NWS Foreign Travel Process International Activities Office February 2008

Agenda

- Lead Time for Travel Packages
- NWS Foreign Travel Packages
 - Justification Memo
 - Travel Authorization
 - Letter of Invitation
 - Travel Itinerary
- eCountry Clearance
- Trip Reports
- Helpful Hints
- Q&A





Goals

- Establish minimum lead times within NWS for the submittal of travel packages to IA and onto the Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA).
- Improve the quality of foreign travel packages.
- Ensure harmonization between itinerary, letter of invitation, justification memo, and travel authorization.
- Ensure foreign travel has direct linkage to NOAA/NWS Goals, Bilateral Agreements, and US responsibilities as a member of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).



When do travelers submit foreign travel packages to IA?

It depends on the type of action required by the NOAA Travel Office and IA.

NWS/IA developed a time table based on the following NOAA Travel Regulations:

NTR 306-3.7, 306-5.2, and 306-6.2



When do travelers submit foreign travel packages to IA?

- Scenario A
 - Traveler <u>does not</u> have an official passport and <u>requires</u> a visa.

6 to 8 weeks prior to departure

Allows IA to process and submit package to NOAA Travel Office within the required lead time of 5 to 6 weeks. (NTR 306-5.2)



When do travelers submit foreign travel packages to IA?

- Scenario B
 - Traveler <u>does not</u> have an official passport and <u>does not require</u> a visa.

6 to 8 weeks prior to departure

Allows IA to process and submit package to NOAA Travel Office within the required lead time of 5 to 6 weeks. (NTR 306-5.2)



When do travelers submit foreign travel packages to IA?

- Scenario C
 - Traveler <u>has</u> an official passport and <u>will require</u> a visa.

4 weeks prior to departure

Allows IA to process and submit package to NOAA Travel Office within the required lead time of 2 to 3 weeks. (NTR 306-6.2)



When do travelers submit foreign travel packages to IA?

- Scenario D
 - Traveler <u>has</u> an official passport and <u>will not require</u> a visa.

3 weeks prior to departure

Allows IA to process and submit package to NOAA Travel Office not later than 7 business days before traveler departs. (NTR 306-3.7)



When does the Deputy Assistant Administrator need to approve the foreign travel authorization?

• Scenarios A, B, C and D



Not later than 7 business days prior to departure.

Foreign Travel Packages

- Must be submitted to IA in a blue folder.
 - For those outside the Washington Region, packages can still be submitted via fax or email <u>only</u> if there is no action required by the NOAA Travel Office (i.e., passport and/or visa applications are not required).
 - Please avoid piecemeal submissions.
- Incomplete packages may be returned to the Travel Preparer or Traveler which could cause a delay in processing the package and possible disapproval of the foreign travel request.
- Foreign travel for Operations and Maintenance will still need to follow the lead times and travel package format, but some exceptions will be made for emergencies.
 - IA is still working to resolve issues related to blanket foreign travel orders.

Front Cover of Travel Package

On the front cover of the foreign travel package, clip a CD-15 Transmittal Form.

Complete as shown in the example.

The first two lines should have the employee's name and the employee's supervisor.

The remaining six to seven lines have the routing that will apply to all foreign travel packages submitted to NWS/IA. Only add Mary Waldron when using IA's org code: 20-01-0000-04-00-00

Additional routing can be added between the employee's supervisor and IA depending on each FMC's internal process for routing travel packages.

Please include the traveler's name, destination and travel authorization number in the comments section.

The Travel Preparer's name and contact information is added at the bottom.

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| The Employee's Supervisor | | 2 | |
| Jan Jones/Robin Cecil | | 12 | |
| Mary C. Waldron (only for IA funds) | | 12 | |
| Joe Mroz - W/IA | | 2 | |
| Curtis B. Barrett - W/IA | | 2 | |
| Shelia Foster - CFO/2 | | 12 | |
| Vickie L. Nadolski - DAA | | 1 | |
| Jan Jones/Robin Cecil | | | |
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*U.S. Government Printing Office: 1980-665-115/1024 Region No. 6

Inside Left of Travel Package

On the inside left of the travel package, please clip the Foreign Travel Justification Memo.

The memo is from the traveler through their supervisor/office director/regional director to the Deputy Assistant Administrator – Vickie L. Nadolski.

Key Points:

 Memo must follow NWS Correspondence format.

- Spell out all acronyms.
- Ensure travel dates link to travel authorization/letter of invitation and travel itinerary.
- Official record for the file.
- Mistakes on memo are reflection of FMC.

