

U.S. Department of the Interior

DOI TRAVEL NEWSLETTER

Published by: Office of Financial Management

Volume 4, Issue 3

May 2004



IN THE NEWS

Airport Security Line Reduction

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) will closely monitor 25 of the busiest U.S. airports this summer and send in extra help if security delays arise as part of a plan to minimize waits for travelers. Among the 25 airports are: McCarran and Hartsfield, Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, Washington's Dulles International Airport, New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport, Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, Newark Liberty International Airport and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. TSA has been criticized for not deploying enough screeners at some busy airports, leading to long lines. Industry experts are worried that the airport security systems will not be able to handle the increased volume of travelers for the summer. Cities, where special events have been hosted, had some airports experiencing up to five-hour security lines. Major airport hubs have the most congestion and long lines at security check points. Ten problem airports identified by the



Air Transport Association, shows the average wait at security lines is 45 minutes or more during peak travel times. A TSA security agent stated lines are extra long on Sundays and Mondays. If you are transferring through hub airports you should have no problems. However, if you have to check-in at those airports you should be prepared to arrive 2 hours prior to your flight. Many smaller airports should see relatively fast security checks and you should still be able to arrive 60-90 minutes prior to flight time to make it to your flight.

Security Training for Flight Attendants

The biggest U.S. flight attendant unions were promoting the development of mandatory security training.

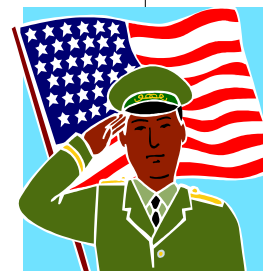
Flight attendants complain that pilots are locked away behind reinforced cockpit doors while cabin crews remain largely unprepared in self-defense and other security skills to handle a serious threat to the aircraft. Federal law allows each airline to develop its own security program for flight attendants. A few carriers provide minimal training, while others were still teaching flight attendants to cooperate with threatening passengers. Congress had already given TSA authority to mandate minimum security training standards for flight attendants as well as permit instruction on advanced techniques on a voluntary basis. A TSA spokeswoman said the agency was working on new guidelines for advanced crew training that would be voluntary.

US Airways Plans to Replace Agents with Machines

About 200 gate agents will be gone by September, when the airline installs gateside ticket-reading machines. "This moves people

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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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through the airport better, and does it at a lower cost," said US Airways spokesman David Castelvetter, noting that United uses similar systems.

Screening Rail Passengers

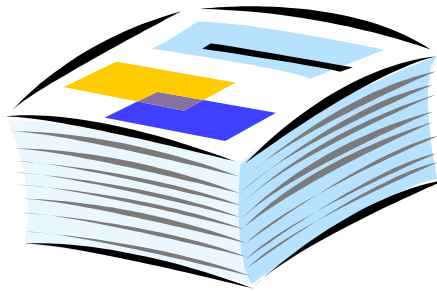
A test program to screen rail passengers for explosives got under way outside Washington D.C. on May 4. Transportation Security Administration personnel started screening commuters passing through the train station in New Carrollton, Maryland, which serves about 1,000 Amtrak and commuter rail riders per day. During the month long pilot program, officials plan to screen passengers only during the busiest hours.

Before boarding, passengers walk through a portal where they stand for a few seconds and feel a couple of puffs of air. The machinery analyzes whether the person has come into contact with explosive material. Unlike the checks that airplane passengers undergo, rail travelers will not be screened for metal items such as scissors, box cutters and tweezers. Once the test program is concluded, the plan is to screen rail passengers only if there is a specific threat and not routinely.

Exception to the (Contract City Pair) Rule?

Omega World Travel's (OWT) "Exception Report" reveals that nearly one-half of Department travel dollars are spent on non-contract city pair fares each month. Travelers are required to use contract city-pair fares unless one of the exceptions outlined in the Federal Travel Regulation 301-10.107 applies. Approving officials must authorize the use of a non-refundable fare in advance. All tickets must be purchased through the TMC (OWT). Remember, choosing not to use the contract carrier because of frequent flyer clubs is a violation of the city pair contract, unless a specific exception applies.

