



NOAA CBS INTEGRATED TRAVEL MANAGER DISPATCH #11 Eliminating "Ink Signatures" on Hard Copy Travel Authorizations for Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel Updated October 2015

Effective November 16, 2009, the NOAA Finance Office will eliminate the requirement for "Ink Signature" approvals on official travel orders for authorized TDY travel. Travel Authorizations electronically processed through the Integrated Travel Manager (ITM) system receiving electronic approval, data link and CFS system generated obligation number(s) will replace the need for "Ink Signature" approvals on the hard copy authorization.



Per [Travel Advisory 10-1](#) and [Transmittal 23](#) issued by the Director, Finance Office/Comptroller, "electronically approved authorizations are considered legally binding documents" thereby serving as the official document of record. Individuals applying electronic approvals in Travel Manager are expected to be in compliance with the delegation authority as outlined in the NOAA Travel Regulations (NTR).

As a result of eliminating "Ink Signatures", the Travel Manager Travel Authorization Default form will now include an additional printout page documenting the electronic stamping activity. This page is titled as the "Document History" page. The Document History page is required to show the history of the electronic approval process. *A signature is not required on the 'Signature Certification Statement' which appears below the electronic stamping history.* This statement is a standard component of the Document History page that we do not have the option of turning off.

The Document History page is a vital component of the authorization printout as it Time/Date stamps the electronic approval. Failure to produce the Document History page as part of the Travel Authorization will require circulation of the hard copy for "Ink Signature" approval (s)."



Note: This procedure does not apply to Travel Authorizations associated with Permanent Change of Station (PCS). PCS Travel Authorizations are processed outside of Travel Manager and will continue to require hard copy signatures.

How does this impact ticketing reservations through the Travel Management Services (TMS)?

Approved Travel Authorizations can be submitted to the servicing TMS in electronic Portable Document Format (Adobe Acrobat) (pdf) via email. Proper email submission should include:

- Subject Line: Traveler's Last Name and Travel Authorization Number



To generate a pdf file in Travel Manager, select *Preview Document* from the left hand navigation bar. Once the authorization is displayed onscreen, click the SAVE icon  located in the upper left hand corner of the Adobe Acrobat toolbar. The pdf file should be saved using the traveler's Last Name and Travel Authorization number as the File name.

Note: A document must be opened for this function to operate.

Direct all email traffic to your servicing TMS using one (1) of the following applicable dedicated email addresses:

CWTSatoTravel - DOCAUTH@CWTSATOTRAVEL.COM

ElSol Travel - ELSOLALASKA@ELSOLTRAVEL.NET

In the event of a network outage, or if submission via fax is preferred, your approved authorization can be sent to your servicing TMS via fax using one of the following applicable facsimile numbers:

CWTSatoTravel - (855) 403-5255

ElSol Travel - (855) 248-3076



Note: Submission of documentation should occur utilizing one (1) of the methods indicated above. If the authorization is submitted via email it does not need to be followed up by facsimile submission and vice versa unless otherwise directed by the TMS.

No matter which method is utilized, delays in ticket processing can be prevented by ensuring the authorization contains:

- A CBA obligation number in Block 8
- A completed Itinerary in Block 4
- An Account Classification Code Structure (ACCS) in Block 7
- Applicable Remarks/Comments in Block 8
- Electronic approval Time/Date stamp on the "Document History" page (the last page of the authorization)



How will the elimination of "Ink Signatures" impact previously documented guidance for Emergency Travel and/or System Downtime?

Eliminating "Ink Signature" approvals will have minimal impact on previously documented guidance for Emergency Travel and/or System Downtime as documented in [ITM Dispatch #7 - Travel Manager and Obligation Nos. \(October 2015\)](#) located on the Financial Systems Division (FSD) webpage. The TMS will continue to accept either the Commerce Department Form CD-29 (CD-29) or the Travel Manager Default Travel Authorization form in situations where time is of the essence and transportation must be ticketed before the authorization can have the appropriate electronic approvals applied or when the system is unavailable.

CD-29s used in this interim process and Travel Manager Default Travel Authorization forms without an electronic approval/CBA Obligation number must contain "Ink Signature" approval and include one of the following justifications in the Block 8 comments section:

- 1) "Emergency Travel - Obligation Information not Available"
- 2) "Mission Essential - Obligation Information not Available"
- 3) "System Downtime - Obligation Information not Available"

The TMS will not accept a CD-29 or Travel Manager Default Travel Authorization form that has not been electronically approved, without proper justification and ink signature approval.

Does the elimination of "Ink Signatures" absolve the traveler's responsibility of having to carry signed orders while on official travel?

A Travel Authorization is required to be in place for TDY travel prior to the employee incurring any expenses; however there is no written policy within the Federal, Departmental or NOAA Travel Regulations requiring the traveler to physically carry the authorization while on official duty. As a result, the requirement for the authorization to accompany the traveler is discretionary based upon internal business procedures established by each individual Line/Staff Office/Financial Management Center (FMC).

A signed hard copy authorization is not the only official evidence of an employee being in a TDY status. Should an unfortunate event occur while the employee is on TDY status the electronically approved Travel Authorization in Travel Manager and/or a signed statement from the Approving Official attesting the employee was acting in an official capacity is sufficient documentation to cover the employee should an unfortunate event occur.

In addition since all travel reservations are arranged through the servicing TMS, signed hard copy authorizations should not be required by merchants for purposes of securing Government rates. At most employees should only anticipate having to furnish their Government issued Identification Card (ID).

Lessons Learned

- Travel Authorizations displaying a CBA Obligation Number in Block 8 and the Electronic approval Time/Date stamp on the "Document History" page can be submitted to the TMS for ticketing without an "Ink Signature"
- Travel Authorizations that are not electronically approved must have one of the following justifications noted in Block 8: "Emergency Travel", "Mission Essential", or "System Downtime" and have the appropriate "Ink Signature" before submitting to the TMS for ticketing
- Electronically approved authorizations are considered legally binding documents
- Travel Authorizations can be submitted electronically in pdf format via email to the TMS
- Travel documents can be generated into pdf files directly from Travel Manager
- The Document History page is a required printout of the Travel Manager Default Travel Authorization form
- Travel Authorizations are not required by policy to accompany travelers while on official travel

