



INTEGRATED TRAVEL MANAGER (ITM) 9.0 DISPATCH #14 Preparing for Post As Approved August 2011

Did you know that....

With the implementation of Post as Approved (PAA), Travel Vouchers (TVs) have the potential to data link into the Core Financial System (CFS) as an approved payment without the need for hard copy submission or intervention by Finance Office personnel? Reference the [ITM 9.0 Post As Approved - Coming Fall 2011](#) communications located on the NOAA Financial Systems Division (FSD) ITM webpage. Enlight of these changes it is extremely important that Preparers, Travelers and Approving Officials (AO) remain aware of the fact that they all share a responsibility of ensuring travel documents entered into ITM are:



- compliant with travel policies, reference [NOAA Travel Regulations \(NTR\) 301-1.2\(a\)\(1\) and 301-1.12](#) and
- expenses claimed reflect charges incurred and are supported by receipts, reference the [NTR 301-52](#).

This level of scrutinization should occur by all parties PRIOR to applying electronic signatures/approvals. Electronically certifying that expenses claimed are accurate and correct without carefully reviewing the TV may constitute a fraudulent claim. Per [NTR 301-52.3\(b\)](#), both the electronic and hard copy TV are considered to be legally binding documents and therefore it is in the best interest of all involved to ensure the accuracy and legitimacy of the voucher claims submitted.

Failure to fully review the electronic TV for accuracy prior to applying electronic signatures/approvals could result in overpayments, issuance of a Bill for Collection and/or loss of the privilege to utilize the Post As Approved process. It is important to note that although the hard copy documentation and supporting receipts remain the official document of record, the electronic TV is what results in reimbursements to the traveler. Therefore, if the electronic TV is incorrect, it may result in an erroneous payment if posted into CFS as approved. Once a TV posts into CFS as an approved payment, it is

considered "paid" and Finance Office personnel cannot intervene to alter or prevent the approved payment from going through the next disbursement process.

The time for users to prepare for the PAA implementation is now:

- Preparers, Travelers and AOs should not electronically sign travel documents without performing the following due diligence:
 - review all data on the TV
 - ensure a previous claim has not already been submitted (data linked)
- If your TV is prepared by a Group Administrator you should not attempt to access, review or electronically sign your TV until verbally notified by the Group Administrator that the TV is ready to be reviewed and electronically signed.

Note: By default a TV will appear in a traveler's Review queue the moment it is saved in the system. This does not indicate that the document has been prepared to completion.
- Preparers and AOs are strongly encouraged to (re)familiarize themselves with the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) and consider taking FTR training offered through the [General Services Administration \(GSA\)](#) or a Commercial vendor such as the [Graduate School](#).

From an audit perspective, travel expenses are classified in one (1) of the following three (3) categories: Allowable, Allowable with Justification and/or requiring specific authorization, Un-Allowable. The table below provides a list of expenses associated with the three (3) different categories. Travelers need to be mindful of the expenses they incur or run the risk of not being reimbursed.



When in doubt it is always advisable to seek guidance from the NOAA Travel Policy Office **prior** to incurring any questionable expense(s).

Expense Description	Allowable?	Policy Reference
Rental Car - GPS	Normally, no unless justified as mission essential. Example, an employee who's TDY involves visiting multiple NOAA sites.	
Rental Car - Upgrade	Yes, if Justifiable.	Reference: Commerce Travel Handbook (CTH) C301-10.453 ; CTH 301-10.454
Rental Car Insurance - Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) or Theft Insurance (CONUS - TDY Assignments)	No. Only when traveling outside CONUS and such insurance is necessary because the rental or leasing agency requirements, foreign statute, or legal procedures could cause extreme difficulty for an employee involved in an accident.	Reference: FTR §301-10.451 ; CTH C301-10.458 US. Government Rental Car Agreement
Rental Car Insurance - Personal accident insurance	No	Reference: FTR §301-10.452

Expense Description	Allowable?	Policy Reference
Rental Car Insurance - Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) or Theft Insurance (<u>Outside CONUS</u> - TDY Assignments)	Yes, but <u>only</u> when traveling outside CONUS and such insurance is necessary because the rental or leasing agency requirements, foreign statute, or legal procedures could cause extreme difficulty for an employee involved in an accident.	Reference: FTR §301-10.451 ; CTH C301-10.458 US. Government Rental Car Agreement
Gas - Rental Car	Yes; however, use the "prudent traveler" approach for refueling.	Reference: CTH C301-10.457
Tips - taxi, shuttle service, or courtesy transportation driver	Yes. Gratuities or tips to taxi drivers and others providing necessary services (not included as a part of the incidental allowance) to the traveler, will be limited to 15 percent of the basic charge(s).	Reference: CTH C301-11.12
Tips - Porters, Baggage Carriers, Bellhops, Hotel maids, etc...	No, these expenses are not reimbursable as a separate expense as they are included in the Incidental portion of the applicable M&IE rate.	Reference: FTR §300-3.1 - Glossary of Terms - Per Diem Allowance (c) Incidental Expenses
Room Service	No. The M&IE portion of the per diem is used to cover expenses for breakfast, lunch, dinner and related tips and taxes therefore; Room Service cannot be claimed as a separate expense.	

