

May 8, 2006

FEDERAL TRAVEL REGULATION
Amendment 2006-02

TO: Heads of Federal agencies

SUBJECT: Amendment 2006-02, FTR Case 2006-302, Conference
Planning-Prepayment of Registration Fee

1. Purpose. This final rule amends the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) by clarifying that advance payment of discounted conference fees may be treated as an allowable travel advance, and by adding a new section to allow for the reimbursement of the prepayment of "early bird" discounted registration fees to attend a conference or training seminar. This clarification is added to allow agencies to take advantage of discounted "early bird" registration discounts, thereby saving Government funds. This FTR rule was published in the Federal Register at 71 FR 24597, April 26, 2006. The FTR and any corresponding documents may be accessed at GSA's website at <http://www.gsa.gov/ftr>.

2. Effective date. April 26, 2006.

3. Background. When planning a conference, it is a general practice to offer discounted "early bird" registration fees, which are available in the months prior to the beginning of the conference. However, many travelers have expressed reluctance over taking advantage of such offers because of the belief that they cannot claim reimbursement until the conference is over, and they file their travel claims. To take advantage of such specials, agencies may authorize travelers to charge such fees to their individually billed Government sponsored travel cards. Accordingly, this final rule clarifies that authorized travelers are allowed to register early and claim reimbursement for the discounted registration fee as soon as their agencies have approved their attendance at the conference. This final rule also addresses the situations when the traveler fails to attend the conference and identifies the circumstances under which the traveler might have to repay the agency for the registration fee.

4. Explanation of changes. This final rule amends the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) as follows:

- In section 301-51.200 paragraph (b) regarding non-cash transactions is revised.

- Sections 301-74.25 and 301-74.26 are added to address reimbursement of advanced payments.

5. Filing instructions. Remove and insert the following pages to the FTR:

Remove page(s):

TOC,
pp. 301-xiii and 301-xiv

301-51-3 and 301-51-4


301-74-3 and 301-74-4

Insert page(s):

TOC,
pp. 301-xiii and 301-xiv

301-51-3 and 301-51-4

301-74-3 and 301-74-4

 5/8/06
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Attachment

Subpart D—Travel Payment System

- §301-73.300—What is a travel payment system?
- §301-73.301—How do we obtain travel payment system services?

Part 301-74—Conference Planning

Subpart A—Agency Responsibilities

- §301-74.1—What policies must we follow in planning a conference?
- §301-74.2—What costs should be considered when planning a conference?
- §301-74.3—What must we do to determine which conference expenditures result in the greatest advantage to the Government?
- §301-74.4—What should cost comparisons include?
- §301-74.5—How should we select a location and a facility?
- §301-74.6—What can we do if we cannot find an appropriate conference facility at the chosen locality per diem rate?
- §301-74.7—What is the conference lodging allowance?
- §301-74.8—Who may authorize reimbursement of the conference lodging allowance for a Government sponsored conference?
- §301-74.9—Who may authorize reimbursement of the conference lodging allowance for a non-Government sponsored conference?
- §301-74.10—May the conference lodging allowance ever exceed 25 percent above the lodging per diem rate?
- §301-74.11—May we provide light refreshments at an official conference?
- §301-74.12—May we use both the conference lodging allowance method and the actual expense method of reimbursement concurrently?
- §301-74.13—May we include conference administrative costs in an employee's per diem allowance payment for attendance at a conference?
- §301-74.14—Are there any special requirements for sponsoring or funding a conference at a hotel, motel or other place of public accommodation?
- §301-74.15—May we waive the requirement in §301-74.14?
- §301-74.16—What must be included in any advertisement or application form relating to conference attendance?
- §301-74.17—What special rules apply when a conference is held in the District of Columbia?
- §301-74.18—What policies and procedures must we establish to govern the selection of conference attendees?
- §301-74.19—What records must we maintain to document the selection of a conference site?

Subpart B—Conference Attendees

- §301-74.21—What is the applicable M&IE rate when meals or light refreshments are furnished by the Government or are included in the registration fee?
- §301-74.22—When may an employee, attending a conference, be authorized the conference lodging allowance?
- §301-74.23—Is the conference lodging allowance an actual expense reimbursement?
- §301-74.24—When should actual expense reimbursement be authorized for conference attendees?
- §301-74.25—May we reimburse travelers for an advanced payment of a conference or training registration fee?
- §301-74.26—What is the traveler required to do if he/she is unable to attend an event for which they were reimbursed for an advanced discounted payment of a conference or training registration fee?

