

U.S. Department of the Interior

DOI TRAVEL NEWSLETTER

Published by: Office of Financial Management

Volume 3, Issue 1

February 2003



IN THE NEWS

Airlines Remove \$100 Standby Fee

Spokespeople for United, American and Continental airlines have dropped plans to charge travelers using non-refundable tickets a \$100 fee to stand-by for a flight on the same day of travel. Other major airlines are expected to make this change, as well.

Some Airlines Begin At-Home Check-In

This new procedure allows travelers to go to their airline web site prior to their flight and print off a boarding pass that can be used to bypass the counter check-in at the airport. Travelers on American Airlines can go to their web site 12 hours prior to their flight. US Airways also allows their passengers to check-in on their web site 6 hours prior to flight time. Delta and Alaska Airlines also allow for online boarding passes. During the computer check-in process, American will issue two boarding pass copies, one that the airline will keep and one for the passenger's records. If a boarding pass is

lost, customers will need to see an agent at the airport.

In-Flight Cafe?

In an experiment to see if coach passengers would be willing to pay for airline food, America West and Northwest began charging \$3 for snacks, \$5 for sandwiches, and \$10 for full hot meals on a few test flights. Coach passengers, who cur-



rently do not receive meal service, would have an opportunity to purchase a meal. Delta and other airlines have been toying with the idea as well, and are not ruling out charging for food, too. United has cut food service on flights of two to three hours. American Airlines is talking with airport restaurants about selling food from kiosks at gates as passengers are boarding.

Pentagon Calls on Passenger Jets

The Pentagon has called some of the nation's passenger jets for active duty to move troops and equipment in advance of a possible war with Iraq. Under the air reserve program, the Government can commandeer use of civil aircraft to mobilize troops, transport cargo, or make medical evacuations. This decision is only the second time in its 51-year history that Civilian Reserve Air Fleet has been mobilized. The first mobilization was in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, when the Pentagon spent \$1.5 billion using fleet. The government reimburses the airline for the use of the aircraft—which will assist the airlines once a war breaks out or a commercial airliner becomes the target of a terrorist and bookings vaporize. The Defense Department said the action was necessary because of "increased operations associated with the buildup of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf region." The first flights, involving 47 planes, were scheduled to take off mid-

Inside this issue:

Continuing Resolution	2
Rental Car Increase	2
POV Reimbursement	2
Quality Assurance Survey	2
Guidance for Phone Calls	3
Mandatory Use of OWT	3
Trip Manager's Corner	3
Latest on Trip Manager	3
Flight Reservations	3
OWT Ticket Data	4
Traveler's Tip Bits	4



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.

DOI TRAVELER INFORMATION

February, aviation industry officials said.

Continuing Resolution Status

The House and the Senate adopted the Conference report on February 13, 2003. H.J. Res. 2 was presented to the President on February 19, 2003 and signed on February 20, 2003. H.J. Res 2 became Public Law 108-10 on February 20, 2003.

Rental Car Rate Increase

The November 2002 DOI Travel Newsletter included an article which reminded DOI travelers about rental car rules. The article also included a link to the current MTMC Government rental car agreement (<http://www.mtmc.army.mil/CONTENT/6603/CAR3.pdf>). Incorporated into



the October 1, 2002, agreement was a standard mandatory Government administrative rate supplement (GARS) of \$5.00 per day worldwide. Since the last newsletter, most rental car companies have now announced their intention to implement the \$5.00 fee. GARS will reimburse the rental car company for those costs incurred which are peculiar to doing business with the government, including the application of the agreement terms and conditions on a worldwide basis, the rental of vehicles to employees under age 25, acceptance of properly licensed fellow government employees on official business as additional drivers, and a guarantee of the maximum rates for at least 60 days. GARS will be paid by all renters and shall be listed separately from the rate on the rental documents.

Department travelers should be aware that the \$5.00 fee is not included, but is in addition to, the daily rate. When arranging travel by rental car, please remember to add the \$5.00 fee per day to get the actual cost of the rental car.

There is a listing of rental car companies that participate in the MTMC program on the Internet. To find the companies listed by city, go to:

<http://www.fedtravel.com/gsa/cars.asp?flights=&cars=&hotels=&trains=&PDA=&Home=Y> If your city is not listed, find a list of company phone numbers at <http://www.mtmc.army.mil/frontDoor/0,1383,OID=3-215-219-502,00.html>, click on Participating companies on the left of your screen.