Expense Description	Allowable?	Policy Reference
Laundry Expenses - while on Foreign TDY	<p>No. Laundry expenses are included as part of the incidental portion of the M&IE and cannot be claimed separately under miscellaneous expenses.</p> <p><i>Note: The implementation of PAA will add a new pre-audit to fail when Laundry expense is claimed while TDY in a Foreign Location.</i></p>	Reference: FTR §301-11.31
Laundry Expenses - while TDY within the Continental United States (CONUS)	<p>Yes; however, you must incur a minimum of four (4) <u>consecutive nights lodging on official travel</u> to qualify for this reimbursement.</p>	Reference: FTR §301-11.31
Calls Home	<p>Yes. NOAA employees on official travel must place personal phone calls using either Federal or Pre-Paid Calling Cards except as noted in NTR 301-12.1(c)</p>	Reference: NTR 301-12.1(a) - 301-12.1(j)

Expense Description	Allowable?	Policy Reference
Pre-Paid Lodging	<p>You may be reimbursed for an advance room deposit, when such a deposit is required by the lodging facility to secure a room reservation, prior to the beginning of your scheduled official travel.</p> <p>This is a onetime deposit to keep the room reservation, not full payment on schedule for the room.</p> <p>Employees on Extended TDY should avoid rental situations in which one month's rent is required upfront on a monthly basis. Advance on a rental unit is <u>not</u> an eligible pre-paid expense.</p>	<p>Reference:</p> <p>FTR §301-11.32;</p> <p>ITM Dispatch #8 - Prepaid Travel Expenses (Jul 2009)</p>
Actual Expenses	Yes, if authorized.	Reference: FTR §301-11.301 - 306

Expense Description	Allowable?	Policy Reference
<p>Incurring Unexpected Expenses not authorized on the Travel Authorization (TA)</p>	<p>Unexpected expenses that are not authorized on the TA may be post-approved at the discretion of your authorizing official in the remarks section of the TV using the following statement: "Electronic approval of this travel voucher indicates reimbursement of the (specific expense(s)) as stated on the travel voucher were necessary and post-approved."</p> <p>Note: Employees are responsible for obtaining approval from their authorizing official prior to incurring unexpected expenses. Failure to obtain approval in advance of incurring an unexpected expense may result in the employee being denied reimbursement.</p>	<p>Reference: NTR 301-2.1(i)</p>



The table below identifies common document preparation errors. Users are encouraged to exercise extreme caution when preparing travel documents within ITM in order to ensure the legitimacy of payments issued to travelers.

<p>Document Naming</p>	<p>TAs and TVs should be saved using the Travel Authorization number (TA#) as the Document Name (i.e., 1FKAS0001).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended TDY TVs: When naming an extended TDY TV, the TA# should be followed by a hyphen and a sequential number (i.e., 1AJAS0001-1) • Reclaims: When naming a Reclaim voucher, the TA# should be followed by a hyphen, the letter "R" and a sequential number (i.e., 1AN2S0001-R1) <p><i>Note: The implementation of PAA will add a new pre-audit to fail when the Document Name does not comply with the standard Document Naming convention.</i></p>
<p>Itinerary Locations</p>	<p>Employees should first try to find lodging at the official TDY location. However, if lodging is not available at the official TDY location, the AO may authorize lodging at a location in close proximity to the TDY location. Specific approval for the alternate location must be justified on the TA in accordance with: FTR §301-11.8.</p> <p>Whenever a traveler lodges in an alternate location other than their TDY location, the City/State where lodging is obtained <u>must</u> appear in the traveler's Itinerary for purposes of determining the maximum per diem reimbursement rate.</p> <p>For example: Traveler is sent to perform TDY in Gulfport, MS but cannot secure lodging in Gulfport, MS. However, the traveler is able to secure lodging in Pascagoula, MS which is in close proximity to his official TDY location. As a result, the TA must specifically justify and authorize Pascagoula, MS and the itinerary must show Pascagoula, MS and <u>not</u> Gulfport, MS in order to reimburse the employee at the appropriate rate.</p>

