

U.S. Department of the Interior

DOI TRAVEL NEWSLETTER

Published by: Office of Financial Management

Volume 4, Issue 1

January 2004



IN THE NEWS

Security Alert Dropped From an Orange (High) to a Yellow (Elevated) Condition

On Friday, January 9, 2004, the Homeland Security Advisory System threat level was reduced from "orange" to "yellow" while eight airports and other unspecified facilities remain on high alert. A few unnamed airports remain at a higher risk of terrorist attack than other airports, which unofficial sources claim are Washington, New York, Los Angeles and Las Vegas. The national threat level had been raised to high risk/Code Orange on Sunday, December 21, 2003. The holiday travel season ended without incident, but the nation stayed on a high terrorism alert because US authorities continued to receive credible information about possible attacks.

U.S. Begins Fingerprint Program

An estimated 28 million visitors to the United States this year will be photographed and fingerprinted under a new program introduced



Monday, January 5, 2004. The new US-VISIT program applies to any visitors who must have a visa to enter the United States. By October, all visitors will be required to have a machine-readable passport or some other method of biometric identification, such as fingerprints or retina scans.

TSA-Approved Locks for Checked Luggage

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and the Travel Goods Association have created a certified locking device, the Travel Sentry. It does not interfere with the TSA's mandate that checked luggage be readily

available for inspection as it passes through TSA screening stations. The TSA screener will input TSA-designated codes to open the lock. Participating manufacturers will include the locks as a standard element of luggage. Travel Sentry-certified locks will bear a red diamond-shaped logo as a signal to TSA screeners that they meet approved standards. Visit www.travelsentry.org for more information.

Car Rental Rates Rising

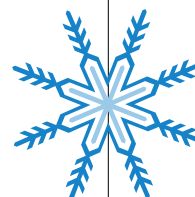
Avis, Budget, Hertz, National and Alamo are raising car rental rates. The companies say they will raise prices by \$5 per day, or \$20 per week, on all vehicle types. The rate increase is effective for rentals checked out beginning February 15, 2004.

Registered Traveler Program Examined

The program allows any traveler to volunteer for a more thorough background check. Once the check is completed the traveler would receive a card that ensures that they would not be targeted for additional screening. The card would

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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.

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be tied to some form of biometric identification, such as iris scanning or fingerprints.

O'Hare Ranks Last for Arrivals, Departures

Travelers are more likely to run into delays when flying into or out of O'Hare International Airport than when passing through any other major airport in the country, according to newly released federal data. As many as seven out of every 10 flights are arriving late at O'Hare during peak hours.

DOI travelers are thus advised to avoid O'Hare airport whenever possible. On DOI's most commonly traveled route, for example, Washington, DC to Denver, American Airlines offers routing through both Chicago and Dallas-Ft. Worth. To avoid delays, the latter connection would be preferable.

Sky Marshals Likely Will Use "Soft" Bullets

Sky Marshals are most likely to use compact self-loading pistols with special "soft" bullets in order to minimize the risk that a stray shot could puncture an aircraft's pressurized cabin. Even if it did, ballistics and aviation experts say it would not cause catastrophic structural damage, and the idea of planes breaking up or passengers being sucked out is far-fetched.

eTravel is on the DOI 2004 Agenda

The General Services Administration has released Amendment 2003-07 in the Federal Register, replacing the requirement to use a Travel Management System (TMS) with a requirement to use the Governmentwide eTravel Service (eTS) (see <http://www.doi.gov/pfm/fam03-28.html>). eTravel is one of 24 original e-government initiatives, which will let federal travelers plan travel (reserving flights, hotels, and cars) and file for reimbursement of travel expenses over the Internet. Each agency's travel sys-

tem must connect to its financial management system, and eventually the travel systems will connect to a GSA-run data warehouse. The rule also requires agencies to submit plans to GSA's eTravel Program Management Office by March 31 on how they will implement their new systems. eTravel is expected to cut the overall costs of travel management.

Civilian agencies must choose one of three end-to-end online travel systems and begin migrating to it by December



31, 2004. eTravel services contracts were awarded to CW Government Travel Inc. of San Antonio; Northrop Grumman Mission Systems of Fairfax, Virginia; and EDS Corp o Plano, Texas. All federal travelers must use the system by September 20, 2006.

