diem ends?

Travelers are required to use the TMC for lodging when per diem is under the Lodging Plus per diem computation method. If the traveler chooses to move to different lodging once flat-rate per diem policy ends, the traveler must contact the TMC for assistance in obtaining the appropriate lodging.

9. If my TDY is to an Integrated Lodging Program Pilot (ILPP) site, will I be required to move into ILPP facilities once flat-rate per diem ends?

No, as long as the traveler remains in the original TDY lodging. However, reimbursement is limited to the cost of the ILPP facilities. If the traveler chooses to move, he or she is required to move to an ILPP facility if available. See the JTR, par. 020303.

10. Will the elimination of the flat-rate per diem policy be a legitimate reason to break my lease without penalty? If not, will the Government pay lease-breaking expenses?

Whether the traveler is released from their lease or not is between the traveler and the landlord and depends on the terms of the lease. If the TDY is curtailed for official reasons, then early termination fees or penalties may be reimbursed as specified in the JTR, Table 2-16. However, if the traveler chooses to move for personal reasons as a result of flat-rate per diem elimination, there is no authority in the JTR to pay lease-breaking expenses.

11. With the elimination of the flat-rate per diem policy, will the Government pay for storage if I move from an apartment to commercial lodging?

No, there is no authority in the JTR to pay for storage in this situation.

12. If Lodging Plus will not cover the cost of my current lodging, can my per diem rate be increased to cover lodging when flat-rate per diem ends?

It is the AO's decision whether the circumstances meet the criteria for actual expense allowance (AEA). However, the termination of flat-rate per diem is not, in itself, a reason for AEA or to stay in a higher cost lodging if lodging within the per diem rate is available.

13. What is the impact of eliminating flat-rate per diem on dual lodging?

The authority for 30-day dual lodging is also eliminated, and the traveler may only be authorized dual lodging as specified in the JTR, Table 2-16.

14. What if I am ordered on a long-term TDY that was authorized flat-rate per diem, but I do not depart the PDS on TDY until the day of or after the President signs the NDAA that eliminates flat-rate per diem?

Flat-rate per diem will not apply and Lodging Plus per diem will be the computation method used for TDY travel days on or after the effective date of the NDAA.