

# U.S. Department of the Interior

## DOI TRAVEL NEWSLETTER

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### IN THE NEWS

#### Travelers Continue to Fill Planes

Airlines are reporting a record number of seats being full. Several are reporting 80% to 86% load factors. Be sure to get to the airport early and be patient.

#### Independence Air: Brand New, Yet Several Years Old

Independence Air, formerly Atlantic Coast Airlines (ACA), was partnered with United (since 1989) and Delta Airlines (since 2000). ACA planned to one day declare independence from the larger airlines. In November 2003, Independence Air was born, dedicated to creating a low-fare airline that makes air travel easier for customers. Although Independence Air offers low-fare flights, note that all fares are non-refundable. There is a \$25 fee prior to scheduled departure time for:

- Changes, plus any difference in the applicable re-booked fare. If the new fare is lower, the difference in the fare will be applied as a credit and can be used for



travel on Independence Air within the next 12 months.

- Cancellations, with the remaining balance applied as a credit for travel on Independence Air within the next 12 months.

Call Omega World Travel ([http://www.doi.gov/pfm/tmc/tmc\\_num.html](http://www.doi.gov/pfm/tmc/tmc_num.html)) to make reservations on Independence Air.

#### Hotel Taxes on the Rise...Again

A recent survey found that hotel taxes in some U.S. cities are more than 17% per night. Houston, Cincinnati and Columbus, Ohio, each levied taxes in 2003 in excess of 17% per night. Among the top 15 cities in BTN's annual Corporate Travel Index the leaders in terms of taxes were Washington, D.C., at 15.86%, New

York at 15.24% and Chicago at 14.9%. The national average tax for the year was 12.46%.

#### D.W.P. (Driving While on Phone)

The District of Columbia, New Jersey and New York State will issue driver's a \$100 fine for talking on wireless phones without using hands-free devices.

#### Recent Policy Announcements

##### Travel and Transportation Cost Savings Initiative

Assistant Secretary, Policy, Management and Budget, signed a memorandum on August 3, 2004, encouraging practical, prudent travel, to accomplish the mission of the Department. The Department will only reimburse travelers for the cost of accommodations and services, which meet reasonable and customary standards for convenience, safety and comfort in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulation. To read the complete memorandum and attachment, click on: <http://www.doi.gov/pfm/fam04-07.html>.

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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.

# DOI TRAVELER INFORMATION

*Airline Food-For-Purchase Program  
Guidance Reduced M&IE Allowance for  
the First and Last Day of Assignment*

This FAM provides travelers with guidance on the new airline food-for-purchase program, and also reminds travelers about policy regarding the reduced meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) allowance for the first and last day of the travel assignment. For more information, go to:

<http://www.doi.gov/pfm/fam04-05.html>

## It's That Time of Year Again...Fiscal Year-End Travel

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. During an uncertain budget time, you are encouraged to buy only fully refundable tickets for travel commencing on or after October 1, 2004, until funding authority for FY 2005 is enacted. This restriction does not apply for travel involving no-year funds or multiple-year funds (if valid for FY 2005) – since funding would already have been appropriated.

Please note that GSA contract city-pair tickets are generally issued 2 days prior to travel, while restricted fare tickets are issued (and charged) at the time travel reservations are made. For more information see:

<http://www.doi.gov/pfm/fam02-14.html>.

## Reminder: Emergency Incident Travel Contacts

OWT has provided contacts to be used ONLY for Emergency Firefighting and other National Emergencies. For immediate emergency incident travel planning after hours, please call 866-785-5875. Omega has a 24 hour call center as well at: 877-517-3417, Fax: 910-989-0990, e-mail: doiff@owt.net.

**Table 1**  
Comparison of 2004 and 2005 Awards for DOI Most Frequently Used City Pairs

| DOI's Most Used City Pairs     | 2004 Awarded Airline | 2004 Standard City Pair | 2004 Capacity Controlled | 2005 Awarded Airline | 2005 Standard City Pair | 2005 Capacity Controlled | Unrestricted Coach Fare      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Albuquerque-Phoenix            | America West         | \$75                    | \$37                     | Southwest            | \$70                    | \$37                     | \$378 (Southwest under \$50) |
| Anchorage-Fairbanks            | Alaska               | \$229                   | \$189                    | Alaska               | \$194                   | None                     | \$198                        |
| Boise-Salt Lake City           | Delta                | \$89                    | \$64                     | Delta                | \$89                    | \$68                     | \$74 (Southwest under \$50)  |
| Wash. DC (Reagan Nat'l)-Denver | American             | \$196                   | \$96                     | American             | \$204                   | \$90                     | \$116                        |
| Denver-Wash. DC (Dulles)       | United               | \$410                   | \$394                    | United               | \$358                   | None                     | \$404                        |
| Denver-Las Vegas               | America West         | \$120                   | \$110                    | United               | \$186                   | \$97                     | \$119                        |
| Denver-Phoenix                 | America West         | \$122                   | \$99                     | America West         | \$130                   | \$99                     | \$109                        |
| Denver-Salt Lake City          | United               | \$78                    | \$68                     | Delta                | \$89                    | \$69                     | \$88                         |

