

**ARS □ CSREES □ ERS □ NASS**

***Bulletin***

**Title:** Official Travel File and Receipt Requirement

**Number:** 09-304

**Date:** April 9, 2009                      **Expiration:** April 8, 2010

**Originating Office:** Travel and Relocation Services Branch,  
Financial Management Division, AFM/ARS

**Distribution:** All REE Employees

This bulletin provides the new dollar value for which receipts are required for travel expenses and clarifies the policy for maintaining receipts for travel reimbursements made through the GovTrip system.

## **Background**

In March 2008, the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) agencies started using GovTrip to support the temporary duty travel process, which includes planning and authorizing travel, making reservations, delivering electronic tickets, calculating and approving reimbursements, and archiving data. GovTrip is a web-based system; a key component of GovTrip is the ability to maintain files electronically. GovTrip provides the capability to upload receipts and special authorization letters and attach them to the electronic file.

Traditionally, REE offices have maintained paper copies of travel documents onsite. The electronic GovTrip file is the official file for temporary duty travel. Paper files containing hard copies of the authorization and voucher no longer need to be maintained by the employee's travel or administrative office. Audit of travel, which used to be performed by submitting documents, including receipts, to the Controller of Operations Division (COD), National Finance Center (NFC), will now be completed electronically by statistical sampling.

Additionally, REE is lowering the receipt requirement. This step is necessary in the current environment of restricted budgets, increased accountability and transparency, and the significant overview of travel costs, conference costs and audit of travel vouchers. REE policy will now require receipts for lodging, common carrier tickets, and any other expense, except meals and incidental expense, of \$35.00 or greater. We suggest that employees obtain and maintain receipts for all claimed travel costs to ensure the accuracy of their travel voucher, but receipts will be required for expenses of \$35.00 or greater.

## **Policy**

- Receipts must be submitted for any individual temporary duty (TDY) travel expense of **\$35.00 or greater**. This applies to any TDY expense other than lodging and common carrier transportation, which always requires a receipt for reimbursement, and meals and incidental expense, which does not require a receipt for reimbursement. Any other expense, including but not limited to, shuttle or taxi, rental car, tolls, and parking of \$35.00 or greater will require a receipt. This policy will go into effect for travel that commences on or after May 4, 2009.

*Note: This receipt requirement is for TDY travel only. Reimbursement for any local travel expense must be supported by a receipt, regardless of dollar value, unless obtaining a receipt for local travel is impractical, such as metered parking or mileage reimbursement.*

- The GovTrip electronic record is the official file for all temporary duty travel. Travelers or travel arrangers who access GovTrip must upload all supporting documentation, including receipts to the electronic file. Supporting documents include:

- Authorizations signed by the approving official if the approving official has delegated the document stamping process to an administrative assistant.
  - Vouchers signed by the traveler if the voucher is prepared by a travel arranger instead of the traveler. The uploaded voucher must also be signed by the approving official if that person has delegated the stamping process to an administrative assistant.
  - Letters of approval for special items, such as actual expense or the use of premium-class accommodations.
  - Receipts for common carrier tickets (i.e., airline, train, bus tickets), lodging, and any other expense of \$35.00 or greater.
- Approving officials must view and ensure that all mandatory documents and receipts are attached to the electronic file. In the case of missing receipts, a justification must be placed in the remarks box on the GovTrip document signature page. Travel vouchers should be stamped “returned” for correction if this requirement is not met.
  - Travelers must maintain their receipts in accordance with Federal Travel Regulations standards (six years and three months) in case a receipt is requested as a result of an audit.
  - The office arranging travel for invitational travelers will maintain all receipts on file for invitational travelers.
  - Please remember that receipts are required for:
    - Common carrier travel tickets;
    - Lodging; and any expense \$35.00 or greater.
  - Receipts are not required for:
    - Meals and incidental expense (M&IE), unless approved for actual expense for M&IE, and:
    - Any expense less than \$35.00, unless it is for lodging or a common carrier ticket.

Most audits will be performed electronically, with COD/NFC examining the uploaded documents and/or receipts. On occasion, an original receipt may be requested of the employee if a required receipt is not attached to the file, an attached receipt is not legible, the attached receipt does not support the expense claimed; or if there is suspicion that a receipt may have been altered. In most cases, the audit of the travel file will occur when the voucher is filed and prior to scheduling for payment. All payment documents are subject to future audit for varying reasons, making it necessary for employees to maintain their original receipts.

/s/

S. M. HELMRICH

Director

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