



## INTEGRATED TRAVEL MANAGER (ITM) 9.0 DISPATCH #15 Actual Expenses August 2012

In support of moving toward travel cost savings in line with [Executive Order \(EO\) 13589 -Promoting Efficient Spending](#), dated November 9, 2011, the Department will be required to exercise oversight and monitoring of cost initiatives on a monthly basis. They will share the information gathered each month and report data to the DOC/CFO/Assistant Secretary of Administration (ASA).



As a result, new pre-audits will be implemented on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012 to assist users with properly recording actual expenses within ITM. Initially, these pre-audits will be set in ITM with a WARN message. In the near future, the actual expense pre-audits will be switched to FAIL forcing users to correct the expenses.

### What is an "Actual" expense?

An Actual expense refers to per diem costs that exceed the maximum locality per diem rate. Per Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) §301-11.300, actual expense reimbursement is warranted when:

- a) Lodging and/or meals are procured at a prearranged place such as a hotel where a meeting, conference or training session is held;
- b) Costs have escalated because of special events (e.g., missile launching periods, sporting events, World's Fair, conventions, natural or manmade disasters); lodging and meal expenses within prescribed allowances cannot be obtained nearby; and costs to commute to/from the nearby location consume most or all of the savings achieved from occupying less expensive lodging;
- c) The TDY location is subject to a Presidentially-Declared Disaster and your agency has issued a blanket actual expense authorization for the location (see §301-70.201);
- d) Because of mission requirements; or
- e) Any other reason approved within your agency.

## Why is it important to record Actuals properly?

Improper recording of expense entries has an impact on:

- Electronic Routing for proper approvals
- Data reported under Departmental and/or Congressional inquiries
- Data requested as a result of Internal/External audits



All Line Office Chief Financial Officers (CFOs)/Staff Office Directors, and NOAA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) will review quarterly reports on dollars spent and the related justifications for actual expenses.

## How do I record Actuals in Travel Manager?

Under normal circumstances, Actuals should be authorized on the Travel Authorization in advance of travel. However, under unusual circumstances, actuals may be post-approved on the Travel Voucher when authorized by the Authorizing Official and supported by an acceptable justification.

When Actuals are authorized, update the default Lodging expense entry to indicate "Lodging - Actuals" by selecting it from the Expense Description drop down menu located on the Lodging expense line. In addition, the Travel Authorization or post approved Travel Voucher must specifically include one of the following justifications whenever actual expenses are authorized:

- Lodging procured at a prearranged place such as a hotel where a meeting, conference or training session is held;
- Local costs have escalated due to special or unforeseen events and lodging within the locality per diem rate cannot be obtained nearby; or
- Mission necessity which requires the traveler to procure superior lodging accommodations.

On a Travel Authorization, provide the justification as an addendum to the Actual Expense remarks appearing in the Other Authorization screen.

On a Travel Voucher, provide the justification in the Comments section on the Document Summary page.

Note:

- Only use "Lodging - Actuals" when the traveler incurred expenses that exceed the maximum listed locality per diem rate, and are authorized to claim actuals under one of the justifications listed above
- Actuals should not be used when a traveler incurs an expense at or below the maximum locality per diem rate
- Actuals for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) are no longer allowable.
- Personal preference or convenience is never a condition for authorizing actual expenses.

**What if the amount of the expense incurred is at or below the maximum locality per diem rate?**

If an expense is incurred at or below the established locality per diem rate, enter the amount(s) using the system default expense entry of "Lodging". "Lodging - Actuals" does not apply under these circumstances because the incurred expense is not exceeding the per diem rate.



Per FTR §301-11.304, when actual expense is authorized per the definition above and expenses are less than the locality per diem rate or the authorized amount, reimbursement is limited to the expenses incurred. In the event a traveler was authorized for actual expenses on the Travel Authorization, but the incurred expenses are at or below the established locality rate, the Travel Voucher requires modification. Change the expense description carried over from the Travel Authorization to the Voucher from "Lodging - Actuals" to "Lodging".

Note: When reducing M&IE expenses below the locality per diem rate, use the M&IE Override function(s). Do not use M&IE Actuals as a method of reducing the M&IE cost(s). In the event the system prevents reducing the M&IE in this manner, contact the NOAA Client Services Help Desk at [ClientServices@noaa.gov](mailto:ClientServices@noaa.gov) or (301) 444-3400, Option #2 for Travel, to receive proper guidance.

## Lessons Learned

- Actuals is defined as per diem (Lodging and/or M&IE) that **exceeds** the maximum locality per diem rate.
- A justification **must** specifically be included on either the Travel Authorization or post approved on the Travel Voucher whenever actual expenses are authorized.
- **Actuals should not be used when a traveler incurs expenses at or below the maximum locality per diem rate.**
- New Pre-Audits to support accurately entering Actuals will be implemented August 6<sup>th</sup>, initially as warnings
- Entering expenses accurately ensures:
  - Documents are properly routed
  - Data retrieved for auditing and reporting purposes is represented accurately as defined under the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR)
- Oversight and monitoring will occur by the Department, CFO/ASA, Line Office Chief Financial Officers (CFOs)/Staff Office Directors and NOAA's Office of the Chief, Financial Officer (OCFO).

