Information Paper:

January 2018 DTS Update Look-Ahead

Summary

The DTS home page and reservations screens are undergoing major changes to incorporate a more modern look and improved navigation, data entry, and option selection tools. The date you will see the new reservations screens depends on whether your organization is part of the initial, limited-user release in January 2018 or as part of a subsequent implementation phase.

This information paper walks you through the new look from beginning to end, by following the steps to create a new authorization. In doing so, it points out in broad terms what is changing and what will remain the same. There’s a lot that’s changed, but we think you’ll like the result.

To get started, you still access DTS at the old familiar URL: www.defensetravel.osd.mil.

New DTS Home Screen

When DTS opens, you’ll immediately notice a redesigned DTS Home screen (Figure 1). Beyond the cosmetic changes to the color scheme and imagery, more information is directly accessible from the Home screen. Roughly from top to bottom, it contains:

1. **DTS and ETWS status icons** (indicator #1) let you know when the systems are working. When a yellow or red icon appears, select it to see specific systems statuses (as seen on Figure 1).

2. **Travel alerts** indicator #2) provide immediate information about current critical travel situations.

3. **Sign Up** (self-registration) and **Log In** buttons (indicator #3) launch DTS.

4. **A step-by-step travel process summary** (indicator #4) is especially useful if you’re new to DoD official travel.

5. **DoD Travel News and DTS Notices** (indicator #5) open travel information that – while important – is less urgent than the travel alerts, as well as information about DTS.

6. **Icon Buttons** (indicator #6) give you fast access to A) DTS Training, B) open a chat session with a Travel Assistance Center (DoD travel Help Desk) analyst, C) information about TSA’s Precheck program, and D) the Joint Travel Regulations.

7. **Links** (indicator #1) lead to additional assistance and travel-related services.
Figure 1: DTS Home Screen
When you log onto the updated DTS, here’s what you’ll see:

- Besides the new DTS logo in the upper left corner, the **DTS Welcome screen** (image on right) and most of the screens accessed directly from its top navigation bar (e.g., the Routing List screen, the Rate Lookup Menu screen) look and function the same way they do today. The only exceptions are listed below.

- The home screens for **Authorizations** (image on right), **Vouchers**, **Local Vouchers**, and **Group Authorizations** that you reach through the **Official Travel** and **Official Travel – Others** screens retain the same functionality, although their color scheme and general look and feel have been updated.

- When you select **Create New Authorization**, a new drop-down menu (center image in Figure 2) let’s you choose between the new or legacy itinerary-creation paths:

  o If you select the “**Routine TDY**” path (selectable on any trip unless you need to use a Special Circumstances Travel trip type – see note below), you can use the newer, faster itinerary creation screen (right image in Figure 2). You’ll be familiar with the tools on this screen, though it has been slightly updated with the new color scheme and a slight rearrangement of fields.

  o If you select the “**Special Circumstances**” path (selectable on any trip), you can use the legacy itinerary creation screens (left image in Figure 2).

**Note:** The text on the **Create New Authorization** drop-down menu in Figure 2 says that you must use the legacy itinerary creation screens if your trip crosses the International Date Line (IDL). However, due to a recent upgrade, you can also use the new screens for IDL trips. As soon as the text on the graphic is updated, we’ll replace that image.
New Travel Module

The first thing you’ll notice in the DTS Travel module is that the screen is divided into two areas. On the left (indicator #1) is a narrow progress bar. For more information on the progress bar, see the “New Progress Bar” section of this information paper. The right side is the working area (indicator #2), which takes up most of the screen space. The content of the working area changes depending on what part of your reservation you’re currently working on. The bulk of this information paper is dedicated to the various tools that may appear in the right column.

Figure 2: Itinerary Creation Decision Screen
The progress bar (Figure 4) shows what you have done, what you are currently working on, and what you still have to do to complete your authorization. Each sections of the progress is collapsible – only one section is visible at a time.

In the example in Figure 4, you have displayed the Transportation to TDY section, which shows that:

- You have finished entering your TSA information, as indicated by the green circle with a checkmark.
- You are currently booking your first flight reservation – a flight from Los Angeles to Miami, as indicated by the red icon.
- You still have to book your flights from Miami to Colorado Springs, and from Colorado Springs back to Los Angeles, as indicated by the grey icons.
Items on the progress bar are ordered, from top to bottom, as follows:

1. TSA information (if you are flying)
2. En route transportation (e.g., flights, trains)
   - Transportation to, from, and between official locations
3. Reservations at each TDY location (rental cars, lodging)
   - Includes “in-and-around” transportation
4. Reimbursable expenses and travel allowances
5. Accounting information (LOAs, advances, SPPs)
6. Other authorizations and justifications
7. Digital signature

And just in case you wondered, the look of and navigation through DTS modules remains essentially the same, with two exceptions:

1. On the new screens, the subnavigation bar adds selectable icons to the words (see the My Expenses screen in the Familiar Modules section).
2. The color scheme has been updated on newes screens, though the familiar look (light blue navigation bar, dark blue subnavigation bar) remains on the old screens (see the Per Diem Expenses screen in the Familiar Modules section).

When you begin the process for selecting flight reservations, the first screen that appears is the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Information screen. The tools on this screen have not changed, although the color scheme has.

If you do not need air reservations, this screen does not appear. Select Continue to Booking at the bottom left of the screen to begin making your air reservations.
New Travel Module – Air

The major change for air reservations is that the tabs have been replaced by listing flights in default order from least to most expensive (see Figure 5), with the least expensive flight being the “Recommended” option (indicator #1).

Selecting an air reservation is a three-step process. The first step is to select your flight (indicator #2).

**Note:** This upgrade allows restricted flights to appear in DTS, if your TDY meets certain conditions. When restricted airfares appear, DTS provides both the traveler and AO with on-screen and pop-up warnings of the potential to incur extra costs should travel plans change. Restricted airfares only display in non-GSA City Pair markets, and for single-location TDY travel. See the Section “Additional Considerations” at the end of this information paper for more information about restricted airfares.

Figure 5: Flight Step 1 of 3
Step 2 (Figure 6) is to select your seat or seat type. This tool should be familiar to you, although the graphics have been updated.

![Flight Seat Selection Diagram](image-url)

*Figure 6: Flight Step 2 of 3*
Step 3 (Figure 7) is to review your choice and book it (indicator #1). On this screen, you may also make special accommodation requests (indicator #2), enter or modify your rewards program information (will prepopulate if part of your DTS profile) (indicator #3), and change your payment type, say if you’re paying with a CBA (indicator #4).

![Figure 7: Flight Step 3 of 3](image)
Reserving a rental car or train follow very similar 2-step processes, the primary difference being that train requests, as always, go to the TMC for booking, while rental car reservations are automatically booked.

Step 1 (figure 8) is similar to Flight Step 1. Look through the list of available options (the lowest cost option is “Recommended”), make a decision, and select the car or train of your choice (indicator #1). For rental cars, you can also indicate if this is a one-way rental (indicator #2) and/or a rental car to, from, or between TDY locations (indicator #3).

Figure 8: Rental Car Step 1 of 2
In Step 2 (Figure 9), you can provide optional information for rewards programs (indicator #1), special requests (indicator #2), and an alternate payment method (indicator #3), then confirm your choice (indicator #4).

![Figure 9: Rental Car Step 2 of 2](image)

**New Travel Module – Lodging**  

The lodging screen, like the airfare screen, has also been modified to remove the tab. Instead, you’ll see a single listing of lodging types. Options include:

1. DoD Lodging (i.e., DoD or DoD Privatized lodging options)  
2. DoD Preferred Commercial Lodging  
3. Alternative Options (i.e., all other commercial lodging options)
Depending on who you are and where you’re going, the JTR may direct you to use a particular lodging type. DTS automatically displays your required lodging type, plus lodging types that the JTR allows you to use without limiting your lodging reimbursement. For example, you are TDY to an Integrated Lodging Program Pilot metro area. The JTR directs you to use DoD Preferred commercial lodging, but allows you to use DoD lodging without limiting your lodging reimbursement, so DTS displays both those lodging types.

If a directed lodging type has no availability, DTS lets you know and offers other options. Also, you can decline an available, directed lodging type to select other options, but you run the risk of receiving a limited lodging reimbursement if you do.

Reserving lodging is a three-step process. Step 1 (Figure 10) is to select a lodging provider. In the example, DoD Lodging (indicator #1) is displayed as the “Recommended” (that is, the lowest cost, policy-compliant) option, and DoD Preferred Commercial Lodging options (indicator #2) visible as well. Select Get More Options (indicator #3) if you need to see other commercial lodging. When you’re ready, select your hotel (indicator #4).
Figure 10: Lodging Step 1 of 3
Step 2 (Figure 11) is to select a room and rate (indicator #1).

