



NOAA CBS INTEGRATED TRAVEL MANAGER DISPATCH #8 Pre-Paid Travel Expenses Updated January 2012

What is a Pre-Paid Travel Expense?

A pre-paid Travel expense is an expense directly related to a specific Temporary Duty (TDY) assignment which is incurred prior to the start of travel. It is extremely important to note the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) and NOAA Travel Policy limit the types of expenses a traveler is allowed to claim in advance of travel. Therefore, not all travel expenses qualify as a legitimate pre-paid expense. For example, FTR §301-11.32 states the following:



"May I be reimbursed for an advanced room deposit in situations where a lodging facility requires the payment of a deposit, prior to the beginning of my scheduled official travel?"

Yes, your agency may reimburse you 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. However, if you are reimbursed the advance room deposit, but fail to perform the scheduled official travel for reasons not acceptable to your agency, resulting in forfeit of the deposit, you are indebted to the Government for that amount and must repay it in a manner prescribed by your agency. "

As a precaution, when in doubt, travelers should seek guidance from either their Travel Manager Group Administrator or the NOAA Travel Policy Office prior to incurring any expense(s) in advance of travel.

Can Travel Manager accommodate processing a Pre-paid expense claim?

Yes. A system enhancement was implemented July 27, 2009 to accommodate situations when a traveler must submit a claim for reimbursement of a pre-paid travel expense. This enhancement benefits the Line Office as it allows processing of multiple vouchers against the Undelivered Order (UDO); thereby preventing premature closure (de-obligation) of the bulk of the obligated funding.

To accommodate pre-paid expenses in ITM 9.0 the following Settings were added to the system and are applicable based upon Document Type:

- Travel Authorization (TA)

The following was added as a selection from the Master List of Other Authorizations:

- ❖ "Pre-Paid Expenses Authorized"

- Travel Vouchers (TV)

The following pre-paid expenses were added as available Expense selections from the Expense Description drop-down menu:

- ❖ Pre-Paid Lodging
- ❖ Pre-Paid Registration Fees-ADP
- ❖ Pre-Paid Registration Fees-Non-ADP Federal Source
- ❖ Pre-Paid Registration Fees-Non-ADP Non-Fed Source

The following was added as a selection from the Type Code drop-down menu:

- ❖ Pre-Paid Expense

In addition, pre-audits were added for validating Pre-Paid expenses on a TV. These pre-audits are included in the ITM 9.0 Reference Messages document located on the NOAA Finance Office ITM Information web page at <http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/travel.html> under the Integrated Travel Manager Information, ITM 9.0 Reference Library.



How do I create a Travel Authorization when I must pay for an expense in advance of travel?

Once it is determined a pre-paid expense will be incurred in advance of the traveler's TDY assignment, the TA will need to be created in the same manner as any other TA, with the exception that the selection of *"Pre-Paid Expenses Authorized"* ***must be selected under Other Authorizations***. This is necessary because it results in the obligation being created in the Core Financial System (CFS) in a manner that allows multiple vouchers to be processed against the UDO; thereby preventing premature closure (de-obligation) of the bulk of the obligated funding.

Note: A pre-paid expense is simply a payment of a normal expense in advance of travel and therefore should not be added any differently from a normal expense (i.e., Lodging vs. Pre-Paid Lodging). Including it as a normal expense on the TA will prevent over obligating.

How do I create a Travel Voucher to claim reimbursement for an expense incurred in advance of travel?



- Create a TV from TA in the same manner as any other TV with the exception of the following:
 - Allow the Document Name to default to the TA Number. If another TV exists with that number, add a suffix at the end of the default name. Use "-1" or "pre" to make it unique.
 - Initially, choose the Type Code affiliated with the type of travel. Once Created, change the Type Code to "Pre-Paid Expense" and *Save* the changes. (Pre-Paid Expense option does not appear until after the TV has been created).
 - Edit the Begin and End Travel Dates to reflect the current date.
 - Edit the Trip Duration to be 12 hrs or less and *Save* the changes.
 - Lodging and M&IE expenses should equal \$0.
 - Choose the appropriate Pre-Paid expense option(s) from the Expense Description drop-down menu and enter the associated cost.
- Run Pre-Audit Validations.
 - The following scenarios will FAIL the Validation:
 - If TA does not contain "Pre-Paid Expenses Authorized" in the Other Authorizations
 - If on the TV the Pre-Paid Expense selection is not chosen for the Type Code but a Pre-Paid expense is entered
 - If on the TV the Pre-Paid selection is chosen for the Type Code but a Pre-Paid expense is not entered
 - If a manually keyed expense or other expense is selected other than Pre-Paid
- Apply the appropriate status stamp to the document.

If I incur a Pre-paid travel expense must I submit a Pre-paid expense claim?

No. A pre-paid expense claim is only necessary if a traveler chooses to be reimbursed for a pre-paid travel expense in advance of travel. If a traveler prefers to wait or circumstances prevent a pre-paid expense claim from being processed until the end of the TDY assignment, the pre-paid expense can be claimed as a normal expense (i.e., Lodging vs. Pre-Paid Lodging) on a regular TV.

Lessons Learned

- "Pre-Paid Expenses Authorized" must be selected as an Other Authorization on the TA in order to voucher for pre-paid expenses in advance of travel
- Not all travel expenses qualify as a legitimate pre-paid expense. When in doubt, seek guidance prior to incurring any expense(s) in advance of travel
- Pre-paid expenses are only valid Expense selections on a Pre-Paid TV
- Vouchering for a pre-paid expense in advance of travel is the traveler's option

