



U.S. Government Rental Car Program

Frequently Asked Questions

To qualify for program benefits:

Travelers must be on official business travel, book the government rate and ensure that the government rate and the Government Administrative Rate (GARS) is listed on the rental contract at the time of pickup



Who can use the U.S. Government Rental Car Program? Military members and employees of the Federal Government, including the United States Postal Service, while in official travel status, and when such rental is authorized by the government.

Why should federal government travelers use the U.S. Government Rental Car Program? The program is designed to meet the needs of the government traveler, offering quality rentals through approved vendors at over 10,000 rental locations. The Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO) administers the program through the U.S. Rental Car Agreement. This Agreement provides the advantage of reduced rates and special rental benefits such as: free collision/damage waiver or loss/damage waiver and liability insurance coverage; no charge for drivers under the age of 25; and no charge for additional authorized drivers, unlimited mileage, and no minimum rental period.

How do I show that I am qualified for the U.S. Government Rental Car Program when renting a vehicle? A traveler's official travel status is authenticated by either:

- Presenting a travel authorization/order or Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) when on authorized official travel
- Making a reservation through the Defense Travel System (DTS) or the General Services Administration E-GOV Travel System (ETS)

The GTCC and/or travel authorization/orders do not guarantee that travelers are covered under the terms and conditions of the Agreement. The government rate must be booked and the Government Administrative Rate (GARS) must be charged.

How do I know that I have a government rate? If you book your rental car through the DTS/ETS or go through your approved government contracted Commercial Travel Office (CTO) or Travel Management Center, you will receive the government rate. If GARS is on your contract, it indicates that you are being charged the government rate. Many of the participating rental car companies use the term "GOVT RATE" on their contracts; however, some do not. **It remains your responsibility to ensure that you ask for and receive the government rate when you pick up the vehicle.**

What is GARS? The Government Administrative Rate Supplement (GARS) is a daily fee (\$5 or foreign currency equivalent) and is intended to address those costs incurred by the rental company which are peculiar to doing business with the government. If you see GARS on a rental contract, you are covered under the terms and conditions of the program unless you operate the vehicle in a manner that would apply exceptions. See paragraph 18 of the Agreement for exceptions.

If I rent a vehicle under the program, am I always covered for accidents or damage? In most cases, yes. However, there are exceptions listed in the U.S. Government Rental Car Agreement that void the terms and conditions of the Agreement. If the vehicle is being used in an unauthorized manner, travelers may be responsible for loss or damage. A complete list of the fourteen exceptions is listed on page under paragraph 18.b of the U.S. Government Rental Car Agreement at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/CarRentalAgreement.pdf>

Is training available that explains the U.S. Government Rental Car Program? Yes. DTMO offers a web-based course, "Rental Car Program" (formerly known as "Rental Car 101"), that provides an overview of the U.S. Government Rental Car program and covers rules and tips for renting cars when traveling. This course is recommended for travelers who intend to rent a vehicle. The course is available through DTMO's Travel Explorer (TraX). To access TraX, register through Passport, DTMO's web portal at www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Passport

Information current as of 11/2016



DEFENSE TRAVEL MANAGEMENT OFFICE
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Where do I go for rental car assistance? In the event of a customer service concern, the renter should first attempt to resolve the issue directly with the rental car company. Should the traveler need additional assistance, DTMO has established the Rental Vehicle Assistance Tool located on the DTMO website at <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Rental>. You may register accidents or damage, and register compliments or complaints using this tool. DTMO personnel will assist in resolving your case.

Can government contractors ride in a vehicle rented by a government employee under the U.S. Government Rental Car Agreement? Government employees should consult their servicing legal offices, as well as their Contracting Officer Representative or Contracting Officer for specific guidance before deciding to transport additional passengers. For FAQs related to this visit Travel Explorer (TraX) via DTMO's Passport at <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Passport>.

May family members or friends ride in a vehicle rented by a government employee under the U.S. Government Rental Car Agreement? Vehicles rented by government employees should be used only for authorized travel. Government employees should consult with their servicing legal offices before deciding to transport family members or anyone not on authorized travel.

Is prepaid fuel reimbursable expense? Prepaid refueling costs are not authorized. The AO may approve vendor refueling charges only if it is not possible for the traveler to refuel completely prior to returning the vehicle because of safety issues or the location of the closest fueling station.

Can a rental car company pre-charge for fuel? No. The program now prevents rental car companies from automatically charging for fuel upon vehicle return, without the traveler's written consent. You may be asked to present a fuel receipt to prove that the vehicle was returned with a full tank.

Can I use the U.S. Government Rental Car Program for leisure travel? Use of the rental vehicle for personal use is prohibited while being rented for official travel purposes. Rental car companies may extend government rates for leisure travel, however Agreement benefits are not extended. Travelers may be able to obtain more competitive personal rental rates directly from the company.

What if there are no participating rental car companies in my travel location? If you cannot find a participating vendor, you may rent from a non-participating vendor, but you will not be covered by the benefits of the Agreement. Since insurance is not reimbursable, except when overseas, any accident that occurs must be reported to your local legal office upon return.

Can I be reimbursed if I accept the optional Global Positioning System (GPS) on a rental car while on official travel? According to the Joint Federal Travel Regulations/Joint Travel Regulations (JFTR/JTR), Appendix G, a GPS rental is reimbursable "when the Authorizing Official determines it is necessary for official use." Travelers are responsible for any damage or loss of a GPS.

Does the program allow me to rent a toll transponder to pay for tolls? While the cost for tolls is a reimbursable expense, the activation of a toll transponder is an expense that must receive approval from the Approving Official based upon the need of the trip. There are cashless toll roads in the U.S. that require a toll transponder to pay the toll. If the toll transponder is not activated and you drive on one of these cashless toll roads, the rental car company will bill you later for the tolls and add an administrative fee from \$25-\$45, which is not a reimbursable expense.

Am I automatically covered for roadside assistance under the program? If you rent a vehicle under the program, you are covered for any mechanical problem with the vehicle. Rental car companies offer optional roadside assistance coverage, but this is considered a personal expense and is not reimbursable.

Are hybrid rental cars available through the program? In keeping with President Obama's "Green Initiative" and in an ongoing effort to reduce the carbon footprint several rental car companies are now offering hybrid vehicles under the U.S. Government Rental Car program including: Enterprise Rent-A-Car; National Car Rental; Alamo Rent a Car; and Fox Rent-A-Car. Travelers may request a hybrid rental car, but since these vehicles are generally more expensive, it must be approved by your organization. Until the Defense Travel System (DTS) is modified to accommodate an automated booking process, DoD travelers are being advised to use the DTS CTO assistance remark field to request a hybrid rental car, provided it is approved.

Is there a limit to how long I can rent a vehicle under the program? No. Rental car companies may not have a minimum rental period under the program, and there is no maximum. Should you have a longer lease, you may be required to return the vehicle to

About DTMO

The Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO) serves as the single focal point for commercial travel within the Department of Defense (DoD), to establish strategic direction, set policy, and centrally manage commercial travel programs. DTMO provides central oversight for commercial travel management, travel policy and implementation, travel card program management, customer support and training, functional oversight of the Defense Travel System (DTS), and allowance and entitlement program management.

