

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
Washington, DC 20405

September 29, 2005

FEDERAL TRAVEL REGULATION
GSA BULLETIN FTR 05-07

TO: Heads of Federal Agencies

SUBJECT: Reimbursement for actual subsistence expenses, and waivers of certain provisions of the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) (41 CFR parts 301 and 302) for temporary duty (TDY), or relocation travel of employees to areas impacted by Hurricane Rita.

1. Purpose. This Bulletin informs agencies that certain provisions of the FTR governing the authorization of actual subsistence expenses for official travel (both TDY and relocation) are temporarily waived as a result of Hurricane Rita, because it is expected that finding lodging facilities and/or adequate meals may be difficult, and distances involved may be great resulting in increased costs for per diem expenses.

The provisions in this Bulletin are effective from the date of the Presidential declaration affecting the State of Texas (September 24, 2005). The provisions of the Bulletin expire as stated in paragraph 6.

2. Background. As a result of the catastrophic destruction caused by Hurricane Rita, agencies should consider delaying all non-essential TDY and relocation to the affected locations for a period of 90 days. This is especially important with relocation travel because the 120-day maximum for TQSE cannot be extended due to statutory restrictions. While in the past, GSA has limited application of such waivers to Presidentially Declared Disaster Areas, in the case of Hurricane Rita, the widespread devastation coupled with the extensive evacuation of urban areas means that we cannot effectively determine the extent to which the ability to secure lodgings will be compromised. In this case, we are stating that each agency may determine whether this Bulletin applies to travel which is impacted by Hurricane Rita. If TDY and relocation travel to areas affected by Hurricane Rita cannot be delayed due to mission requirements or personal hardships then the following applies:

3. For TDY travel:

Section 301-70.200(f) of the FTR requiring an agency determination in each individual case that reimbursement under the actual expense method is appropriate is hereby waived. Thus, agencies may authorize actual expense reimbursement for per diem expenses on a blanket basis for employees traveling to areas affected by Hurricane Rita. Additionally, section 301-11.7 of the FTR states that the maximum per diem reimbursement rate is determined by the TDY location. For employees assigned to the affected areas where lodging is not available, the provisions of section 301-11.8 of the FTR state that the agency may authorize the per diem rate for the location where lodging is obtained. In all cases, the provisions of section 301-11.303 of the FTR limiting actual expenses not to exceed 300 percent (rounded to the next higher dollar) of the applicable maximum per diem rate for the locality concerned remains in effect.

4. For relocation travel:

For temporary quarters subsistence expense (TQSE), section 302-6.9 of the FTR requiring that temporary quarters be in reasonable proximity to the new official station is hereby waived for the areas affected by Hurricane Rita. The maximum limit of 120 days that TQSE may be authorized remains in effect pursuant to section 302-6.104 of the FTR.

In addition, the following provisions of the FTR are waived:

- a. Section 302-6.102 of the FTR which limits the per diem reimbursement to the standard CONUS rate for TQSE. Agencies may authorize subsistence expenses at the locality per diem rate under the provisions of section 301-11.101 of the FTR or as an actual expense reimbursement allowance under sections 301-11.300 through 301-11.306 of the FTR.
- b. For Househunting trips, section 302-5.13 of the FTR limiting the reimbursement of subsistence expenses to the lodgings-plus method to allow for reimbursement under the actual expense allowances under sections 301-11.300 through 301-11.306 of the FTR.

5. Maximum Rates. As a result of Hurricane Rita, agencies may approve actual subsistence expense reimbursement, not to exceed 300 percent of the applicable per diem rate, without further justification for employees performing official travel to areas affected by Hurricane Rita.

6. Expiration date. This Bulletin expires on March 1, 2006, unless extended or rescinded by this office.

7. For further information contact. Ms. Peggy DeProspero, Travel Program Director, Travel Management Policy at (202) 501-2826.

By delegation of the Administrator,
General Services Administration.

G. Martin Wagner
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Office of Governmentwide Policy