



Travel Newsletter

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The Department of the Interior Selects Northrop Grumman's GovTrip!

The Department of the Interior is pleased to announce the award of the E-Gov Travel Task Order to Northrop Grumman, which occurred on July 31, 2007. The award was based on a best value competition among the three GSA E-Gov Travel vendors, Northrop Grumman, EDS, and Carlson Wagonlit (our incumbent travel services provider). All bureaus, the National Business Center, and the Financial and Business Management System Project Management Office participated with the Office of Financial Management and the Office of Inspector General (in a

non-audit capacity) in selecting Northrop as our travel management services provider. Sato Travel (as Carlson/SATO) will remain on the task order as a sub-contractor to Northrop and will provide



travel management center services to all of Interior.

The E-Gov Travel Task Order consolidates all Interior travel management service requirements under Northrop Grumman. Northrop is responsible

for booking travel reservations, automating the processing of travel authorizations and travel vouchers, and forwarding travel transactions from Northrop's travel management system, GovTrip, to our core financial systems.

Work on the E-Gov Travel Task Order has already begun. We held our kickoff meeting with Northrop on August 9 to determine how we will work together to deploy GovTrip across the Department. Northrop conducted training/orientation on Gov-

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Special points of interest:

- PCS Mileage Increases to Flat 20 cents
- GovTrip OBE Implementation Schedule
- Centrally Billed Lodging Q&A
- New Per Diem Rates

Travel under a Continuing Resolution

This a reminder of Financial Administration [Memorandum 2002-14](#), for Departmental Offices or Bureaus with an annual Appropriation.

Travel arrangements under a continuing resolution authority (CRA) may continue to be made in the usual manner, provided that adequate funding is available to cover anticipated travel expenses. Program offices and travel approving offi-

cials must work closely with their budget offices to ensure travel arrangements do not create obligations exceeding approved funding levels.

Travelers are to be reminded that, except in emergency situations, official travel may not commence unless a Continuing Resolution is in effect, or a regular appropriation has been enacted. Employees who are already in travel status when a CRA expires (and a new CRA

is not in place) should seek direction from their supervisor regarding their return to the permanent duty station. Personnel responsible for arranging travel and travelers are encouraged to purchase only contract city-pair tickets or fully refundable tickets during this period of uncertain funding. This will ensure that a refund will be available in the event a new CRA is not signed and travel must be cancelled.

The Department of the Interior Selects Northrop Grumman's GovTrip! (con't)



GovTrip is a web-based, self-service travel system.

Trip for bureau travel management leads and travel systems administrators on August 13-15 both in Denver, CO and in the Washington, DC area. Training for system administrators on the Online Booking Engine (OBE) phase of GovTrip will continue throughout October.

Northrop is now working with bureau travel management leads on a detailed implementation schedule. Bureaus will be

implementing the OBE in phases beginning on October 15th and completing by November 16th, 2007. Currently, DOI intends to use the OBE for domestic travel reservations only. To ensure Fly America compliance, reservations for international travel should be made by calling Sato Travel at 1-866-486-6135.

DOI is committed to implementing the automated travel authorization and vouchering

process (referred to as TAVS in the milestone schedule) in the FFS bureaus by September 30, 2008.

See Page 6 for upcoming OBE training schedule.

Please contact Jacqueline Lynch, DOI Travel Manager, at (703) 648-7680, e-mail

Jacqueline.Lynch@ios.doi.gov for questions about E-Gov Travel implementation.

Bureau or Departmental Office	First Date on GovTrip	Last Date on CWGT.com
OS, NBC, USGS	10/15/2007	10/26/2007
NPS	10/22/2007	10/26/2007
BOR, FWS, OSM	10/22/2007	11/2/2007
BIA	10/29/2007	11/2/2007
BLM, MMS	11/5/2007	11/16/2007

Relocation Mileage Rate Increase

Historically, relocation mileage rates have been reimbursed on a tiered system based on number of passengers in the vehicles.

Historically, relocation mileage rates have been reimbursed on a tiered system based on number of passengers in the vehicles. When those relocation rates have exceeded the IRS published rate, the excess was considered taxable income to the relocating employee. For employees whose relocation

travel authorizations are issued on or after September 25, 2007 the relocation mileage rate will match the IRS published rate for moving (currently .20 a mile) regardless of number of passengers in the vehicle. In the future, it will be adjusted as necessary for increases and decreases,

comparable to the regular temporary duty mileage rates. Given that the reimbursed rate will equal the IRS authorized rate, there will no longer be a taxable impact on relocation mileage payments.