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE 1325 East-West Highway Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3283

JAN 2 8 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR: Vickie L. Nadolski Deputy Assistant A

Deputy Assistant Administrator

THROUGH:

SUBJECT:

FROM:

Courtney J. Draggon Program Analyst ist B. Curtis B. Barrett Acting Chief/IA

Foreign Travel to WMO HC-29 Hurricane Conference

I received a formal invitation from the WMO to attend the 29th Session of the WMO Regional Association IV (RAIV) Hurricane Committee (HC29). I will be representing NOAA/NWS at the upcoming WMO HC-29 which will be held in Curacao on April 23 through April 28, 2008. I plan to travel to the conference two days earlier, April 21, 2008. On April 22, 2008 I plan to conduct a status meeting on our e-learning initiatives in RA-IV and have informal discussions with other regional representatives on the status of joint meteorological projects. I plan to take two days of annual leave, April 29 and April 30, 2008 at no additional cost to the government.

As the lead for RA-IV activities with the International Activities Office, I plan to accomplish the following goals and objectives:

- 1. Draft and finalize the WMO RAIV HC Technical Plan
- 2. Draft and finalize the WMO RAIV HC Operational Plan
- Coordinate hurricane related activities regionally in the NHC Area of Responsibilities including upper air launches, reconnaissance flight clearances, protocols for issuing and disseminating watches, and data collection.

In addition to my participation at the WMO HC-29, Joe Mroz plans to attend.

Part of my travel expenses will be reimbursed. The WMO plans to cover lodging expenses and will pay the hotel directly. All other expenditures will be covered by the WMO Voluntary Contribution Program (VCP), a reimbursable agreement with the Department of State.

My foreign travel package was submitted to W/IA within the four week period. I already have an official passport. This trip requires a visa. My travel package was submitted to NOAA Travel to obtain my visa within the required time frame per NOAA Travel Regulations (NTR). Simultaneously, my orders are being submitted for DAA signature. Enclosed please find, recommend you sign as I have met all NTR.

Printed on Recycled Paper

SAMPLE FOREIGN TRAVEL PACKAGE

Foreign Travel Package

Include the following in the **Travel Justification Memo**:

- Name, purpose, dates, and location of meeting;
- Indicate whether any annual leave will be taken;
- Indicate if there are additional side meetings or prep meetings that are outside the dates of the primary meeting that may or may not be reflected in the invitational letter;
- Identify other NOAA and NWS personnel who will be attending the same meeting(s);
- List three to four objectives for the meeting, what NOAA/NWS gains from traveler's attendance, linkage to bilateral agreements and/or WMO Programs;
- Indicate and provide specific details if NOAA or the traveler will be reimbursed for any expenses;
- Indicate whether a visa is required and if traveler already has an official passport
- Indicate whether the package is being submitted within IA's recommended lead times and if prior coordination with IA has occurred.

Inside Right of Travel Package

On the inside right of the travel package, please clip:

• The travel authorization;

• An invitation letter ** from the foreign entity which shows the meeting dates and details any travel costs (air fare, ground transportation. lodging and/or meals) that may be reimbursed to either the traveler, NOAA/NWS or to the vendor. If the foreign entity will be reimbursing travel expenses, please add this information to the justification memo and in the "Remarks" section of the travel authorization.

 Depending on when reimbursement will take place, it might be necessary to zero out some of the cost on the authorization prior to the traveler's departure.

 Travel Itinerary from ADTRAV or each region's Travel Management Center (TMC).

** For operations maintenance travel and NWS initiated foreign travel (i.e. CHAT Tour) an invite letter is not necessary.

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| ==AUTHORIZED BY Curtis B. Bar Vickie L. Nad | Crett TITLE Acti | I ng Chief, W/IA | NITIALS | DATE=== |