If a non-contract carrier offers the same destination at a lower cost fare that is



available to the general public, and you will not incur any other additional costs or related travel expenses, your approving official may authorize the use of the non-contract carrier lower fare. However, if the non-contract carrier lower fare is not available to the general public and is restricted to Government and military travelers on official business, you cannot purchase the non-contract carrier lower fare. Additionally, if the contract carrier who was awarded the city-pair fare and a non-contract carrier offer the same fare, you cannot use the non-contract carrier.

When an authorizing official authorizes a non-contract carrier and the ticket purchased has restrictions, the authorizer and traveler must know or reasonably anticipate, based on the planned trip, that the ticket will be used to avoid costly penalties. Consider and fully understand the airfare's applicable restrictions, change and cancellation penalties before accepting the itinerary. Such penalties are reimbursable only if your approving authority agrees that any itinerary change or cancellation was in the best interest of the Department. If changes to a restricted, non-refundable ticket are for personal reasons, the traveler will be held liable for any costs associated with the ticket and any corresponding penalties. In the event of changed plans, cancellation and other penalties will be reimbursed provided that the cancellation or change was made for the convenience of the Department or was necessitated by circumstances of an emergency nature affecting the traveler. The approving authority must approve the costs.

It is always a good idea to include in the remarks section of your travel authorization the justification for the use of a non-contract carrier. For example, the use of a non-contract carrier offered to the general public provided a savings of over \$400.

WHO PAYS?

The following four articles are intended to assist travelers in answering reimbursement questions that often arise.

Costs Associated with Jury Duty

Have you been selected to serve on Jury Duty? In most cases, Jury Duty is an authorized absence. (See <http://www.doi.gov/hrm/pmanager/er9e.html>).

Generally, if jury duty is during the employee's normal duty day, any fees collected must be turned in, in accordance with the provisions of 5 USC 5515, 5537, 5751. Fees received by the employee are collected while allowances are not. Allowances must be identified separately, or all monies collected will be considered fees and will be collected. Employees may keep reimbursements for expenses received from the court, authority, or party that caused the employee to be summoned and may keep the fees that exceed the employee's compensation for the days of service.



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Typically, employees serving on Jury Duty do not have a travel authorization. Employees may attempt to submit a travel voucher for the parking or other associated fees, however, the claim does not arise from travel or relocation, but from service as a juror. A federal employee who serves as a juror is not in a travel status for his or her employment; rather, the employee is on leave. Therefore, if you pay for parking or other costs associated with Jury Duty, do not expect to be reimbursed by the Department.

Parking or Traffic Violations

If a traveler receives a fine for a parking or traffic violation while performing approved travel, the employee will not be reimbursed. There is no statutory or regulatory basis which authorizes reimbursement for fines associated with parking or traffic violations. The Comptroller General has recognized, "We are not aware of any authority by which [the agency] may use its appropriations to pay for any fine imposed by a court on a government employee for a traffic offense committed by him while in the performance of, but not as a part of, his official duties. Such fine (or forfeiture of collateral) is imposed on the employee personally and payment thereof is his personal responsibility." Attorney Fees in Traffic Offense Cases, 57 Comp. Gen. 270 (1978).

When you are performing approved travel by automobile, drive defensively and pay attention to:

- parking signs/rules
- speed limits
- traffic signals/signs

Privately Owned Automobile Operating Costs While on Official Travel

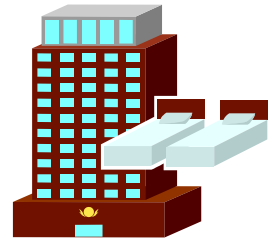
An employee who is engaged on official business for the Government is entitled to a rate per mile established by the Administrator of General Services, instead of the actual expenses of transportation, for the use of a privately owned automobile when that mode of transportation is authorized or approved as more advantageous to the Government.

The mileage reimbursement rates reflect the current costs of operating privately owned vehicles, including depreciation of original vehicle costs; gasoline and oil; maintenance, accessories, parts, and tires; insurance; and state and federal taxes. In addition to the rate per mile authorized, an employee using a privately owned automobile may be reimbursed for parking fees; ferry fees; and bridge, road and tunnel costs. Effective rate for travel performed on or after January 1, 2004 can be found at: <http://www.doi.gov/pfm/fam03-27.html>.

