

ARTICLE 97

Travel and Per Diem

Section 1.- Unless otherwise specified in this Agreement, reimbursement for travel expenses shall be in accordance with the FAA Travel Policy (FAATP).

Section 2.- In order to prevent an undue financial burden upon the employee, travel vouchers are to be processed in accordance with the following time limits as contained in the FAATP and this Agreement:

- a. Employees are to submit vouchers to approving officials within five (5) workdays of completion of authorized travel or every twenty-one (21) calendar days if the employee is in a continuous or extended stay travel status. Employees shall be permitted to complete vouchers on duty time.
- b. The Agency shall ensure an employee who submits a proper voucher for allowable expenses receives reimbursement within thirty (30) days after submission of the voucher. If the Agency fails to reimburse an employee who has submitted a proper voucher within thirty (30) days after submission of the voucher, the Agency shall pay the employee's late payment fees as prescribed by the General Services Administration (GSA).
- c. In the case of questionable item(s) on a submitted travel voucher, the approving official shall have two (2) workdays to notify the employee and will attempt to resolve the item(s) as soon as practicable. Should the item(s) not be resolved to the satisfaction of the approving official, he/she shall approve the travel voucher with the questionable item(s) deleted. The voucher with an explanation for the disapproved item(s) shall be forwarded to the employee.
- d. In the case of a questionable item or items on a submitted travel voucher, the amount may be withheld by the paying office, pending clarification, but the balance of the claim is to be paid promptly.

Section 3. -When travel is direct between duty points which are separated by several time zones, and at least one duty point is outside the forty-eight (48) contiguous states (CONUS), a rest period not in excess of twenty-four (24) hours may be authorized if the scheduled flight time (including stopovers of less than eight (8) hours) exceeds fourteen (14) hours by a direct or usually traveled route.

Section 4. -In determining allowable enroute per diem for TDY assignments, the Agency will use an average rate of three hundred fifty (350) miles per day of travel.

Section 5.- If an employee will be going on an "extended stay" travel assignment under FAATP, lodging plus shall be authorized for the first seven (7) days or until suitable

FEMA approved lodging can be found, whichever is less. -If, within the first seven (7) days, no suitable FEMA approved lodging can be found at the “fixed” rate of sixty (60) percent of the maximum lodging rate set by the GSA, and the employee has sought assistance from his/her front line manager or approving official, the employee shall be granted approval for a higher fixed rate, not to exceed the daily GSA maximum lodging rate, which will cover the lowest available lodging rate. -Such approval shall be reflected on the employee’s travel authorization.

Section 6.- If the employee on an extended stay travel assignment is unable to secure lodging with adequate kitchen facilities, the employee will seek assistance from his/her front line manager or approving official. -If lodging with adequate kitchen facilities still cannot be found, the employee’s authorization shall reflect approval for the full M&IE rate. -If lodging with adequate kitchen facilities is available, the reduced M&IE rate will apply.

Section 7. -Although proof of commercial lodging is required, employees who are reimbursed at a fixed rate established under the FAATP shall not be required to submit receipts unless the fixed rate has been raised in accordance with the provisions of this Section.

Section 8. -When an employee on an extended stay elects to return home during off duty time, the employee shall be entitled to use the approved fixed per diem rate at the employee’s temporary duty location for cost comparison purposes consistent with the FAATP. -Employees who are authorized a return trip home while on extended stay travel may use his/her “frequent flyer miles” for these return trips consistent with the FAATP and government-wide regulations.

Section 9. Return Trips Home:

~~a. A periodic return trip home, as provided in the FAATP, is justified for employees performing an extended travel assignment. Therefore, an employee performing an extended stay travel assignment, which is projected to be sixty (60) days or longer or an employee is on a continuous travel assignment, shall be authorized, at the election of the employee, one (1) round trip to his/her home during each sixty (60) day period. The travel will be completed during off duty time. Use of the government travel card, in lieu of using a personal credit card, is required for all such travel when using government rates.~~

~~a. For Engineering Services employees, the employee’s During an extended TDY assignment, the Agency will pay for an employee’s return home or to another authorized destination once every 30 days. The employee must list this return trip in the remarks section of their authorization. If the employee travels to a location other than their home, they must complete a cost comparison detailing the transportation expenses. The Agency will pay the employee’s transportation expenses to an alternate location not to exceed the expense of returning to the employee’s home. The employee must accomplish this travel during their regularly scheduled off duty~~

time. The employee can schedule subsequent return trips home for every additional thirty (30) calendar days of temporary duty in the same extended travel period.

If the employee returns home or to another authorized location without an authorization, and they qualify for payment of per diem, the Agency will pay the employee's transportation costs not to exceed the amount of M&IE authorized had they remained at the TDY site.

b. The employee's "home" for purposes of ~~the FAATP~~this Article shall be designated by the employee before the employee begins an extended stay travel assignment. Any change to this designation shall be communicated to the Agency as soon as practical. -In designating the employee's "home," the following applies:

1. If the employee has a residence as defined in the FAATP, that place shall be the employee's "home."
2. If the employee does not have a residence as defined in the FAATP, then the "home" will generally be the employee's official duty station.
~~The employee, however, may elect an alternate location for the "home" if he/she establishes a reasonable nexus to that alternate location.~~

Section 10.- Upon request, employees shall be authorized the use of portable dwellings, such as a recreational vehicle (RV), for long-term or continuous travel. -Notwithstanding the provisions contained in the FAATP, an employee's allowable lodging costs shall include monthly telephone use fees and other reasonable and customary fees normally charged at an RV facility.