## 2005 City-Pair Contract Awards

Fiscal year 2005 airline city-pair contracts, awarded by the General Services Administration (GSA), will be effective October 1, 2004. Average flight time, pricing, flight distribution and number of flights offered by each submitting airline are considered in the decision. Advance purchases are not required nor is there a minimum or maximum length of stay required.

GSA has negotiated capacity controlled fares once again offering prices even lower than the already discounted standard city-pair rates for a limited number of seats (Table 1). Capacity controlled fares are offered for a limited number of seats on each flight and therefore must be booked early.

## eTravel Update

eTravel is quickly approaching! On July 27-30, 2004, the three eTravel vendors presented their system to

travel/finance/technology representatives from each DOI Bureau. The eTravel system will automate and consolidate travel processes involving travel planning, authorization, reservations, payment of travel claims, submit/fulfill vouchers for reimbursement, and voucher reconciliation into an end-to-end system.

## First Class Travel Guidance

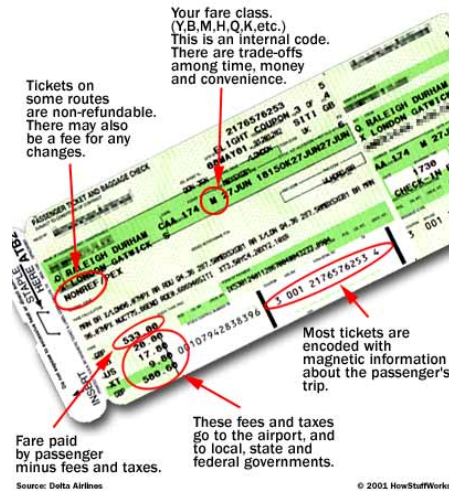
Lately, several airlines have offered last minute first class travel rates at reasonable prices. Bear in mind, the Department has official policy on first class travel. First-class is the highest class of accommodations on a multiple-class airline flight. The Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) states for official business travel, both domestic and international, you must use coach-class accommodations, with a few exceptions (301-10.122). You may use first-class airline accommodations only when the Assis-

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tant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget specifically authorizes/approves first class accommodations (301-10.50) and (a) no other coach-class or premium-class other than first class accommodation is available within 24 hours of your proposed departure time, or scheduled to arrive within 24 hours of your proposed arrival time; (b) when accommodating a disability (substantiated in writing by medical authority and approved by A/S PMB) or other special need (in writing and approved by A/S PMB); (c) exception security circumstances defined by the Department; and (d) agency mission requirement (301-10.123). The approval authority is kept at this level because each year the Department must report all first-class airline accommodations used to Congress and show the comparison of cost between contract city-pair cost or tourist fare cost if there is no city-pair. Lower cost is not a justification for flying first class, nor is paying full coach “upgradeable” fares.

## Unwelcomed Fees Due to Traveler Misinterpretation—Duplicate Booking, Back-to-Back Ticketing, and Hidden City Ticketing

Many Department travelers are not aware they can make some costly “errors” that are against the rules of most airlines. When setting fares for each market, a key factor that airlines consider is the amount of competition from other airlines offering similar scheduled air travel between two different points. When passengers purchase tickets, they enter into a legally binding contract with the carrier to receive transportation between two locations at specified prices and to use tickets exactly as issued. Tickets contain a written reference to the terms and conditions set forth in this contract. The airlines view a failure to use tickets exactly as issued as a possible breach of contract for which the airlines can demand compensation. If an airline discovers you have violated their policy, they may



charge you or your travel agent the full fare for both tickets and may refuse to honor the ticket being misused. They may also take away all your frequent flyer points and any status you have in their frequent flyer program. Some airlines charge up to \$500 per occurrence. Following are some definitions of common “mistakes.”