Lodging Costs Within Your Duty Station

Lodging is a component of the per diem allowance, which is only payable when an employee is traveling away from his/her official duty station. Employees will not receive per diem if the "temporary duty (TDY)" is within 50 miles of employee's duty station or residence, unless the travel conditions are so severe returning to employee's residence would endanger health and safety of employee or if employee is attending a conference. If travel involves severe conditions or employee is attending training or a conference, the bureau official designated may approve per diem for duty in excess of 12 hours that is at least 30 miles from both the residence and permanent duty station. Per diem will not be paid for TDY per-

formed, training or conference attendance within 30 miles of employees permanent duty station or residence. When



determining the 12 hours or more, the clock starts running when employees depart from their residence or from their permanent duty station, whichever is the later. If employees go to their duty station prior to starting a temporary duty trip, the trip time will not start until the employee departs the permanent duty station. (See: <http://www.doi.gov/pfm/fam01-11.html>; <http://www.doi.gov/pfm/fam0111a.pdf>; <http://www.doi.gov/pfm/oden/ch301-11.html#301-11.1> and <http://www.doi.gov/pfm/oden/ch301-11.html#301-11.2>)

Airport Parking Made Easy

Many airports have a shortage of convenient affordable parking due to construction and heightened security. APR (AirportParkingReservations.com) offers Airport Parking online or by phone. The site is user friendly. First click on: <http://www.airportparkingreservations.com/> Then:

- select your airport,
- enter your travel itinerary,
- choose a parking lot, and
- book your space.

It's quick, safe, and guaranteed. Most lots are open 24 hours and provide free transportation to/from the terminals. You must pay for one day in advance using a credit card, but that amount will be deducted from your bill when you arrive at the parking lot. There is also a \$4 nonrefundable fee.

You can also call toll free: 888-960-Park Remember, if the mileage and parking cost exceeds what a taxi would have



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cost, you will only be reimbursed the cost of a taxi. Also, prior to using this service, ensure it is a cost savings and that the airport long term parking is comparable or more expensive before making a reservation.

Trip Manager's Corner

During March, 3,589 air segments, 382 hotel rooms, and 771 rental cars were reserved on Trip Manager, and in April, 3,448 air segments, 461 hotel rooms, and 797 rental cars.

As the Department continues to prepare for eTravel, use the on-line booking tool for travel arrangements. The on-line booking tool, Trip Manager, is the Department's preferred way to arrange travel. It is provided through the TMC, with a transaction fee of \$10.50, which is a savings of over 50% versus the traditional agent reservation. There are some exceptions for using the on-line booking tool:

- Not recommended for trips with multiple destinations
- User must have internet access
- Foreign travel not available
- Not all airlines are represented (i.e. Southwest Airlines)
- Not all hotels are listed (call Hotel Only Desk - 877-867-9013)

If you have never tried Trip Manager, view the Trip Manager for Government tutorial at:

<http://www.tripmanager.com/gt/tmgovtutorial.htm> You will find it is friendly. Take charge of your travel, use Trip Manager!

TRAVELER "TIP BITS"

Eating Healthy While on Travel

Recently, it seems like everyone is into healthy eating, even during temporary duty travel. Are you concerned about gaining weight from eating out in restaurants? Here are some tips for eating healthy in any restaurant.

- Don't go to a restaurant starving.

Have a snack before you go out to eat. Bring instant oatmeal, fresh or dried fruit to munch on throughout the day.

- Talk to the restaurant manager. Ask the manager, who knows how the food is prepared, for suggestions on healthier options or substitutions.
- Order the portion size you want. If you were brought up with the 'clean plate' mentality, order just what you want/need. Request just a smaller sized steak, just one roll (rather than a basket), or a 1-cup portion of pasta.
- Ask for special orders. The pasta meal can be prepared with 1/2 the cream sauce. Substitute fruit for the coleslaw. Ask them not to brush the steak or fajitas with butter/oil.

OWT Airline Ticket Data

The following table shows updated OWT airline ticket data.

OWT Airline Ticket Data		
March 2003 — April 2004		
	Tickets Issued	Dollar Value (in millions)
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
Jan	12,024	4.85
Feb	12,702	5.12
Mar	14,385	5.90
Apr	13,793	5.70
Total	172,374	\$68.93

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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/gui/doi/login.asp>

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