Inside Travel Package

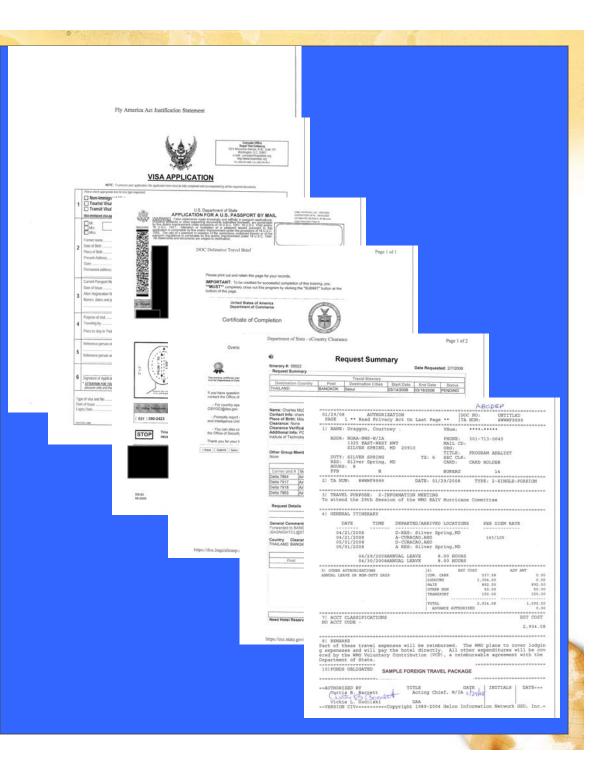
Inside the package, place:

- A duplicate copy of the travel authorization;
- A copy of the submitted eCountry Clearance request completed by either the Traveler or the Travel Preparer;
- A copy of the traveler's DOC Defensive Travel Brief completion certificate.

and if required:

- Foreign Travel Checklist (NTR 306-7.1)
- Visa application with photos
- Passport Application
- Fly America Act Justification Statement

These items should be **<u>clipped</u>** together for easy removal and processing by IA staff thus allowing for a simple review of the foreign travel package before forwarding on to the Deputy Assistant Administrator for approval.



Wait! What do you mean I need to zero out per diem and/or lodging??

- If the foreign entity is paying for any travel costs upfront, <u>zero out the specific costs</u> they are paying for on the travel authorization prior to approval and note in remarks section.
- If the foreign entity will reimburses NOAA/NWS after travel is completed, <u>leave the costs</u> so that the traveler can be reimbursed via a voucher upon return. Be sure to complete a CD-210 and submit with the voucher to your servicing finance office.



New Process



• Country clearance is obtained via online at

https://ecc.state.gov

- The <u>traveler or travel preparer</u> is responsible for preparing and submitting the eClearance request via the Department of State's eClearance system. (draft NTR 306-4.4)
- This function being moved out of all NOAA LO's IA offices.
- At least a <u>four week lead-time</u> is required for processing eClearance requests (draft NTR 306-4.5)
- NOAA/IA is working with NOAA Travel to revise NTR 306-4 (Susan Ware-Harris – International Affairs Council)



 Department of State Training and Overview Session



- Tuesday, February 26, 2008
- 9:00 am till 11:00 am
- SSMC2 2nd Floor Conference Room
- Available via VTC and Telecon
 - Send e:mail to Robin.Cecil@noaa.gov to ensure we reserve VTC lines



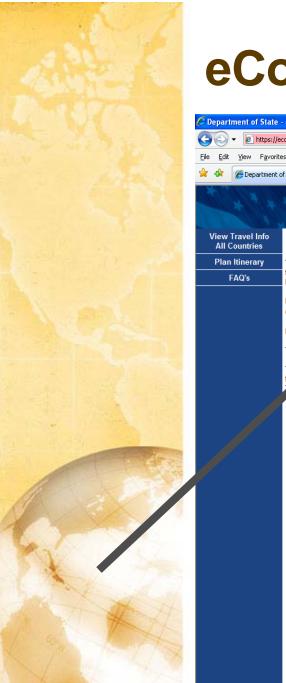


- Creating an account is easy!
- When establishing an account be sure to select:

Department of Commerce/NOAA



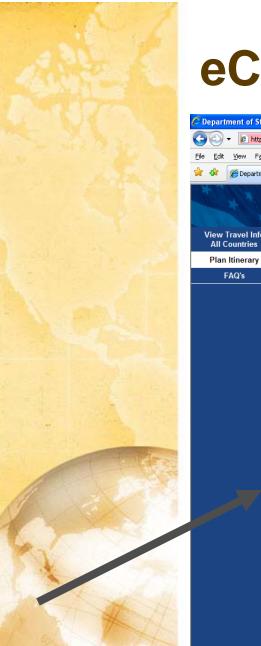
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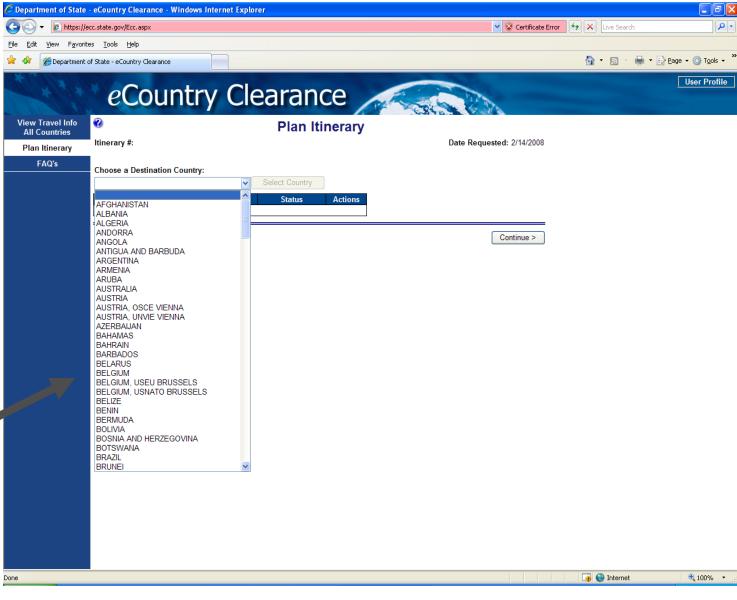