### What is Duplicate Booking?

Duplicate bookings are multiple itineraries for any number of passengers with the same passenger name, whether identical itineraries or not. Reserving one or more seats on the same flight or conflicting flights for any identical time frame, regardless of the class of service or input code used to make the reservations. For example, the traveler is booked more than once through different Call Centers or Agents. Another example is when an initial trip is reserved, but not purchased, on Trip Manager, and is later reserved and purchased through a traditional agent booking without canceling the original Trip Manager reservation.

### What is Back-to-Back Ticketing?

Back-to-back ticketing is expressly forbidden by most airlines. This ticketing occurs when a passenger buys two round-trip discounted tickets that include a Saturday night stay, but either

uses only half the ticket coupons or uses all the coupons out of sequence. Since the debit memo for this offense is costly, here are two common scenarios:

### *Scenario 1: Coupons Not Used*

You want to fly IAD-DEN May 11 and return May 13. The usual cost is on the order of \$820 (RT). The same airline offers a special fare of \$200 round trip, provided you book 14 days in advance and stay over a Saturday night. You decide to “save” the Department money and buy two tickets:

You plan to use (A) from Ticket 1 and (C) from Ticket 2 in order to complete your round trip itinerary. Each ticket costs \$200, for a total of \$400, so you save \$420 off the cost of a full fare \$820 ticket. You do not use coupons (B) and (D). Note that you used the first segment of each itinerary, because failure to use the first segment may result in the airline canceling the remainder of the itinerary.

Ticket 1: IAD-DEN May 11 (A)  
IAD-DCA May 16 (B)

Ticket 2: IAD-DEN May 13 (C)  
DEN-IAD May 17 (D)

| MAY 2004 |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Su       | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa |
|          |    |    |    |    |    | 1  |
|          | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  |
|          | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
|          | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
|          | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
|          | 30 | 31 |    |    |    |    |

### *Scenario 2: Coupons Used Out of Sequence*

You want to fly IAD-DEN May 11 and return May 13. You want to make the same trip the next week, that is, leaving May 18 and returning May 20. Normally each round trip ticket would cost \$820, for a total of \$1640. As in Scenario 1, the same airline offers a special fare of \$200 round trip, provided you book 14 days in advance and stay over a Saturday night. You decide to “save” the Department some money and buy two tickets:

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Ticket 1: IAD-DEN May 11 (A)  
IAD-DCA May 20 (B)

Ticket 2: IAD-DEN May 13 (C)  
DEN-IAD May 18 (D)

| MAY 2004 |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Su       | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa |
|          |    |    |    |    |    | 1  |
| 2        | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  |
| 9        | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16       | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23       | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30       | 31 |    |    |    |    |    |

You plan to use all four segments from these two tickets, but in the following order: {A C D B}. The two trips cost \$400 instead of \$1640, saving \$1240.

## What is Hidden-City Ticketing?

Hidden-city ticketing occurs when a traveler books a flight to one city but purposely deplanes at an intermediate city. Though never intending to make the last leg of the flight, the passenger purchased the ticket because it is cheaper than a ticket to the intermediate city.

## **Metrobus 5A: DC – Dulles Line . . . \$3.00 Express Fare!**

Whenever practical, the most economical means of transportation should be considered. Public transportation should be contemplated first, since it is usually the least expensive, especially in certain densely populated urban areas, such as New York, Washington, DC, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Transportation around the DC – Dulles area can be quite costly. If practical, chose the Metrobus 5A route: DC – Dulles line. The cost is only \$3.00! An unbelievable cost savings when a taxi can cost over \$50 for the same route. The 5A route runs once per hour (East 6:30 a.m. – 11:40 p.m.; Westbound 5:30 a.m. – 10:37 p.m.) and serves the following locations:

- L'Enfant Plaza station
- Rosslyn station
- Tysons-Westpark Transit Station
- Herndon-Monroe Park & Ride Lot



• Washington Dulles International Airport

To find more information, please go to: <http://www.wmata.com/timetables/dc/5a.pdf>

## **Alamo and Thrifty Rental Car Customers – Take Notice!**

Recently, several DOI employees have rented vehicles from Alamo and Thrifty Car Rental companies while on personal travel. Although the employees provided a personal (non-Government) charge card, the rental companies charged the employee's Government Travel Charge Card. The rental car companies are confusing official business profiles and personal profiles. Check your Bank of America travel charge card statement and your personal charge card statement for correct billing. If you find an error, please have it corrected by the rental car company as soon as possible.

