

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
Washington, DC 20405

September 10, 2008

Federal Travel Regulation
GSA Bulletin FTR 08-11

TO: Heads of Federal Agencies

SUBJECT: Reimbursement for actual subsistence expenses, and waivers of certain provisions of the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) (41 CFR chapters 301 and 302) for temporary duty (TDY), or relocation travel of employees to the following counties and other areas impacted by Hurricane Ike in the state of Texas: Aransas, Brazoria, Brooks, Calhoun, Cameron, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Hardin, Harris, Hidalgo, Jackson, Jefferson, Jim Wells, Kenedy, Kleberg, Liberty, Matagorda, Nueces, Orange, Refugio, San Patricio, Victoria, Wharton, and Willacy.

1. What is the purpose of this bulletin? This Bulletin informs agencies that certain provisions of the FTR governing the authorization of actual subsistence expenses for official travel (both TDY and relocation) are temporarily waived in the above-referenced counties and other areas affected in the state of Texas due to Hurricane Ike. It is expected that finding lodging facilities and/or adequate meals may be difficult, and distances involved may be great, resulting in increased costs for per diem expenses.
2. What are the effective dates of this bulletin? The provisions in this Bulletin are effective for a period of one year from the date of the Presidential Emergency Declaration affecting the above-referenced counties in the state of Texas (September 10, 2008), unless extended or rescinded by this office.
3. What is the background of this bulletin? As a result of the Presidential Emergency Declaration of a State of Emergency for the above-referenced counties and other affected areas in the state of Texas due to Hurricane Ike, agencies should consider delaying all non-essential TDY and relocation to the affected areas for a period of 30 days. This is especially important with relocation travel because the 120-day maximum for TQSE cannot be extended due to statutory restrictions. Given the potential damage expected by the storm, GSA cannot effectively determine the extent to which the ability to secure lodgings will be compromised. In this case, each agency may determine whether this Bulletin applies to travel to areas that are impacted by Hurricane Ike.

4. What should I do as a result of this Bulletin? If TDY and relocation travel to the areas affected by Hurricane Ike cannot be delayed due to mission requirements or personal hardships then the following applies:

(a) For TDY travel: Section 301-70.200(f) of the FTR requires an agency to determine the need for actual expense reimbursement on a case-by-case basis. This Bulletin waives the case-by-case determination requirement. Thus, if actual expense authority is determined to be necessary for the reimbursement of travel expenses, the agency may approve actual expense authority on a blanket basis for all employees traveling to the areas affected by Hurricane Ike. Additionally, FTR section 301-11.7 states that the maximum per diem reimbursement rate is determined by the TDY location. For employees assigned to the affected areas where lodging is not available, the provisions of FTR section 301-11.8 state that the agency may authorize the per diem rate for the location where lodging is obtained. In all cases, the provisions of FTR section 301-11.303 limiting actual expenses not to exceed 300 percent (rounded to the next higher dollar) of the applicable maximum per diem rate for the locality concerned remains in effect.

(b) For relocation travel: For temporary quarters subsistence expense (TQSE), FTR section 302-6.9 requiring that temporary quarters be in reasonable proximity to the old or new official station is hereby waived for employees relocating to the areas affected by Hurricane Ike. The maximum limit of 120 days that TQSE may be authorized remains in effect pursuant to FTR section 302-6.104.

(c) In addition, the following provisions of the FTR are waived:


i. With regards to temporary quarters located within the Continental United States (CONUS), FTR section 302-6.102 limits the applicable per diem allowance under the TQSE reimbursement method to the standard CONUS allowance. Under this bulletin, for temporary quarters located within the areas affected by Hurricane Ike, agencies may go beyond the standard CONUS allowance and authorize TQSE at the applicable locality per diem allowance under FTR section 301-11.100-301-102 or authorize actual expenses under FTR sections 301-11.300-301-11.306

ii. For House-hunting trips, FTR section 302-5.13 does not allow use of the actual expense method described in FTR sections 301-11.300 - 301-11.306 for reimbursement of subsistence expenses. Under this bulletin,

in addition to the methods listed in FTR section 302-5.13, agencies may authorize actual expenses for the reimbursement of subsistence expenses for employees conducting house-hunting trips to the areas affected by Hurricane Ike.

5. Maximum Rates. As a result of Hurricane Ike, agencies may approve actual subsistence expense reimbursement, not to exceed 300 percent of the applicable per diem rate, without further justification for employees performing official travel to the areas affected by Hurricane Ike.

6. Who should I contact for further information? Mr. Patrick McConnell, Acting Program Director, Travel Management Policy, Office of Governmentwide Policy, General Services Administration, Washington, DC 20405, telephone (202) 501-2362 or email at patrick.mcconnell@gsa.gov.

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KEVIN MESSNER
Acting Associate Administrator
Office of Governmentwide Policy