



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Office of the Chief Financial Officer
Finance Office

MEMORANDUM FOR: All NOAA Employees

FROM: Kim Darling *Kim Darling*
Acting Director Finance Office/Comptroller

SUBJECT: Travel Advisory 12-2
Group Travel

DATE: June 8, 2012

Background. The policy for obtaining approval for group travel was implemented in the Department to minimize travel costs associated with group travel and to ensure that Line/Staff Offices were not authorizing more employees than necessary to travel to the same event or function.

Our past policy required approval for groups of twenty or more employees on domestic travel and ten or more employees on foreign travel, including invitational travelers, traveling to the same location or event and funded by NOAA.

Recent events have caused conferences and group travel to come under increased scrutiny and require vetting at higher levels in the Department, as directed by memorandum from the Office of Management and Budget – Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations, May 11, 2012. As a result, the acting Deputy Under Secretary for Operations (DUS/O) issued an email to the heads of NOAA’s operating units to lower interim group travel approval levels to ten or more employees on domestic travel and five or more employees on foreign travel:
<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/docs/DUS.GroupTravel.E-Mail.docx>

Furthermore, the additional scrutiny on travel and conferences has changed the standard for what travel can be approved: reasonable and justified has been replaced by absolutely essential.

Policy. In order to implement and clarify the group travel requirements sent out by the DUS/O and to meet the new approval standard, effective immediately, NOAA travel policy is being revised as follows:

Approval for groups of **ten** (10) or more employees on domestic travel and **five** (5) or more employees on foreign travel, including invitational travelers, **regardless of whether or not NOAA is funding the travel**, traveling to the same location or event, is to be submitted to the DUS/O for review.

Procedures. Requests for group travel must be submitted on a “NOAA Group Travel Request”: http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/docs/NOAA%20Group%20Travel%20Request%20Template_08Jun2012.docx by the Line/Staff Office, Chief of Staff (or equivalent point of contact) to the Executive Director to the Deputy Under Secretary via email. Each request will be reviewed, and possibly approved, by the DUS/O. Please visit the NOAA Travel website for more information on the group travel approval process: <http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/GROUP.html>. Please direct any questions regarding this advisory to Joseph.A.Pica@noaa.gov/(202) 482-3565.