Subpart A—General Rules

- §301-75.1—What is the purpose of the allowance for pre-employment interview travel expenses?
- §301-75.2—May we pay pre-employment interview travel expenses?
- §301-75.3—What governing policies and procedures must we establish related to pre-employment interview travel?

§301-75.4—What other responsibilities do we have for pre-employment interview travel?

Subpart B—Travel Expenses

§301-75.100—Must we pay all of the interviewee’s pre-employment interview travel expenses?

§301-75.101—What pre-employment interview travel expenses may we pay?

§301-75.102—What pre-employment interview travel expenses are not payable?

§301-75.103—What are our responsibilities when we authorize an interviewee to use common carrier transportation to perform pre-employment interview travel?

Subpart C—Obtaining Travel Services and Claiming Reimbursement

§301-75.200—How will we pay for pre-employment interviewee travel expenses?

§301-75.201—May we allow the interviewee to use individual Government contractor-issued charge cards for pre-employment interview travel?

§301-75.202—What must we do if the interviewee exchanges the ticket he or she has been issued?

§301-75.203—May we provide the interviewee with a travel advance?

§301-75.204—May we use Government contractor-issued travelers checks to pay for the interviewee’s travel expenses?

§301-75.205—Is the interviewee required to submit a travel claim to us?

Part 301-76—Collection of Undisputed Delinquent Amounts Owed to the Contractor Issuing the Individually Billed Travel Charge Card

Subpart A—General Rules

§301-76.1—May we collect undisputed delinquent amounts that an employee (including members of the uniformed services) owes to a Government travel charge card contractor?

§301-76.2—What is disposable pay?

Subpart B—Policies and Procedures

§301-76.100—Are there any due process requirements with which we must comply before collecting undisputed delinquent amounts on behalf of the charge card contractor?

§301-76.101—Who is responsible for ensuring that all due process and legal requirements have been met?

§301-76.102—Can we collect undisputed delinquent amounts if we have not reimbursed the employee for amounts reimbursable under applicable travel regulations?

§301-76.103—What is the maximum amount we may deduct from the employee’s disposable pay?

Appendix A to Chapter 301—Prescribed Maximum Per Diem Rates for CONUS

Appendix B to Chapter 301—Allocation of M&IE Rates To Be Used in Making Deductions From the M&IE Allowance

Appendix C to Chapter 301—Standard Data Elements for Federal Travel

Appendix D to Chapter 301—Glossary of Acronyms

Appendix E to Chapter 301—Suggested Guidance for Conference Planning

AMENDMENT 2006–02 APRIL 26, 2006

Subpart C—Receiving Travel Advances

§301-51.200 For what expenses may I receive a travel advance?

For	You may receive an advance
(a) Cash transaction expenses (i.e., expenses that as a general rule cannot be charged and must be paid using cash, a personal check, or travelers check). (1) M&IE covered by the per diem allowance or actual expenses allowance; (2) Miscellaneous transportation expenses such as local transportation system and taxi fares; parking fees; ferry fees; bridge, road, and tunnel fees; and aircraft parking, landing, and tie-down fees; (3) Gasoline and other variable expenses covered by the mileage allowance for advantageous use of a privately owned automobile for official business; and (4) Other authorized miscellaneous expenses that cannot be charged using a Government contractor-issued charge card and for which a cost can be estimated.	Any time you travel.
(b) Non-cash transaction expenses (e.g., lodging, common carrier, advance payment of discounted conference registration fee).	Only in the following situations: (1) Government contractor-issued charge card not expected to be accepted. (2) Government contractor-issued charge card issuance denied. Your agency has decided not to provide you a Government contractor-issued individually billed travel card. (3) Official change of station. Your agency determines that use of a Government contractor-issued individually billed travel card would not be feasible incident to a transfer, particularly a transfer to another agency. (4) Financial hardship would be incurred.

§301-51.201 What is the maximum amount that my agency may advance?