The Office of Financial Management (PFM) is coordinating the development of the migration plan for the Department. This will be a cooperative effort involving GSA, the FBMS team, NBC, and Bureau representatives. Should you receive inquiries from the various vendors participating in the eTravel Service, please refer the inquiry to PFM for response.

Mileage Rate Changes for Temporary Duty

The General Services Administration (GSA) issued Federal Travel

Table 1

Privately Owned Vehicle (POV)	2003 Mileage Rate (cents per mile)	2004 Mileage Rate (cents per mile)
Automobile	36.0	37.5 (increase 1.5)
Airplane	95.5	99.5 (increase 4.0)
Motorcycle	27.5	28.5 (increase 1.0)

Regulation Amendment 2003-06, adjusting 41 CFR Part 301-10.303, Privately Owned Vehicle Mileage Reimbursement. The rates are effective January 1, 2004.

The mileage rates for advantageous use of privately owned vehicles (POV) on official Government travel increased (see Table 1).

Additionally, based on updated data for the two-tiered reimbursement rates reflecting costs to an agency of operating a Government furnished vehicle (GFV) the following change occurs (see Table 2).

If you are authorized (not committed) to use a Government automobile and use a privately owned automobile instead, your reimbursement will be limited to the cost that would be incurred for use of a Government automobile (27.0 cents per mile). If you are committed to use a Government automobile and would not ordinarily be authorized to use a privately owned automobile due to the availability of a Government automobile, but nevertheless request to use a privately owned automobile, you will be partially reimbursed (10.5 cents per mile). This is the approximate cost

Table 2

Government Furnished Vehicle (GFV)	2003 Mileage Rate (cents per mile)	2004 Mileage Rate (cents per mile)
Use of a POV when a GFV is authorized/available	28.5	27.0 (decrease 1.5)
Use of a POV by an employee committed to use a GFV	10.5	10.5 (no change)

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- User must have Internet access
- Foreign travel not available
- Not all airlines are represented

Travelers needing assistance while using Trip Manager should first call their Bureau system administrator for support. Locate your bureau representative at:

http://www.doi.gov/pfm/tmc/tmc_system_admin.html. If the issue cannot be resolved, the administrator will contact the Omega Trip Manager Desk. If a traveler calls with an "user error" and received "agent intervention," a full transaction fee will be charged. For example, a traveler requesting the agent to rebook a flight, book a car or hotel, add seats, etc. The traveler will not be charged if the product malfunctions.

What Are the Alternatives to Traveling?

The economic downturn, traveler safety concerns and security processes have stimulated interest in the use of travel alternatives. When travel is purely for the purpose of communicating, other options may be more cost effective. Teleconferencing, videoconferencing, and web conferencing, should be considered as alternatives to travel when cost savings can be realized. Costs associated with each alternative should be known in order to make appropriate business decisions. Travel alternatives and related costs should be made available to travelers during pre-trip planning. These are effective tools to bring employees and other together (e.g., business/project team meetings, interviews, hearings and trials, distance learning, training and workshops). These are especially convenient for 2-3 hour meetings or when several employees from the same area have to travel.

When less costly, and advantageous to the Department, also consider:

- Traveling by car and/or carpooling
- Taking the train instead of air travel
- Greater use of public transportation
- Reducing the frequency of regularly scheduled out-of-town meetings
- Restrict the number of staff traveling to the same destination for the same purpose.
- Coordinating between bureaus/agencies for joint travel arrangements when more than one bureau/agency is involved
- Utilizing video recordings, bulletin boards, E-mail, internet



DOI TRAVELER INFORMATION

OWT Airline Ticket Data

The following table shows updated OWT airline ticket data.

OWT Airline Ticket Data		
November 2002 – December 2003		
	Tickets Issued	Dollar Value (in millions)
Nov	14,273	\$4.61
Dec	7,453	3.16
Jan	13,609	5.50
Feb	13,460	5.44
Mar	14,468	5.80
Apr	14,577	5.88
May	13,185	5.53
Jun	10,681	4.60
Jul	11,837	5.30
Aug	11,355	4.94
Sep	9,844	4.14
Oct	14,926	6.46
Nov	11,602	4.86
Dec	6,995	2.85
TOTAL	168,265	\$69.07

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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