In addition to GARS, the Department has learned that some Hertz companies have begun charging a \$2 "promotional items fee." PFM attempted to verify this charge and gain further explanation, without success. Some Hertz companies are charging \$2 per day, others \$0.50 per day, not to exceed \$2, and the list goes on. This "promotional items fee" is not an official fee, and cannot be charged to your Department Bank of America charge card. OWT is aware of this issue and has been instructed to not accept this fee. If necessary, instruct your reservation clerk at pick-up that you cannot pay for this additional fee.

2003 Privately Owned Vehicle Mileage Reimbursement

On December 24, 2002, the Administrator of General Services signed Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) amendment, Privately Owned Vehicle Mileage Reimbursement. The mileage reimbursement rates for use of privately owned vehicles (POV) on official Government travel decreased. The mileage allowance for advantageous use of an automobile decreased from 36.5 to 36.0 cents per mile; airplane from 97.5 to 95.5 cents per mile; and motorcycle from 28.0 to 27.5 cents per mile.



FTR Amendment 112, Privately Owned Vehicle Mileage Reimbursement rates was published in the Federal Register on January 6, 2003. The amendment was effective January 1, 2003.

DOI Quality Assurance Survey

In order to assess the quality of travel service the Department was receiving from Omega World Travel (OWT), a Quality Assurance Survey was conducted nationwide. This survey included 1,375 randomly selected participants from the universe of DOI employees who performed official travel during the June through September 2002 time frame. The survey began on Monday, November 25, 2002. Travelers who participated were extremely informative on those issues that were successful, needed work, and/or required change. Travelers were asked to rate their overall experience with OWT, and the results showed 85% very good or good. A summary of the QA survey findings are presented below.

The survey revealed that the majority of travelers are using OWT to arrange airline reservations only. Please remember to benefit from OWT for hotel reservations, car rentals, and rail trips, also. It was additionally discovered that the majority of travelers (87%) make reservations via telephone, the remainder walk in, e-mail, or fax reservations. Calls are answered in less than seven rings, and hold times are under ten minutes. Most e-mails and faxes were responded

DOI TRAVELER INFORMATION

to within 24 hours. The results were less favorable for the 24-hour number, with complaints that the 24-hour line was not readily available 24 hours per day, but rather only when the other call centers were closed. OWT has been made aware of the importance of 24-hour assistance for DOI travelers.

Reminder: Guidance for Telephone Calls While on TDY

The Federal Travel Regulation directs travelers to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business. This is an extremely important point to remember when you are making telephone calls while on temporary duty. Telephone calls made while on temporary duty could become costly to the Department. The cost of telephone calls placed from hotel rooms has been on the rise, and continues to increase.

Employees on official overnight travel status should make calls using least-cost-to-the-Government methods. Supervisors are expected to provide employees with a Federal Calling Card or a pre-paid calling card for long-distance



calls for use while on official travel. Employees are allowed to make official business calls, a brief daily personal call, and other necessary long-distance calls that would have been made from home or office phones if the employee were not in travel status.

Reminder: Mandatory Use of Omega World Travel

The Federal Travel Regulation (FTR)



governs the Department's travel program. The FTR required mandatory usage of Travel Management Centers (TMC) effective January 1, 2001. The Department's mandatory use TMC is Omega World Travel (OWT). The Travel Management Center (OWT) must be used for booking all official travel reservations, in order to comply with the Federal Travel Regulation (301-50.1 and 301-73.102). Due to the countless remote areas where the Department conducts business, four exemptions from the mandatory use concerning lodging were established in FAM 2001-005 (II.G.1.) <http://www.doi.gov/pfm/fam01-05.html>.



Trip Manager's Corner

During the month of January, 3,874 air segments, 588 hotel rooms, and 468 rental cars were reserved on Trip Manager.

The Latest on Trip Manager

Good News!! The next generation of Trip Manager user interface is greatly enhanced by simplifying steps to book a trip, as well as adding additional functionality to the system. Booking your travel with Trip Manager could not be easier. DOI travelers can log on to the system, and in less than 10 minutes for a simple trip, have their airline, hotel and car reservations made. The new

system adds more flight selection capabilities, adopting real-time web automation technology, and has the ability to access and book online (non-refundable) fares from individual airline sites later this year. Real-time web automation technology will provide DOI travelers with access to and full booking functionality for all online fares. Additionally, travelers will have access to travel inventory from more than 150 travel web sites, including such airlines as jetBlue. This real-time search capability will enable travelers to book with complete confidence, knowing they have found the best fare available without spending extra time searching additional sites on the Internet.