## **Trip Manager's Corner**

During May, 1,344 tickets were purchased, 380 hotel rooms, and 673 rental cars were reserved on Trip Manager; in June, 1,305 tickets, 430 hotel rooms, and 654 rental cars; and July, 1,232 tickets, 350 hotel rooms, and 656 rental cars.

## **REMINDER - CONVENTIONS FOR OWT AND TRIP MANAGER PROFILES**

All employee profiles are created and updated at <http://www.doitravel.com>.

• **New Users** - User ID is the first initial of your first name, first four of your last name, last six of the SSN. Those with

less than 4 letters in the last name use only what is there. LEAVE out all punctuation! No hyphens or apostrophes. This is for both systems.

• **PASSWORD** in OWT is last 4 of SSN unless you changed it. Password in Trip Manager is blank on first login.

• **Name Changes** - If you change your name in the OWT profile- then your ID changes. Once the name is changed and the ID is updated, you must login in with the new ID. Your password in OWT profile remains the same. A new Trip manager profile will then be created in 48 hours with the new ID. First login for trip manager- blank password.

• **Bureau Changes** - Employees must log in to the OWT profile and update all information- bureau, credit card, email. Your login ID and password in OWT remain the same. A new profile will then be created in the new bureau in Trip Manager in 48 hours. Blank password for first login in Trip Manager.

## **Tips for Purchasing Tickets on Trip Manager**

- Is the ticket refundable?
- If the ticket is non-refundable, can the value of the ticket be used for future travel?
- If the ticket can be used for future travel:
  - When does it expire?
  - Is there a service fee associated with the change?
  - If so, what is the fee?
- Print the rules at the time you buy your ticket and carry them with you when you travel. If a dispute arises between you and the airline agent, you will have your fare rules available.



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## Free Online Bill Payment Available for Government-Issued Charge Cards

(by Andrea Gurrola)

Bank of America now offers FREE online bill payments for your government-issued integrated charge card. MyEasyPayment.com allows you to access and make a payment to your government-issued charge card with ease and convenience. You can use this capability wherever you are, whenever you choose by simply logging onto the Internet and entering your checking account information. All payments made through MyEasyPayment.com will be applied to your account within two to three calendar days. Making a payment online is easy, convenient, 100% secure, and absolutely free!

Payments can be made in five easy steps:

1. Sign onto [www.MyEasyPayment.com](http://www.MyEasyPayment.com)
2. Select "Federal Government Charge Card"
3. Enter your government-issued charge card account information
4. View your account information
5. Make a payment using your checking account

## OWT Airline Ticket Data

The following table shows updated OWT airline ticket data.

| OWT Airline Ticket Data |                |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| August 2003 – July 2004 |                |                            |
|                         | Tickets Issued | Dollar Value (in millions) |
| 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                       |
| Jan                     | 12,814         | 4.53                       |
| Feb                     | 13,960         | 4.62                       |
| Mar                     | 15,493         | 5.42                       |
| Apr                     | 14,855         | 5.29                       |
| May                     | 13,035         | 4.37                       |
| June                    | 12,717         | 4.55                       |
| July                    | 12,723         | 5.80                       |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>150,319</b> | <b>\$57.83</b>             |

## Travel Contacts and Web Sites:

**Newsletter:** Tamara L. Peyton,,  
[tamara\\_l\\_peyton@ios.doi.gov](mailto:tamara_l_peyton@ios.doi.gov)  
 202.208.6227

**TMC Administrator:** Tamara L. Peyton,  
[tamara\\_l\\_peyton@ios.doi.gov](mailto:tamara_l_peyton@ios.doi.gov)  
 202.208.6227

**Omega World Travel:** Viola Thompson,  
[vtompson@owt.net](mailto:vtompson@owt.net)  
 703.359.0200, ext.392

**TMC Comments and Feedback Form:**  
[www.doi.gov/pfm/tmc/feedback.html](http://www.doi.gov/pfm/tmc/feedback.html)

**DOI Online Quality Assurance Form:**  
[www.doittravel.com/online\\_survey.html](http://www.doittravel.com/online_survey.html)

**DOI Travel Profile:**  
<https://profiler.owt.net/gui/doi/login.asp>

**TripManager:**  
[www.tripmanager.com/doi](http://www.tripmanager.com/doi)

**Omega World Travel**  
[www.doittravel.com](http://www.doittravel.com)

**DOI Travel Policy**  
[www.doi.gov/pfm/travel.html](http://www.doi.gov/pfm/travel.html)

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