Information Paper: Understanding a Travel Debt

Background

A travel-incurred debt occurs in the following situations:

- A trip was cancelled after you* received a travel advance.
- The total of your previous payments (i.e., travel advances, scheduled partial payments, and previous vouchers**) exceed the total allowable payment.
- A post-payment review determined that a paid voucher contains an unauthorized payment.

In DTS, processing a voucher to correct an overpayment results in a travel-incurred debt also referred to as a DUE US voucher.

* For this information paper, “you” refers to a traveler.

** Wherever “voucher” appears in this information paper, it also applies to local vouchers.

How Do I Know I Have A Travel-Incurred Debt?

DTS sends you two emails – an Initial and a Follow-Up Debt Notification email – usually within 5 working days after the AO approves a voucher that leaves you with a travel-incurred debt (which DTS stamps DUE US). These emails provide details of the debt, and lay out your rights and responsibilities regarding the handling of the debt (e.g., right to apply for a waiver, options for paying it off). These email are frequently referred to as Due Process or Demand letters.

What Does DTS Do With A DUE US Voucher?

When DTS sends a DUE US vouchers to the Defense Accounting and Finance Service (DFAS), DFAS creates an accounts receivable. The accounts receivable must be in place before any debt processing (e.g., waivers, payments) can be started. When DFAS is ready to process the debt, DTS stamps the voucher AR SUBMITTED, which DFAS acknowledges with a POS ACK RECEIVED stamp. The POS ACK RECEIVED stamp triggers DTS to send the initial DTS Debt Notification email. If you do not receive this email after the normal timeframe, contact your Debt Management Monitor (DMM) or Defense Travel Administrator (DTA).
Repayment Options

This section does not apply to DIA civilians or USMC members. Both of these DoD Components have established their own methods of handling the debt repayment process. Contact your DMM for more information. DIA personnel also have the option of sending an email to: DTSDebtCollection@dodiis.mil.

Most DoD personnel have 30 days from the date of the Debt Notification email to make a payment, request payroll deduction, or submit a waiver request. If you take none of these actions within 30 days, the DMM will automatically begin payroll deduction. You should contact your DMM as soon as possible to declare your intentions.

Note: Do not attempt to initiate any of the following processes before you receive the Debt Notification email.

1. **Make a payment** (also called *Direct Remittance*)

   a. **Pay online using Pay.gov.**
      Pay online directly from your bank account or by credit/debit card by following these steps:
      1. Go to Welcome to Pay.gov.
      2. Select Make a Payment (big red button).
      3. Under option #2 (Search by keyword), enter “DTS” and select Search.
      4. Under the first option, DTS Debt Notification Payment Form, select Continue to the Form.
      5. Follow on-screen instructions to fill out and submit the form.

   b. **Mail a check.**
      1. Make out a check to DFAS.
      2. Include a copy of the Debt Notification email with your payment.
      3. Mail the payment to the address in the Debt Notification email.
      
      Note: It usually takes 7-10 days for acknowledgement of your payment to reach DTS. You should inform your DMM as soon as you mail your payment, to prevent payroll deduction beginning while your payment is being processed.
c. **Payroll Deduction:**
   1. Within 30 days of receiving the Debt Notification email, contact the DMM to request payroll deduction.
   2. If you do not request payroll deduction within 30 days, the DMM will automatically request the payroll deduction.
   3. **Note:** Payroll deduction usually takes 2-4 weeks to set up and appear on your Leave and Earnings Statement. It may take an additional 2-4 weeks for the deductions to actually begin.

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**Waiving A Travel-Related Debt**

You have the right to submit a request for a waiver/remission of debt. Your DoD Component determines the process for waiver submission. Refer to your local business rules to determine the applicable process.

Most travelers request a waiver within 30 days of the notification of a debt; however, have up to three years (for civilians) or five years (for military members) to do so. You may request a waiver for any amount up to the full amount of the original debt, regardless of previous collections. You may also request a waiver for a debt that has already been satisfied.

If your waiver request is denied (or only partially approved) for any reason, you may file an appeal. The results of the appeal are final.

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**Need More Information?**

Communicate with your DMM or your DTA, or take a look at the [Guide to Managing Travel-Incurred Debt](https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/Guide_to_Managing_Travel_Incurred_Debt.pdf) by selecting the link or going online to: