

U.S. Department of the Interior

DOI TRAVEL NEWSLETTER

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IN THE NEWS

Announced Service Reductions by US Airways, Continental, United, American

US Airways is expected to cut its mainline jet service by 13% by the end of the year as part of its bankruptcy restructuring. US Airways will eliminate 200 of its 1,550 daily departures, 130 of them in September and the rest by year-end. They will continue flying to all of the 204 cities except Saginaw, Michigan. Unprofitable flights will be targeted for elimination.

Continental Airlines will begin reducing service and begin passing on more of its costs to passengers in the form of fees for services now included in the ticket price. American Airlines announced they would reduce capacity 9% by November. United Airlines has also trimmed service. Delta and Northwest airlines may also weigh in with cuts in service that would help reduce overall industry capacity.



Cautionary Note on Using Non-Refundable Air Fares

We previously identified a number of factors to be considered before using restricted fares. Now, more than ever, DOI travelers should be aware of the risks associated with non-refundable fares. Many domestic destinations must be used for the specifically ticketed flight, and will have no value once the flight has departed. Travelers having non-refundable tickets may be allowed to stand-by for alternate flights on the ticketed day of departure subject to certain restrictions and fees, usually \$100.

Changes may be made to the non-refundable itineraries before scheduled departure, subject to certain restrictions and fees. Until now, the value of an unused non-refundable ticket could be credited toward the purchase of another ticket, less the applicable reissue fee, for up to one year. Check with your airline for specifics prior to your flight. PFM strongly recommends DOI employees on official business use Government contract city pairs.

Use of Paper Tickets

Three major airlines (American, Continental and Delta Airlines) have begun charging a fee for all domestic paper tickets, including tickets purchased for Government travel. In addition to the OWT delivery charges for paper tickets, DOI employees requesting paper tickets will be charged an additional fee for all United States and Canada point of sale transactions that qualify for an electronic ticket, but the traveler chooses a paper ticket.

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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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American Airlines plans to discontinue paper tickets for all wholly domestic itineraries by March 2003 and for all other itineraries by December 2003.

United Airlines will stop issuing paper tickets within the United States by July 2003, and plans to issue only electronic tickets for all eligible itineraries, domestically and internationally by January 2004.

Northwest announced domestic usage of electronic tickets by its customers reached 80% during July. Customer's are taking advantage of the many conveniences of e-tickets including: Self-service check-in from home or work, exchanging tickets or applying for refunds online, paying administrative change fees on line, checking fares, schedules, booking and ticketing travel online or by phone, no worry about picking up, carrying or losing paper tickets, no prepaid ticket fees for customers wishing to pay for another traveler's ticket. Northwest Airlines has not yet added a fee for paper tickets issued to Government employees as those airlines listed above.

Limitations on Baggage

Effective August 15, 2002, Delta Air Lines introduced a new checked baggage allowance for domestic travel. Delta customers can check a maximum of two baggage items free of charge for each ticketed passenger, in addition to the one carry-on, plus one personal item. A \$40 fee will be charged for a third checked bag. Fees for additional bags or items, which exceed other excess restrictions, are posted on Delta's

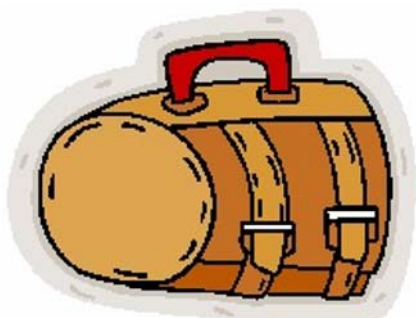


TABLE 1 Weight and Size Limitations	
Checked Baggage	
Weight Limitations	Size Limitations
Items weighing between 70 and 100 lbs. will be charged an excess baggage fee.	Items over size limits will be charged an excess baggage fee.
Items over 100 lbs. will be not be accepted.	Items over 80" will not be accepted.
Carry-On Items	
Weight Limitations	Size Limitations
Must weigh less than 40 lbs.	Approximate dimensions 22" x 14" x 9".

Web site at www.delta.com/baggage. Some packages, sporting goods, dangerous, fragile or bulky items may require special handling. Table 1 specifies the weight and size limitations for checked baggage and carry-on items.

Fiscal Year-End Travel

Travelers are reminded that transportation tickets may not be purchased for travel commencing on or after October 1, 2002, until funding authority for FY 2003 is enacted. This restriction does not apply for travel involving no-year funds or multiple-year funds – since funding would already have been appropriated.

Please note that GSA contract city-pair tickets are generally issued 5 days prior to travel, while restricted fare tickets are issued (and charged) at the time travel reservations are made.

2003 City-Pair Contract Awards

The General Services Administration (GSA) awarded the new fiscal year 2003 city-pair airline contracts on August 8, 2002. The contracts are awarded competitively, with awards based on the best overall value to the government. The best-value decision is determined on the basis of average flight time, the offered price, flight distribution and number of flights. In the

past, Federal employees requested more nonstop flights, and GSA responded by awarding nonstop service for 1,732 routes. Nearly 5,000 city-pair routes will be available to federal fliers in fiscal 2003. The tickets require no advance purchase and have no minimum or maximum stay requirements, travel time limits, charges for cancellations or blackout periods.

Capacity controlled fares, introduced by GSA in 2001, was expanded to include more routes this year. The program offers prices even lower than the already discounted standard

city-pair rates for a limited number of seats in 2,041 test markets. The restricted fares are anywhere from \$20 to \$100 less expensive than the standard city-pair rates.