Source: Tim Kauffman, *Federal Times*, see full story [here](#).

GSA to Offer Contracts for Long-Term TDY Housing



Federal employees on temporary duty travel for longer than a month will soon be able to rent furnished apartments under a new Federal Acquisition Supply Contract being developed by the General Services Administration.

GSA has so far contracted with Marriott ExecuStay and

Oakwood Worldwide, and is looking for a third vendor, to provide corporate housing, Frank Robinson, Deputy Program Manager for E-Gov Travel, said September 6 at the Society of Government Travel Professionals' convention in Alexandria, VA. The apartments, offering fea-

tures such as full-size kitchens, DVD players, stereos, & pet beds, will be available for travelers on training or other trips lasting at least 30 days. For more information contact Frank Robinson, (703)-872-8618.

Source: Stephen Losey, *Federal Times*

GSA Raises Lodging Per Diem

The General Services Administration raised the standard lodging per diem for fiscal year 2008 for federal employees who travel within the continental United States. As in past years, many of the rates went up by several dollars. The rates consist of two parts, a lodging component and a “meals and incidentals” component. For travel destinations without a specific lodging rate, a standard rate applies, which will rise from \$60 a day to \$70 according to an announcement in the Federal Register. The meals and incidental expenses per diem will stay at \$39 per day for destinations without specific per diem rates. The new rates also contain numerous administrative changes, such as changes in boundaries and changes in the dates of seasonal rates, for destinations whose rates vary. GSA developed the higher rate from lodging industry

estimates of average nightly cost. The new rates apply for fiscal year 2008, which began October 1, 2007.

Although the standard per diem applies to locations within the continental United States, most metropolitan centers have their own, often higher, per diem allowances. In areas such as Manhattan and Washington, D.C., per diem allowances vary by season. The top daily rate will be in Vail, Colo., a total of \$381 from December 1-January 31 and \$316 February 1-March 31. Other expensive destinations include Manhattan (including Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Staten Island) \$375 September 1-December 31 (\$308 or \$284 at other times), Nantucket, Mass, \$319 June 1-September 30, and Key West, \$303 February 1-March 31.

Rates for other major travel destinations include Los An-

geles, \$182, San Francisco, \$232 or \$216, Denver, Atlanta, \$188 or \$178, Chicago, \$213-\$269, Boston, \$284 or \$250, Detroit, \$154, Philadelphia, \$213, The Washington per diem will be \$201 per night for lodging in 2008, except for next July and August, when it will be \$154 per night.

Meals and incidental expenses will be \$64 per day year-round. GSA also designated two Virginia towns as nonstandard areas. Both Abingdon and Blacksburg were previously classified as standard areas. The per diem for Abingdon will be \$72 per night for lodging and \$49 for meals. The per diem for Blacksburg will be \$77 per night, with \$54 for meals and incidentals.

The complete set of per diem rates for fiscal 2008, broken down by location and season, is available [here](#).



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Per Diem Rates Are Based on the Official Temporary Duty Station

In determining the appropriate per diem rate for Temporary Duty Travel, the correct locality rate to be used is based on the official Temporary Duty Site location, not the lodging site, unless no lodging is available at the official TDY site.

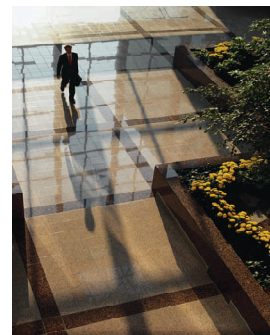
Federal Travel Regulation: §301-11.7 What determines my maximum per diem

reimbursement rate?

Your TDY location determines your maximum per diem reimbursement rate. If you arrive at your lodging location after 12 midnight, you claim lodging cost for the preceding calendar day. If no lodging is required, the applicable M&IE reimbursement rate is the rate for the TDY location. (See §301-11.102.)

§301-11.8 What is the maximum per diem rate I will receive if lodging is not available at my TDY location?

If lodging is not available at your TDY location, your agency may authorize or approve the maximum per diem rate for the location where lodging is obtained.



The correct locality rate to be used is based on the official Temporary Duty Site location.

DOI Agencies To Centrally Bill Lodging

DOI organizations move to centrally bill lodging. The following Q&A will answer many of your questions about the program.

1Q: Why are we centrally billing hotels?

1A: Since inception of the integrated charge card program, the Bureau of Reclamation has centrally billed lodging expenses. Based on the success at BOR, MMS, OS, OSM, and USGS; the Department is directing all bureaus to transition to centrally billed lodging. A significant benefit to the cardholder is a reduction in the amount due to the Bank of America. It also will foster a reduction in the bureau's delinquency rate and result in a tax savings.