The amount your agency advances you may not exceed the following amounts:

For	The maximum amount your agency may advance is
Cash transaction expenses	The estimated amount of your cash transaction expenses. (For M&IE, your advance is limited to the M&IE rate under the lodgings-plus per diem method.)
Non-cash transaction expenses (See §301-51.200(b)).	Generally zero. However, your agency may advance up to the full amount of your expected non-cash transaction expenses for an individual trip (or not to exceed a 45-day period for an open authorization) in accordance with §301-51.200(b) .

§301-51.202 When must I account for my advance?

You must file a travel claim which accounts for your advance after completion of your assignment, in accordance with your agency's policy. If you are in a continuous travel status (e.g., an auditor or inspector) or if you submit periodic reimbursement vouchers on an individual trip authorization, your agency may reimburse you the full amount of your travel expenses without any deduction of your advance until such time as you file a final voucher. If the amount advanced is less than the amount of the voucher on which it is deducted, you will be reimbursed the net amount. If the advance exceeds the reimbursable amount, you must immediately refund the excess.

§301-51.203 What must I do about my advance if my trip is canceled or postponed indefinitely?

Promptly notify the appropriate agency officials and refund any monies advanced in connection with the authorized travel.

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AMENDMENT 2006–02 APRIL 26, 2006

Note to §301-74.17(a): This provision does not prohibit payment of per diem to an employee authorized to obtain lodging in the District of Columbia while performing official business travel.

§301-74.18 What policies and procedures must we establish to govern the selection of conference attendees?

You must establish policies that reduce the overall cost of conference attendance. The policies and procedures must:

- (a) Limit your agency's representation to the minimum number of attendees determined by a senior official necessary to accomplish your agency's mission; and
- (b) Provide for the consideration of travel expenses when selecting attendees.

§301-74.19 What records must we maintain to document the selection of a conference site?

For each conference you sponsor or fund, in whole or in part for 30 or more attendees, you must maintain a record of the cost of each alternative conference site considered. You must consider at least three sites. You must make these records available for inspection by your Office of the Inspector General or other interested parties.

Subpart B—Conference Attendees

Note to Subpart B: Use of pronouns “we”, “you”, and their variants throughout this part refers to the agency.

§301-74.21 What is the applicable M&IE rate when meals or light refreshments are furnished by the Government or are included in the registration fee?

When meals or light refreshments are furnished by the Government or are included in the registration fee the applicable M&IE will be calculated as follows:

- (a) If meals are furnished the appropriate deduction from the M&IE rate must be made (see [§301-11.18](#) of this chapter).
- (b) If light refreshments are furnished, no deduction of the M&IE allowance is required.

§301-74.22 When may an employee, attending a conference, be authorized the conference lodging allowance?

An employee, authorized to attend a conference, may be authorized the conference lodging allowance as prescribed in [§§301-74.8](#) and [301-74.9](#).

§301-74.23 Is the conference lodging allowance an actual expense reimbursement?

No. The conference lodging allowance is a separate method of reimbursement for lodgings expenses.

§301-74.24 When should actual expense reimbursement be authorized for conference attendees?

If the conference lodging allowance still is inadequate, you may authorize actual expense reimbursement under [§301-11.300](#) of this chapter in lieu of the conference lodging allowance method.

§301-74.25 May we reimburse travelers for an advanced payment of a conference or training registration fee?

Yes, you may reimburse travelers for an advanced discounted payment for a conference or training registration fee as soon as you have approved their travel to that event, and they submit a proper claim for the expenses incurred.

§301-74.26 What is the traveler required to do if he/she is unable to attend an event for which they were reimbursed for an advanced discounted payment of a conference or training registration fee?

In all cases where a traveler is unable to attend an event for which a discounted registration fee was paid and reimbursed in advance of the event, the traveler must seek a refund of the registration fee and repay the agency with any refund received. If no refund is made, the agency must absorb the advanced payment if the traveler's failure to attend the event was caused either by an agency decision or for reasons beyond the employee's control that are acceptable to the agency, e.g., unforeseen illness or emergency. If no refund is made, and the traveler's failure to attend the scheduled event is due to reasons deemed unexcusable by the agency, the traveler must repay the agency for the amount advanced.

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