In addition the system interface from the Omega profile system to the trip manager system will be upgraded and the credit card information will be passed from Omega to Worldspan without any bureau administrator assistance. Make sure your profile is current and has the current credit information.

Changing Flight Reservations in Trip Manager

If you book a flight on Trip Manager that has not yet been ticketed, and need to make changes, please proceed as follows. To change one portion of the round trip, in either direction, use "cancel flight" and "add flight." To change all segments of a trip, cancel the entire flight itinerary and re-book under a new itinerary with a new trip locator. DO NOT use "add flights" on the same itinerary if all segments need to be changed. It is against the airline rules to delete the entire flight reservation from a trip and then add back different flights to the same (original) itinerary. When this occurs the airlines charge

DOI TRAVELER INFORMATION

Omega penalties and fines. This is referred to as "churning."

OWT Airline Ticket Data

The following table shows updated OWT airline ticket data.

OWT Airline Ticket Data		
February 2002 — January 2003		
	Tickets Issued	Dollar Value (in millions)
Feb	15,872	\$5.34
Mar	18,197	5.76
Apr	18,665	6.31
May	18,923	6.49
Jun	13,180	5.72
Jul	17,487	6.24
Aug	15,428	6.69
Sept	14,661	4.69
Oct	18,406	6.77
Nov	14,273	4.61
Dec	7,453	3.16
Jan	13,609	5.5
TOTAL	186,154	\$67.28

Traveler's "Tip Bits"

New Security Screening Baggage Tips

The screening of all checked baggage for explosives began on December 31, 2002, at airports across the nation. The latest change in baggage screening for explosives will add to longer wait times at the airport. United Airlines, for instance, is recommending that fliers arrive 90 minutes before their flights, 30 minutes more than the previous recommendation. United recommends obtaining a boarding pass before going through security checkpoints.

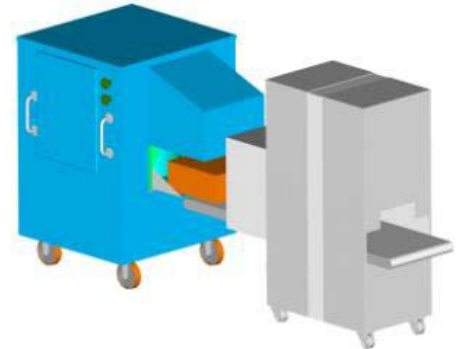
The explosive-detection machines are about the size of a minivan. Travelers

are advised to leave their bags unlocked. Baggage-screening procedures may vary among airports. But Transportation Security Administration officials say they are working toward standardizing procedures wherever possible around the country.

As a general rule, and for your own freedom from hassle, checked bags should be unlocked. That said, travelers were showing up on the first day of baggage screening with sealed cardboard boxes and getting through just fine. If the airport you are going to has its screening machines in the lobby where passengers stand by as they are screened, there is a good chance that the bag will pass through just fine and will not have to be opened. But if the buzzer goes off, you are going to have to open it. If you are in an airport where baggage screening goes on behind the counter, screeners are going to forcibly open the bag if they get a positive reading on it. If you feel you can't leave your luggage unlocked, run plastic bands around it or buy cheap plastic locks that you won't feel bad losing. Plastic slip ties can be cut off, are cheap, and easy to replace.

Anything with a large density like a fruitcake or a liquid could show up in the new bag screening machines as something that flags screeners to open a bag. If you need to carry a liquid or food, consider placing it in your carry-on luggage.

The Transportation Security Administration officials are working toward standardizing baggage procedures. In the interim, Airports will differ on bag checking. Most bags will be given either a swab around the edge (trace detection), directed to the baggage screening machine, or searched by a sniffing dog. Generally, only those bags that are flagged as suspicious by any of those methods may be hand searched. Of course, there may be some airports where systems are not yet in place or are very small and hand searching becomes the norm.



Curbside check-in is still allowed. It may take a few more minutes, though, because the skycap or a porter will need to walk you and your bags into the terminal for the baggage screening check (in those airports where screening is in the lobby).

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TMC Comments and Feedback Form:
www.doi.gov/pfm/tmc/feedback.html

DOI Online Quality Assurance Form:
www.doitravel.com/online_survey.html

DOI Travel Profile:
https://profiler.owt.net/doi_2001

TripManager:
www.tripmanager.com/doi

Omega World Travel
www.doitravel.com

DOI Travel Policy
www.doi.gov/pfm/travel.html

This newsletter is available on the Internet at:
www.doi.gov/pfm/travel_newsletter