




United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
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FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION MEMORANDUM NO. 2007-019 (IL.G.1)

To: Bureau Assistant Directors, Administration
Director, National Business Center
Bureau Finance Officers
Director, Office of Acquisition and Property Management

From: Daniel Fletcher 
Director, Office of Financial Management

Subject: First Class and Business Class Travel

The recent GAO Audit [GAO-07-1268](#) on Premium Class Travel estimates that 67 percent of premium class travel is not properly authorized, justified or both. As a reminder from that same report: "With the serious fiscal challenges facing the federal government, agencies must maximize their ability to manage and safeguard valuable taxpayers' dollars. Recognizing the high cost of premium class travel, GSA and federal agencies have issued a series of policies providing that such travel should be taken as a last resort." Department of the Interior has worked diligently towards demonstrating that we are prudent travelers when performing official travel and structures travel policy in support of that goal. This Financial Administrative Memorandum instructs offices of the correct procedures for requesting approval for First Class or Business Class Travel under truly exceptional circumstances.

First class travel accommodations can only be approved by the Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget per 205 DM 15. If the First Class travel is being requested based on a justifiable reason under Federal Travel Regulation 301-10.123, the detailed documented justification and request for approval must be routed for concurrence by the Director, Office of Financial Management with final approval by the Assistant Secretary-PMB. If the First Class Travel is being requested based on a medical necessity, the approval memorandum will be additionally routed through the Occupational Health Program Manager, Office of Occupational Health and Safety. The employee must provide current medical documentation from their medical provider supporting the request for first class accommodations. This certification must be updated annually for any subsequent requests. The approval memorandum must first be signed by the employee's approving official, followed by concurrence from the Director, Office of Financial Management and the Office of Occupational Health and Safety, with final approval by the Assistant Secretary-PMB.

Business class travel and other classes which are higher than coach class and described in FTR 301-10.121, will be scrutinized as seriously as First Class travel from Fiscal Year 2008 onward by GAO, GSA, and Congress and must be reported. DOI must take steps to curtail use of

Business class travel accommodations indicative of our desire to travel in the most cost advantageous manner possible. Even if a foreign travel routing requires a flight of 14 hours or more, the recommended practice is to authorize a rest stop en route or a rest period upon arrival at the duty site to avoid the increased expense of Business class accommodations. If the Business Class travel is being requested based on a medical necessity, the employee must provide current medical documentation from their medical provider supporting the request for business class accommodations. This certification must be updated annually, unless the physical impairment is a lifelong impairment. In the rare event Business Class accommodations must be utilized under an authorized reason per FTR 301-10.124, the Bureau or Departmental office should have delegated approval authority at the Assistant/Associate Director of Administration level. A copy of the Travel Authorization documenting the reason for approval of Business Class travel should be sent to the DOI Office of Financial Management in support of the annual report to GSA.

Employees may upgrade to business-class or first-class at their own personal expense, through redemption of frequent flyer benefits, with no additional approval required. Please direct any questions you may have on this subject to Jackie Lynch, Jacqueline_Lynch@ios.doi.gov or 703-648-7680.

Prior Financial Administration Memoranda on this subject:

[FAM 2001-003 \(II.G.1\) dated 1/24/01 \(active\)](#)