2Q: Do all states accept the federal exemption from state taxes.

2A: No. The states of New Mexico and Arizona do not typically accept the federal exemption. However, other states are required to accept the exemption. These other states honor the exemption on government charge card transactions if those charges are centrally billed to the federal government. In this case, lodging expenses charged to the government charge card are centrally billed and should be honored. We have communicated this information to all state tax authorities.

3Q: What if the hotel is unwilling to grant me tax exemption?

3A: We do not encourage get-

ting into a battle with the desk clerk over tax exemption. It is allowable to pay the tax. It will be centrally billed and not be a liability to the cardholder. We are granted tax exemptions based on the fact that the Government directly pays for the lodging. DOI is one of the few Government agencies that centrally bill lodging.

It sometimes helps to point out that the sixth digit in our charge card numbering convention demonstrates that we centrally bill the charge.

4Q: Can I use my government charge card at a hotel restaurant?

4A: It is still allowable, even preferred, to charge meals to your government charge card. While not all hotel restaurants are set-up with a unique merchant category code that is separate from the hotel, many are. If the hotel restaurant is set-up with the charge card company under a unique merchant category, separate from the hotel, then the restaurant charge will reflect on your statement as individually billed; you would voucher and receive reimbursement as you currently do.

If you are not certain and the hotel restaurant management can not answer the question as to whether they have a separate merchant category code from the hotel, you can use cash from an ATM advance.

If you did charge a hotel restaurant meal to the government charge card and it is billed centrally, it can be trans-

ferred such that it will appear on your next statement as an item for you to pay. You would have been reimbursed an M&IE allowance for all meals on your travel voucher.

5Q: Can I order room service and charge it to my room?

5A: Yes, but only if arrangements have been made with the hotel to charge the expense to cash or as a separate folio for personal expenses. You can not charge the room service to the room or it will incorrectly post as a centrally billed expense.

6Q: Can I order a movie in my room?

6A: Yes, but only if arrangements have been made with the hotel to charge the expense to cash or a personal charge card. This is a personal expense and should not be charged to the Government charge card.

7Q: How do I pay for movies or room service if I want it?

7A: Arrangements can be made with the hotel to charge these costs to cash or to a separate personal charge card. It tends to be much easier if you arrange a separate personal folio with the hotel at check-in versus at checkout.

8Q: Are there any other expenses I can charge to my hotel room?

8A: Authorized business related Internet access charges,

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GSA Announces New Purchase/Travel/Fleet Card Products

The General Services Administration announced master contract awards to all four companies that bid for spots in a program to provide credit card services to federal agencies.

The contracts for GSA's SmartPay2 program to supply purchase, travel, fleet and integrated charge card services went to Citibank, GE

Capital Financial, JPMorgan Chase and U.S. Bancorp. They will last until 2018 if all options are exercised, and have an estimated value of \$26 billion annually. There is no cap on the value.

A spot in the program means the companies are eligible to market their services; the awardees will undergo another layer of competition as they

vie to win individual agencies' business.

Agencies have until November 2008 to complete the transition to new providers.

Source: Amelia Gruber, Gov Exec.com, see full story [here](#)



DOI Agencies To Centrally Bill Lodging (con't)

authorized phone charges, and hotel parking. Also, for employees in travel status CONUS for more than four nights, laundry service may be charged to the hotel room.

9Q: How do I handle when a room rate is above the allowable per diem?

9A: Pre-approval is required for an increased per diem. The approval must be documented on the travel authorization. In situations, where a traveler is out in the field on an annual TDL authorization and has arranged approval through their supervisor through some other means verbal, email, memo etc; the increased per diem approval should be documented on the travel voucher. If the increased per diem is authorized, it can be placed on the Government charge card and will be centrally billed. If the room rate is above allowable per diem for personal

preference or not authorized, the traveler should pay the difference by cash or on a personal charge card.

10Q: What if all else fails and personal charges end up on the central bill?

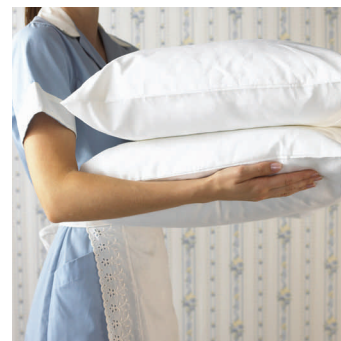
10A: The government charge card is not for personal usage. However, if a room service charge or personal charge is billed to the government charge card, the office can decide to deduct the amount of the room service, etc, from the M&IE allowance on the voucher or have the traveler write a check back to the Government. Either way, please document the deduction/repayment with a note in the comments section of the voucher explaining the circumstances.

