

U.S. Department of the Interior

DOI TRAVEL NEWSLETTER

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IN THE NEWS

Airline Labor Update

There is the possibility that one or more airlines will be involved in a strike or work stoppage during the period from early spring to summer 2001. It appears unlikely, however, that there will be a strike at American Airlines this summer. Flight attendants at American have indicated that they will wait to respond to a government offer of binding arbitration, substantially reducing the likelihood of a strike occurring this summer.

Comair Air, the nation's third largest regional airline, continues to experience major labor woes. Comair has extended its suspension of operations to a rolling 60-day basis. All flights are canceled through Sunday, July 22, 2001. Customers whose flights are affected are being contacted proactively by Comair as far in advance as possible and are being re-accommodated on flights operated by Delta, other Delta Connection carriers, Delta Express or other airlines.



Airline News

American Airlines has completed the acquisition of TWA Airlines, making American the world's largest airline. The combined company will offer flights to more than 300 cities on more than 900 aircraft. Service will continue under both names TWA and American on some routes. United Airlines and US Airways are still in discussions with the Justice Department regarding their potential merger. If United and US Airways successfully merge, American and United will control almost half of the U.S. air travel market.

Passenger Facility Charges May Increase the Price of Airline Tickets

If you have noticed an increase in your airline ticket price, it could be the result of an increase in the "Passenger Facility Charge" (PFC) which airports were authorized to make by the Department of Transportation. As of April 1, 2001, Department of Transportation approved airports began collecting the increased PFC of \$4.00 to \$4.50, up from \$3.00.

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Other Travel Items of Interest:

- FY 2001 OWT Airline Ticket Data
- Carry-On Luggage Tips

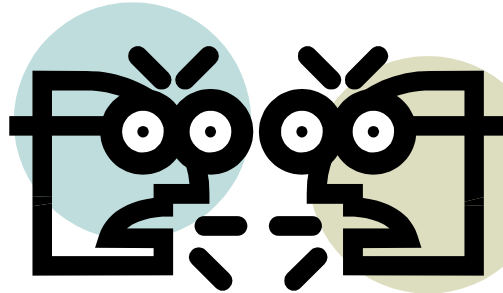
IN THE NEWS

Airport Chaos

Travelers may experience increased long lines, excessive bumping, delayed flights, and long waits on runways while traveling this summer. Airlines are booking record numbers of passengers although many airlines cannot meet their customers' needs. Some of the chaos is caused by an insufficient



number of airline ticket agents and more travelers using E-tickets without clear information on their itineraries. Flight cancellations and delays increase the chaos. Make sure you give yourself enough time when arriving at airports in case your flight is delayed or cancelled.



Unruly Passengers Face Increased Penalties

Unruly passengers have become an increasing and unpleasant part of many airline flights. Now, unruly passengers may have to pay a \$25,000 civil penalty, up from the current \$1,000 penalty. Passengers found guilty of improper behavior may also be banned from flying on commercial aircraft for one year.

DOI TRAVEL & RELOCATION INFORMATION

Making Reservations with Southwest Airlines

Procedures for making reservations with Southwest Air differ from making arrangements with other air carriers. The reason for this is that Southwest has chosen to subscribe to only one computer reservation system (Sabre), while most other airlines belong to all major reservation systems. In order to improve service to customers, Omega World Travel (OWT) has created a "Southwest Desk" which has direct access to the Sabre Reservation System. If you know that Southwest is your contract carrier, you may contact the Southwest Desk directly at (887) 867-9005. For your convenience, a listing of all Fiscal Year 2001 Southwest contract city-pairs is provided at the following site: www.doi.gov/pfm/tmc/swair_city_pair.html. If you do not know that Southwest is the contract carrier for your trip, contact OWT for assistance with your air travel arrangements.



Omega Transaction Fees

On May 1, 2001, the OWT transaction fee for travel service increased from \$7.95 to \$8.35 and all DOI travel booked since May 1 has been at the new rate. Based upon subsequent negotiations, OWT has agreed to roll-back the transaction fee to \$7.95 effective June 1. The \$7.95 fee will remain in effect until September 30, 2001. There is no provision for a refund of the higher rate charged in May.

Quality Assurance Survey

An on-line survey is available on the Omega website, which is accessible at the following address: www.owt.net/survey/doi/daily/DOI_Daily.asp. The new survey became available on May 1. Your opinion is very important to us and we encourage you to take a few minutes to complete the on-line survey.



Traveler Profiles

Remember to update your travel profile with current information concerning your Government Travel Card. When you receive a new card, please update your profile with your card's new expiration date. The profile can be accessed on the following secure OWT web-page: <https://profile.owt.net/doi>.

DOI travelers are also reminded that unless their profiles contain all required information fields, they will not be able to activate the web-based self-booking system (TripManager) which will be implemented next month. More information on TripManager will be included in the July DOI Travel Newsletter.

Travel Balances

DOI employees must pay charge card travel balances on time. The Department will offset from employee salaries, undisputed delinquent amounts billed on their DOI charge card. Employees with delinquent balances in excess of 60 days will lose card privileges and

DOI TRAVEL & RELOCATION INFORMATION

may be subject to disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Department's policy on charge card delinquencies, visit

www.doi.gov/pfm/fam00-10.html.

Additional information on the charge card program may be found at:

www.doi.gov/pam/pamhome.html.

to file a RITA reimbursement voucher could result in the finance office having to collect the withholding tax allowance (WTA) which was included

when the relocation voucher was paid. Taxable per diem payments for temporary duty do not include a WTA.

OWT Airline Ticket Data (November 2000 to April 2001)		
Month	Tickets Issued	Dollar Value (in millions)
November	14,237	\$5.48
December	7,328	2.82
January	13,788	5.20
February	15,066	5.80
March	18,204	7.03
April	16,164	6.30
TOTALS	84,787	\$32.63



Relocation Income Tax Allowance (RITA) and Income Tax Reimbursement Allowance (ITRA)

The RITA and ITRA personal computer (PC) program has been updated with the new marginal tax tables and distributed to each finance office. Employees who received taxable income in Calendar Year 2000 or before as a result of transferring from one duty station to another for the benefit of the government or because of long-term temporary duty should file a request for reimbursement as soon as possible. Failure

TRAVELER "TIP BITS"

Carry-On Luggage Tips

- Ask your Omega agent for airline carry-on-bag requirements before traveling.
- If possible, carry on only bags with essentials such as personal items, prescriptions, jewelry, passports, travel documents, and other valuables.



- Be safety conscious when storing bags in overhead bins. Do not stack heavy items or overstuff the bins.

Airlines has increased overhead bin space. Check out the carry-on bag Web site at www.faa.gov/avr/afs/back.pdf.

- Be prepared to check bags if the airline asks you to do so.
- The maximum size carry-on bag for most airlines is 45 linear inches (the total height, depth, and width of the bag). Continental Airlines has a more lenient carry-on policy and American

Travel Contacts and Web Sites:

Newsletter: Charlene Hutchinson, charlene_hutchinson@ios.doi.gov 202.208.3964

Government Travel Policy: Les Oden, les_oden@ios.doi.gov 202.208.6225

Omega World Travel: Viola Thompson, vthompson@owt.net 703.359.0200, ext.392

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

DOI Online Quality Assurance Form: www.owt.net/survey/doi/daily/doi_daily.asp

DOI Travel Profile: <https://profile.owt.net/doi>

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

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