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| Plan Itinerary | The eCountry Clearance (eCC) application provides web-based access to a country clearance request and approval process that replaces | | |
| FAQ's | the existing methods of submitting and administering requests for clearance to travel to foreign countries on official U.S. government business. | | |
| | For more information on what the eCountry Clearance application is all about, visit our Help Page. Or, you can download the entire help system as a PDF $\mathbf{\overline{B}}$. | | |
| | For a peek at the trace of eCC, visit our eCC Development Roadmap. | | |
| | There is curry up no travel to Somalia via eCC. | | |
| | Traveleties of any countries not listed in the destination countries drop down list in the plan itinerary section cannot use the eCC application for country clearance requests and must continue to request country clearance via cable. These countries will be brought online as soon as possible. | | |
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| | Notice Weekly Maintenance | | |
| | eCC will be down for maintenance every Friday at 2pm EST for approximately one hour. | | |
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Couple of things to remember.....

Travelers' itinerary <u>takes precedence</u> not the destination.

Example 1:

3 NWS Employees from Central Region are traveling to Sydney, Australia on the same itinerary, i.e., on the same flights on the same day (outbound and inbound). In this case, create one clearance request with all three travelers listed.





Couple of things to remember.....

Travelers' itinerary <u>takes precedence</u> not the destination.

Example 2:

3 NWS Employees from Central Region are traveling to Sydney, Australia. However, one is traveling via San Francisco and the other two are traveling via Los Angeles.

In this case two eClearance requests are required.

In order to complete a clearance request.....



You will need to know

- The <u>complete flight itinerary</u> and the hotel (address and phone number) where the traveler will be staying.
- The purpose of the visit.
- Destination city (or cities).
- Note that sometimes you will need to notify the US consulate nearest to the traveler's destination.
- Point of contact in host country who you will be meeting.
- After submitting a clearance request, a pop-up screen appears asking users to enter in additional email addresses to be notified when the request is sent.

Always include: ia.cables@noaa.gov

eCountry Clearance Notifying the Post



- In some countries, the US has an embassy and several consulates.
 - You will need to notify both the embassy and the the consulate nearest to the traveler's destination.
 - http://usembassy.state.gov
- In choosing which section of the embassy and consulate to notify.
 - 1. Science and Technology Office
 - 2. Economic Section
 - 3. Political Section



Notifying the Post



- If a US Embassy or DoS Desk Officer comes back with questions or seeks additional information, please respond back to the US Embassy in a timely manner.
- If there are any changes with travel dates, hotel, and/or flights, an amended clearance request needs to be sent

<u>Under no circumstances should a</u> <u>traveler depart without clearance from</u> <u>the US Embassy.</u>

Notifications of NWS' failure to request country clearance are sent to the Deputy Assistant Secretary – William Brennan (NOAA IA) from the Department of State.





Training From Department of State – Foreign Service Institute (FSI).

PA471 e-Country Clearance

- Will provide employees with knowledge and skills to utilize the e-Country Clearance (e-cc) application.
- PA471 provides online training on the e-cc application and will provide the learner with a basic understanding of the needed information for the e-cc application.
- This course is designed for State Department employees as well as employees of other USG agencies who need to utilize this application to request country clearances.



PA471 e-Country Clearance

- Course costs \$100
- To register:
 - Send an SF-182 to Danielle Nickerson
 - Fax Number: 703-302-7152
 - Email: nickersond@state.gov
 - Can pay either by purchase card or direct fund site.
 - Will receive course confirmation in about 3 days.
 - Course will take about 1-2 hours to complete online.
 - Must score 80% or higher on final exam.