11Q: How will this change affect my Foreign travel?

11A: Unlike GSA, State Department never removed lodging tax and laundry from the incidental expenses portion of M&IE. All Foreign lodging taxes should be included in the lodging rate and if they cause the traveler to exceed the allowable per diem rate for that locality, Increased per diem will need to be approved.

Laundry will have to be paid for separately because it is included in the traveler's M&IE. A traveler can use cash from an ATM withdrawal or charge to a personal card.

Other allowable expenses such as telephone access charges, internet access charges can be left on the Government card. If meals, taxes, or laundry cause any hardship in a foreign lodging establishment, the traveler can deduct from the M&IE allowance on the travel voucher upon return from travel.



Travel Contacts and Web Sites

Newsletter/E-Gov Travel/Travel Policy:

Jacqueline Lynch

Jacqueline_Lynch@ios.doi.gov

703-648-7680

Carlson Wagonlit Government Travel:

866-227-5638 (for reservations and technical assistance)

Sato Travel Number (effective 10/15/2007):

866-486-6135 (for reservations and GovTrip password resets)

CWGT Online Booking Engine (see chart on page 2 for cutoff dates):

<http://www.cwgt.com>

Future DOI Traveler Profile and Online Booking Engine (see chart on page 2 for start dates):

<http://www.govtrip.com>

DOI Travel Policy:

<http://www.doi.gov/pfm/travel.html>

Data Sources for DOI Travel Newsletter:

Much of the travel industry information contained in this newsletter was obtained from public domain sources such as newspapers and the Internet, and was current at the time of publication. Travel industry information is provided solely for the use and information of DOI employees.

At the time of publication, training has been scheduled in the following locations:

October 16th-FWS Building 4501 N. Fairfax Dr, Arlington, VA 10-12 and 1-3

October 19th-Denver Federal Center, Bldg 67 Room 994, Denver, CO 9-11 and 1-3

October 23rd- BIA Building, 1001 Indian School Rd NW, Albuquerque, NM 9-11 and 1-3

October 24th- FWS Building, 2105 Osuna Road NE, Albuquerque, NM 8-10

October 25th-Denver Federal Center, Bldg 67 Rio Grande Room, Denver, CO 9-11 and 1-3

October 26th- Denver Federal Center, Bldg 25 Auditorium, Denver, CO 8-10

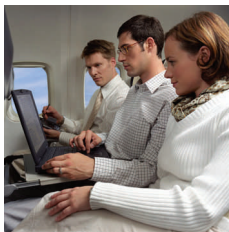
Check with your local travel office for dates in your location.



Traveler "TIP BITS"

Seat Assignments

Airline travel is as popular as ever and most flights are booked to full capacity. Airline reservations should always be made through the DOI contracted Travel Management



Center (TMC) and E-Gov Travel Service provider, which offers seat maps of all available inventory. However, airlines frequently hold much of their seat inventory for "airport check in". If possible, make sure you have a seat assignment before you arrive at the airport by checking in online. Most of the airlines'

websites allow travelers to check in online up to 24 hours before departure.

FedRooms

[FedRooms](#) is the official government-wide, government-approved lodging program that replaced the Federal Premier Lodging Program (FPLP).

Rooms at the FedRooms Rate can be found at major hotels and meet all per diem and



FEMA requirements. It's better to ask a hotel for their FedRooms rate vs. just a Government rate because the Government rate that a hotel may offer can exceed the locality's per diem rate.

The FedRooms rate also offers increased cancellation and early departure flexibility.

DOI Travelers can book online through the OBE, through our DOI Travel Management Center, or by calling the hotel directly when necessary and asking for the FedRooms Rate.

Should you have any questions regarding FedRooms, contact [Donna Cooke](#) via email.

Fuel Surcharges on City Pair Tickets (GSA)

As stated in the FY08 City Pair Program (CPP) Contract, Fuel Surcharges are allowed as directed by Clause C.13 and provides, if imposed commercially, a CPP airline may impose fuel surcharges to the contract fares as well, after a 14-day grace period.

Carriers are responsible to

notify the CPP team at the time commercial fuel



surcharges are implemented, and are required to submit to GSA a list of all markets af-

ected. This listing needs to include the amount of the one-way fuel surcharge and the CPP fares affected, and will be posted under the [Fuel Surcharge Fact Sheet](#). The fact sheets will be posted shortly after the CPP is notified of a Fuel Surcharge imposition.