The capacity controlled reduced fares are available only for a limited number of seats, which prompts federal travelers to book earlier. There are no cancellation fees on the capacity controlled fares. Table 2 (see Page 3) provides a comparison of 2002 and 2003 awards for DOI most frequently used city pairs.

New General Service Administration (GSA) Per Diem Rates for FY 2003

GSA published the FY 2003 CONUS Per Diem Rates for official business travel by federal employees on August 30 in the Federal Register. The new rates will be effective October 1, 2002. The standard continental United States rate of \$55 for lodging and \$30 for meals and incidental expenses will remain the same. Most lodging rates also will continue at the same rate as FY 2002. Changes include adding thirteen cities to the list this year. Meals and incidental (M&IE) rates have increased in more than 400 cities, and a new \$50 M&IE rate was established. An M&IE analysis comparing FY 2002 and FY 2003 rates showed that

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TABLE 2
Comparison of 2002 and 2003 Awards for DOI Most Frequently Used City Pairs

DOI Most Used City Pairs	2002 Awarded Airline	2002 Standard City Pair	2002 Capacity City Pair	2003 Awarded Airline	2003 Standard City Pair	2003 Capacity Controlled	Unrestricted Coach Fare
Albuquerque-Phoenix	America West	\$59.00	\$56.00	Southwest	\$79.00	\$39.00	\$93.00
Boise - Salt Lake City	Delta	\$69.00	None	Delta	\$89.00	\$64.00	\$333.00
Washington, DC (Reagan National) -	US Airways	\$117.00	None	United	\$167.00	\$123.00	\$992.90
Denver - Washington, DC (Dulles)	United	\$371.00	None	United	\$422.00	\$390.00	\$982.90
Denver - Las Vegas	America West	\$100.00	None	America West	\$110.00	\$105.00	\$541.00
Denver - Phoenix	United	\$108.00	None	United	\$142.00	\$98.00	\$563.50
Denver - Salt Lake City	United	\$65.00	None	United	\$108.00	\$68.00	\$604.89

• Always select a row where either the window or the aisle are already taken, but the middle seat is still open.

• Whenever there is a choice between a two-seater vs. a three- or five-seater, always avoid the two-seater, unless the plane is very full and all of the middle seats are going to be filled. One way to assure maximum comfort in a five seat row is to select the middle seat where there is already one person sitting at each end of the row and the three middle seats

86% of M&IE rates increased; 12% of M&IE rates remained the same; 2% of M&IE rates decreased.

A newly formed Governmentwide Per Diem Advisory Board is reviewing GSA's per diem rate setting process and making recommendations for changes. The Board will meet monthly until December 2002. GSA will consider the Board's recommendations for the FY 2004 per diem cycle. The main purpose of the Board is to review the current per diem process and to provide advice on best practices for a Federal lodging program.

Dodging the Middle Seat

Nothing is more frustrating to a traveler that getting wedged in the dreaded middle seat. With the recently announced cuts in scheduling and "downsizing" of aircraft size, the reality is that you are now more likely than ever to get a middle seat. Here are some measures to help avoid the assigned middle seat.

- Book early and request your preferred seat up front.

- Use the DOI online booking tool (Trip Manager) and view and select seats directly from a live seat map...avoid middle seats and find aisle/window seats where the middle seat is not yet occupied.

- Become frequent flyer club member. Airlines often give preference to their frequent flyers. Many airlines set aside certain seats or a specific part of the coach cabin for their frequent flyers and will block the middle seats whenever possible to give these loyal customers more space. (Enter your frequent flyer club membership numbers in your OWT profile.)

- If you are stuck with the middle seat, prior to your airport arrival, always try to change your seat at the airport. There are always "no shows," so let the gate agent know you are interested in a better seat, should one become available.

are vacant. In this way, you are highly likely to have an empty seat on both sides of you unless the plane sells out.

If you do get stuck with a middle seat, try to make the best of it. When you select your middle seat location, determine the "pitch" of the seats available. A "pitch" is the number of inches between the back of your seat and the seatback in front of you. The pitch varies by aircraft, and even by the row. For example, the exit rows have roomier seats. Cope with the middle seat by working, reading a book, catching a nap, or making a new friend.

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Trip Manager Corner

Trip Manager use continues to grow within the Department. There were 3,913 air segments booked in August 2002. Additionally, 667 hotel rooms and 514 rental cars were reserved.

Traveler "Tip Bits"

How to avoid the "Economy-Class Syndrome"

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT), also known as Economy-Class Syndrome, occurs when blood in the deep veins of the calf muscles and lower leg flows sluggishly and eventually clots. Individuals seated in cars, buses and trains may all be at risk, and cases of DVT occurring in flight have been reported in travelers in premium cabins as well as economy.

Advice to avoid the development of DVT:

- Keep well hydrated by drinking a pint of water for every three hours in the air.
- Avoid smoking.
- Before and during the flight, avoid beverages, which contain alcohol and/or caffeine, which are diuretics and have a dehydrating effect - unless you drink extra water to compensate for them.
- Avoid crossing legs when seated.
- Walk around the cabin whenever you can.
- Stand up in your seat area and stretch your arms and legs.



- About every half hour exercise the calf muscles while seated by extending your legs out and flexing and rotating the ankles for a few minutes, move your legs, curl and uncurl your toes, or put your feet flat on the floor and lift your heels off the floor.

- Wear loose fitting comfortable clothes.
- Take the shortest flight possible.
- Only sleep if you can guarantee being wakened to stretch.
- If you notice that your leg has swollen, don't massage it. You may work the blood clot loose.

A "self-assessment" guide to calculating your own risk of DBT can be found at www.travel-medicine.info. It allocates a score for "low," "medium" and "high" risk candidates for deep vein thrombosis based on age, sex and medical history.

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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

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