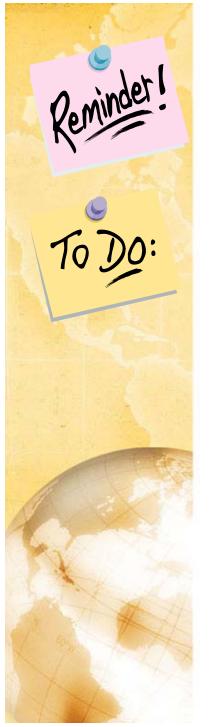


Trip Reports

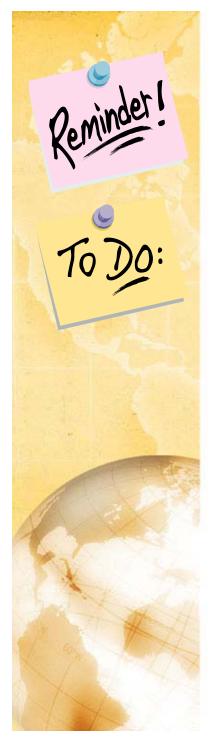
• DAA requirement



- A two page trip report has to be submitted within <u>5 business days</u>
- Should cover:
 - Details of the meeting
 - Any pertinent US issues
 - Impact on our mission
 - Decisions made
- Submit to the traveler's supervisor and to IA at nws.tripreports@noaa.gov



- NWS practice to require two signatures on foreign travel authorizations.
- When travel dates change <u>remember to amend</u> eCountry Clearance to notify DOS and Embassy.
- Update travel dates in FOTOS.
- Update FOTOS with actual expenses when voucher is submitted to Finance.
- Be sure to check "Annual Leave" in Travel Manager or "Non-Duty Leave" when traveler is staying over at their own expense. If Shift Employee – add in remarks section.
- Ensure invitational letter spells out how NOAA or traveler will be reimbursed and identify the specific items.
- If the authorization needs to be revised for whatever reason (dates, errors, etc.) it will need to go through each FMC's approval process again.



- Ensure that the Travel Preparer's name, phone number and fax number are on the authorization.
- After DAA signs the authorization, a copy will be faxed and/or emailed (pdf version) to the Travel Preparer and Traveler.
- Original travel authorization will be returned to the originating office.
- Justification memo will be retained within IA. Provide a copy in package if you would like original back.
- Provide a return shipping label so that travel packages and passports can be returned via Fedex. (IA is under pressure to reduce our FY-208 Fedex charges).



- Invitational Foreign Travel Authorization(s) <u>must adhere</u> to the same process and lead times. (Foreign Country to Foreign Country)
 - Foreign Country to United States is considered Domestic.
- For attendance at foreign conferences initiated by NWS; include a copy of agenda, registration and provide justification in memo on why attendance is important.









- Be sure that travel authorization accurately reflects overnight flights. Most flights to Europe leave on one day and arrive the next day. Most flights to Asia leave on one day and arrive on the second day.
- <u>Under no circumstances</u> should a traveler depart without having their travel authorization signed by the DAA.





Travel Manager Training

CBS Training Center (Gaithersburg):

April 2-3, 2008 May 20-21, 2008 **Western FFB (Seattle):** March 11-12, 2008 **Mountain FFB (Boulder):** March 11-12, 2008



To register go to the Commerce Learning Center at NOAA: https://doc.learn.com/noaa



NWS Foreign Travel Process

Additional Training will be available:

NWS Headquarters (Silver Spring): February 22, 2008 – 1:00 pm March 2008 - TBD

To register send email to Robin.Cecil@noaa.gov





Where do we go from here...

- DAA will continue to sign <u>all</u> Foreign Travel Orders for NWS, including invitational and operations, until further notice.
- FY-2008 foreign travel budget has been submitted to DAA and is being reviewed.
- NWS Directive 1-901 Foreign Travel Procedures will be updated by end of 3rd quarter FY-2008. (IA and CFO)
- NWS Directive 1-204 Delegation of Authority for Travel is due for review. (CFO to lead)
- A Designated IA focal points will be identified for each FMC.



IA Points of Contacts

Jan Jones 301-713-0645 x111 jan.jones@noaa.gov Robin Cecil 301-713-0645 x119 robin.cecil@noaa.gov



Joe Mroz

Administrative Officer, International Activities Office 301-713-0645 x192 joe.mroz@noaa.gov

Curt Barrett

Acting Chief, International Activities Office 301-713-0645 x136 curt.barrett@noaa.gov







Q&A