<p>Scrutinizing Expenses</p>	<p>When creating a TV from TA all expenses, with the exception of lodging are carried over to the TV. Document preparers, travelers and approving officials need to <u>ensure only expenses that are actually incurred are included on the TV.</u></p>	
<p>Trip Dates</p>	<p>Verify trip dates are accurate. If the actual trip dates differ from what was authorized, this will need to be reflected within the Itinerary.</p>	
<p>Incurring Unexpected Expenses not previously authorized</p>	<p>If a traveler incurs an unexpected expense that was not authorized up front on the TA, a post approval statement will need to be provided in the comments section of the TV. Reference NTR 301-2.1(i)</p>	
<p>Personal time in conjunction with official travel</p>	<p>Whenever leave is taken in conjunction with official travel, the employee must have an approved leave slip and costs should be prorated to exclude the personal days taken (i.e., parking fees, rental charges, etc....)</p>	
<p>Lodging Tax - (CONUS) and non-Foreign areas</p>	<p>Lodging Tax must be claimed as a separate miscellaneous expense for CONUS and Non-foreign TDY and is limited to the taxes on reimbursable lodging costs.</p> <p>For example, if your agency authorizes a maximum lodging rate of \$50 per night, and the traveler elects to stay at a hotel that costs \$100 per night, the traveler can only claim the amount of taxes on \$50, which is the maximum authorized lodging amount. Reference, FTR §301-11.27.</p>	

Scrutinizing Expenses (cont'd)	Lodging Tax - Foreign areas	Lodging Tax <i>for foreign TDY</i> must be claimed as part of the lodging cost and cannot be claimed as a separate miscellaneous expense. Reference, FTR S301-11.27 . <i>Note: The implementation of PAA will add a new pre-audit to fail when Lodging Tax is entered separately from Lodging while TDY in a Foreign Location.</i>
	Expense Amounts	With the exception of lodging costs, all expenses entered on the authorization automatically carry over to the TV. These expenses need to be updated to reflect the actual amount(s) incurred based on supporting receipts <u>or</u> deleted if the expense was not incurred.
	Miscellaneous Expense	With the implementation of PAA, Miscellaneous expense will no longer be allowable on a TV. If a traveler incurs an expense that is not available from the Expense Description drop down, it will need to be entered on the TV as an Adhoc expense. <i>Note: The implementation of PAA will add a new pre-audit to fail when Miscellaneous is selected as an expense on a TV; however it can continue to be used on TAs and Reclaims.</i>
Signing and Approving TVs	Preparers, Travelers and Approving Officials should not electronically sign TVs without reviewing all data.	
TDY While on Extended TDY	When a traveler is required to perform TDY while on an extended TDY, the extended TDY authorization must be amended to add the new TDY location.	
Return to Official Duty Station travel	Anytime a traveler is authorized to return to their duty station in the middle of either a TDY or Extended TDY, a new authorization must be processed in order to send the traveler back to their TDY site. This applies when the employee is returned for both leave and business purposes. Authorizations must always reflect a roundtrip itinerary from one's official duty station to their TDY site and return back to their official duty station.	

<p>In Travel Status TV (Extended TDY)</p>	<p>When a traveler is on Extended TDY, TVs must be submitted every 30 days, reference FTR §301-52.7.</p> <p>Training material is available on the NOAA Financial Systems Division (FSD) website for those requiring assistance in processing extended TDY travel: http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~cbs/user_training_extras.htm</p> <p>Reference the following Training exercises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 - TV Ending in Travel Status (Updated Dec 2010) • 9 - TV Beginning AND Ending in Travel Status (Updated Dec 2010) • 10 - TV Beginning in Travel Status (Updated Dec 2010)
<p>Duplicate TV Entry</p>	<p>Whenever a TV data links prematurely, users should <u>not</u> attempt to create a replacement TV. A data linked document indicates the TV has already posted to CFS. Creating a second TV may result in a double payment to the traveler which will result in a bill for collection.</p> <p>Instead users should contact the NOAA Client Services Help Desk via email at ClientServices@noaa.gov or phone (301) 444-3400, option #2 for Travel Help in order to determine the next appropriate course of action.</p>
<p>Contractors and/or Grantees Traveling as Invitational Travelers</p>	<p>Travel expenses for contractors and grantees must be covered in the terms of the contract or grant. Reference NTR 301-1.3(e)</p> <p>Exception: If the contractor or grantee is traveling for purposes unrelated to their contract/grant, the office requiring the travel could process them under invitational orders.</p> <p>When in doubt of the legality issues surrounding this regulation and whether or not a contractor/grantee meets the "Exception" requirements, users are advised to contact the Department of Commerce (DOC), Office of General Counsel (OGC) for a ruling prior to making travel arrangements.</p>

Common
Carrier -
Travel Class
Code

When entering common carrier expenses (i.e., Airline Flight, Train, Bus, etc...) users are required to enter the travel class in the Class field located inside the Expense Details screen. The travel class indicates the quality of accommodation (i.e., First Class, Business Class, Economy, etc...) and is required for routing, reporting and policy purposes.

This applies to TAs as well as TVs and Reclaims.

For details on how to enter the travel class in the Class field, reference [Exercise 2a - Travel Authorization \(Editing Traveler Info\) \(Updated Dec 2010\)](#)

Note: The implementation of PAA will add a new pre-audit to fail when the Class field is left blank or an unexpected value is entered.