Section 11. -When an employee obtains lodging in accordance with the FAATP and associated travel is curtailed, canceled or interrupted, it shall be considered that the employee acted reasonably and prudently if the expense was incurred based on time projections as conveyed in writing by the Agency to the employee.

Section 12. Mileage reimbursement for a privately-owned vehicle (POV) shall be paid in accordance with the applicable mileage allowance determined by GSA and set forth in the FAATP. -There will be no undue delay in implementing changes to the GSA mileage allowance.

Section 13. To the extent practicable, the Agency shall provide employees a minimum of thirty (30) days notice of the beginning and end dates of TDY location assignments and any interruption of TDY assignments. -The Parties recognize that in some instances employees whose normal work assignments include short notice travel may not receive thirty (30) days advance notice.

Section 14. ~~When~~ long term extended assignments will result in a tax liability on reimbursed travel expenses for bargaining unit employees, the Agency may offer to pay Income Tax Reimbursement Allowance (ITRA). When the Agency pays ITRA, such payments shall be paid in the same manner as the relocation income tax allowance (RITA). ~~If~~ the Agency has determined that ITRA will not be offered, employee assignments shall be for periods of less than one year.

Section 15. ~~When~~ making travel arrangements, an employee shall have the option of utilizing the government-contracted travel agent or contacting the airline, hotel and/or rental car services directly.

Section 16. The Agency recognizes the need for local transportation for employees assigned to out-of-agency training; therefore, the use of a rental car at the training site will be authorized where appropriate. ~~Rental cars shall be obtained from rental car companies identified on the Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO) contract unless approved in advance. This Section applies to employees who utilize common carrier transportation.~~

Section 17. To the maximum extent practicable, the Agency shall schedule the time to be spent by an employee in a travel status away from his/her official duty station within the regularly scheduled workweek of the employee. When travel must be accomplished outside of the employee's regularly scheduled tour of duty, the Agency shall record its reasons for scheduling travel during non-duty hours and shall furnish a copy to the employee upon his/her request. ~~Employees shall be compensated in accordance with HRPM Policy Bulletin #41, Travel Compensatory Time, and applicable Agency directives.~~

Section 18. ~~Upon the employee's request, the Agency shall assist the employee in responding to and resolving travel audit findings.~~

Section 19. ~~Employees shall be provided adequate duty time to make their travel arrangements within a reasonable time after receiving the travel assignment.~~

Section 20. ~~When completing a cost comparison, the employee will utilize the non-restricted government fare under the City Pair Program (YCA). When such fare does not exist, a cost comparison will be done in accordance with the FAATP.~~

Section 21. ~~The Agency will evaluate a request for reasonable travel modification from an employee with a special physical need. Such need must either be clearly visible or discernible, or substantiated in writing by a competent medical authority. When the Agency determines that a special physical need exists, the Agency will pay any expenses deemed necessary by the Agency to accommodate the need. Travel modifications under this Section are separate and apart from reasonable accommodations required in accordance with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).~~

Section 22.: When an employee is in a travel status for two (2) or more consecutive nights, he/she will be authorized one (1) brief call to his/her residence each day during non-duty periods on a government telephone, if available. If a government telephone is not available, each employee will be reimbursed for no more than two (2) calls to his/her residence over the commercial long distance network per week (or each seven (7) day period for longer trips). ~~—Calls over commercial telephones will be reimbursed in accordance with FAATP.—~~ This section does not apply on extended stay travel assignments.

Section 23. Flight ~~Inspection-ServicesProgram Operations~~ crewmembers will provide the Flight Inspection Central Operations (FICO) office their travel itinerary when commercially traveling to/from aircraft. This shall normally occur prior to travel.

Section 24. ~~—~~To the maximum extent practicable, Flight ~~Inspection-ServicesProgram Operations~~ crewmembers on an international commercial itinerary will travel together for security and mission concerns. ~~—~~Exceptions to this policy must be approved in advance by the Agency.

Section 25. Unless prohibited by law, in the application of the FAATP to the provisions of this Article, the definition of “immediate family” as set forth in the glossary to this Agreement shall be applicable.

Section 26. Prior to an employee voluntarily giving up their common air carrier seat in accordance with the FAATP, which delays an employee’s travel during duty hours, the employee will request leave. The administration of leave will be in accordance with CBA.

Section 27. Nothing in the FAATP prohibits an attendant for an employee with disabilities from being a family member.

Section 28. Notwithstanding the prohibition in the FAATP, the union may pay travel expenses for union officers, representatives or members to conduct representational duties or attend union activities.

Section 29. In accordance with the FAATP, an employee may request a temporary change of station (TCS) for a temporary duty assignment lasting one year or more. In addition:

- a. An employee considering such a request should receive a briefing from a knowledgeable Agency source regarding the advantages/disadvantages of a TCS.
- b. An employee’s request for a TCS shall be in writing. The Agency shall provide its approval or denial in writing within 14 days. A denial shall include an explanation of the grounds for denial.

Section 30. As with CONUS and International relocations, when an employee is relocating to an OCONUS location, he/she will not be limited regarding the number of lots of household goods that the Agency will pay to ship. Reimbursement, however, will be limited to the cost of transporting all household goods by one lot.

Section 31. The applicable per diem rate to be used for the actual TQSE reimbursement method for an international station will be the locality rate established by the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of State under Subsection 4C1 of the FAATP.

Section 32. An employee on an approved authorization shall be allowed to draw an advance of funds using his government travel card to pay for necessary emergency POA storage expenses regardless of whether the Change of Station was CONUS, OCONUS or International.

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