**Figure 11: Lodging Step 2 of 3**
Step 3 (Figure 12) is the confirmation screen, with the usual options to enter rewards programs (indicator #1), special requests (indicator #1), and payment methods (indicator #1) before you book (indicator #4).
The last screen in the **Travel** module is the Review Reservation Selections screen (Figure 13), where all your reservations are listed in one place. Here, you can add new reservations (indicator #1), book reservations you skipped earlier (indicator #2), and remove existing reservations (indicator #3). The key difference is that the new layout is listed in date order (indicator #4), rather than by reservation type. This format makes it easier to visualize your entire trip, on the basis of your reservations.

**Figure 13: Review Reservation Selections Screen (Top & Bottom)**
So the good news is that the rest of the DTS modules remain more or less the same. Although not all screens are shown in every module, this should suffice to give you the general flavor.

- The **Expenses** module contains:
  
  a. The recently updated My Expenses screen, which incorporates the brand new color scheme and updated navigation bar graphics.

  ![New Navigation and Subnavigation Bars](image)

  **Figure 14: New Navigation and Subnavigation Bars**

  b. The DTS Per Diem Entitlement screen (image on right), which remains the same, in original DTS colors. The only change is the new DTS logo in the upper left corner.

- The **DTS Accounting** module (on the right), which also retains its familiar look and feel – and functionality.

- As does the **DTS Review/Sign** module, seen here on the right.
This DTS release will enable the traveler, in the right circumstances, to select a restricted airfare. Future releases will make restricted airfares available on any trip, but for now, the “right circumstances” include travel to:

- A single TDY location before returning to the PDS.
- A TDY location with no awarded GSA City Pair flights to or from the traveler’s PDS.

There are a few things to keep in mind when using a restricted airfare:

- **For travelers**
  - Restricted airfares may demand quick payment (e.g., within 24 hours). If the AO doesn’t approve your authorization before the payment time limit expires, your selected airfare will no longer be available. If that happens, the AO will return the authorization to you to re-select your flights.
    - Generally, DTS alerts the AO about the shortened approval timeline. However, the alert does not happen if you booked restricted airfare through a TMC assistance request. Using a TMC assistance request requires you to notify the AO personally.
  - Per the JTR, you must use your Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) to purchase airfare. Since you must pay off your GTCC bill in full, if you anticipate that your voucher won’t be processed before the date the payment is due, you must either pay it out of pocket, or if your local business processes allow, you can request a travel advance for the amount of the air tickets.

- **For AOs**
  - Either DTS or the traveler may alert you (see above) that use of a restricted airfare requires you to approve an authorization quickly. If the time limit expires before you approve the authorization, the selected airfare will no longer be available. If that happens, select the RETURN-TICKET EXPIRED stamp on the digital signature screen to return the authorization to the traveler to re-select flights.
  - A traveler who selected a restricted airfare may require a travel advance to pay for their flight before they file their voucher. If they do, make sure they only request an advance for the amount of the restricted airfare.
For DTAs
  o If a traveler requires a travel advance to pay for restricted airfare, and the organization allows it, you must adjust their profile to allow them to receive advances (ADVANCE AUTH or FULL ADVANCE).

Note: Travelers who belong to organizations that use the DTS CBA Reconciliation module (vs. the traditional CBA reconciliation process) may not use (and won’t be able to select) restricted airfares in DTS. They will have to follow their current local business processes.

For more information about requesting a travel advance to purchase restricted airfares in DTS, see the information paper “Travel Advances for Ticketing Restricted Airfares in DTS” at http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/Advance_for_Ticketed_Restricted_Fare.pdf.

Final Words

We understand this is a lot to take in, but allow us to add a few additional comments:

1. This information paper makes no attempt to talk about the many pop-up confirmations, warnings, and information that DTS provides as you make reservations. Trust us, you’ll see them, but they’re self-explanatory.

2. Keep your eyes peeled for more information. We’ll be releasing much more look-ahead information prior to the release.

3. These updates will appear in EWTS 2 days before they appear in DTS.

4. As you can probably guess, the scope of this change means we’ll have to update most of our training inventory. We’ll be updating all pertinent data just as soon as we can.