

MEMORANDUM FOR: All NOAA and BIS Employees

FROM: Jon P. Alexander
Director, Finance Office/Comptroller

SUBJECT: Travel Transmittal Number 22

With the upgrade to Integrated Travel Manager (ITM) 9.0 and obligating temporary duty travel (TDY) travel, which is scheduled to occur in November 2008, it will become **vital** that all Travel Authorizations be entered and approved in the ITM system in order to generate an approved obligation within the Core Financial System (CFS). Travel Authorizations must be obligated within CFS in order for vouchers to properly process and result in reimbursement to the traveler. In order to ensure that the authorization has successfully passed through the interface and posted into CFS, the printed, signed hard copy Travel Authorization must include the Centrally-Billed Account (CBA) obligation number and the traveler reimbursable obligation number(s).

Therefore, effective November 12, 2008, all travel documents **must** be electronically routed and processed through the ITM system. Under extenuating circumstances, i.e., emergency travel over a weekend or when the ITM application is not available for a significant period of time, employees are authorized to use the Department of Commerce, Form CD-29 (http://ocio.os.doc.gov/ITPolicyandPrograms/Electronic_Forms/index.htm) in place of the ITM Default Travel Authorization form. However, employees who use CD-29 forms during these interim periods will be required to re-enter the authorization information into ITM once the system is available. When a CD-29 form is used under an authorized extenuating circumstance, as mentioned above, the CD-29 form must contain the full Account Classification Code Structure (ACCS) chargeable for the travel expenses.

This transmittal updates several chapters of the NOAA Travel Regulation (NTR). This Transmittal has been posted on the NOAA Travel Office (NTO) web page at <http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/travel.html>. Please visit our web page to view or to update your NTR. Please contact the NOAA Client Services Help Desk via e-mail clientservices@noaa.gov or by phone (301) 427-1023, if you have any questions.

1. Filing Instructions for the NOAA Travel Regulation (NTR). Replacement pages for your NTR are attached as follows:

Remove

Pages 301-2-3 thru 2-4
dated February 1, 2008

Pages 301-2-7 thru 301-2-8
dated February 1, 2008

Page 301-32-1
dated September 29, 2005

Pages 301-51-2
dated January 1, 2002

Pages 301-51-3
dated February 1, 2008

Pages 301-51-4
dated December 1, 2003

Pages 306-3-1 thru 306-3-4
dated July 1, 2005

Insert

Pages 301-2-3 thru 301-2-4
dated November 1, 2008

Pages 301-2-7 thru 301-2-8
dated November 1, 2008

Page 301-32-1
dated November 1, 2008

Pages 301-51-2
dated November 1, 2008

Pages 301-51-3
dated November 1, 2008

Pages 301-51-4
dated November 1, 2008

Pages 306-3-1 thru 306-3-4
dated November 1, 2008

2. Explanation of Changes. The attached pages are issued to update several chapters of the NOAA Travel Regulations.

3. File this cover memorandum in the front of the NTR. Clarification or assistance regarding travel policies and/or procedures may be obtained by calling your servicing Finance Office listed below:

Seattle------(206) 526-6008
Boulder------(303) 497-5307
Kansas City------(816) 426-3044
Norfolk------(757) 441-6897
NOAA Travel Office------(301) 444-2136

Attachments

NTR Transmittal 22

November 1, 2008

Attachment

NOAA TRAVEL REGULATION (NTR) CHECKSHEET FOR CHAPTERS 300 and 301

Following is a list of pages currently in effect in the NTR. This checksheet is to be used to verify the accuracy of the NTR.

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TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS**301-2.1(a) What form do I use to authorize travel?**

All NOAA and BIS employees **must** use the Integrated Travel Manager system (ITM) to process all travel documents. Under extenuating circumstances, i.e., emergency travel over a weekend or when the ITM application is not available for a significant period of time, employees are authorized to use the Department of Commerce, Form CD-29

(http://ocio.os.doc.gov/ITPolicyandPrograms/Electronic_Forms/index.htm) in place of the ITM Travel Authorization Default form. However, employees who use CD-29 forms during these interim periods will be required to re-enter the authorization information into ITM once the system is available.

301-2.1(b) What is the difference between an authorizing official and an approving official as it relates to travel?

An authorizing official authorizes the obligation of funding on the travel authorization and an approving official authorizes reimbursement of the travel expenses on the travel voucher.

301-2.1(c) Who has the authority to authorize travel authorizations?

Employees are required to electronically process travel authorizations through ITM. In addition, the signed hard copy travel authorization must continue to accompany the travel voucher upon submission to the servicing finance office for processing as back-up documentation.

- Authorizations are electronically sent through a pre-determined management chain for review, approval, and financial processing.
- Hard copy (paper) travel authorizations must be approved by an authorizing official from the funding office and will be kept at the employee's office for back-up.
- Electronic and hard copy authorizations are legally binding documents and require approval by authorizing officials listed in NTR, Chapter 301-2.5 – 301-2.5(o)(ii).

It's important to annotate the Comments field of the authorization in situations where the funding office is different than the traveler's office, i.e., one line office paying for another line office's travel.

301-2.1(d) When must I have a travel authorization?

You must have a travel authorization when one or more of the following applies to your TDY travel:

- (i) travel exceeds one calendar day (24 hour period);
- (ii) travel exceeds 12 hours and per diem is incurred;
- (iii) common carrier transportation for travel is required;
- (iv) a traveler will incur travel expenses at no cost to NOAA (zero [\$0] dollar travel authorization), when an outside source or another Federal agency prepays all travel expenses and NOAA is charged nothing.

301-2.1(e) Where do I show leave on the travel authorization?

Leave in conjunction with official travel (before, during, or after), must be shown in the "General Itinerary" and "Other Authorizations" section of the ITM travel authorization default form, or "Remarks" section of the travel order. Personal points of travel must never be shown on travel authorizations.

301-2.1(f) Can one travel authorization cover a group of individuals?

No, travel authorizations (including blanket travel authorizations and trip authorizations) must be for a single traveler only unless they fall under one of the exceptions described in 301-2.1(g).

301-2.1(g) Are there any exceptions to list more than one individual on a travel authorization?

Yes, travel authorizations can cover more than one individual for award ceremony travel, home leave travel, evacuation travel, travel of an employee with special needs where an attendant is required, and permanent change of station travel. In these cases, only one travel voucher will be filed for reimbursement.

301-2.1(h) How do I show changes to a travel authorization that has already been approved, but travel has not taken place?

You should complete an amended travel authorization. Amendments should be issued to add expenses that require specific approval (e.g., to add a destination) or to show when travel is delayed more than 30 days. Amendments will completely replace original travel authorizations and will include all costs for the trip.

301-2.1(p) What is the format for assigning a travel authorization number?

Travel authorization numbers are always nine characters (either numeric or alpha) without dashes (-), spaces, or any special characters. All travel authorization numbers **must** be unique and will always start with the last digit of the fiscal year, followed by a three character organization code, followed by a one character travel type code, and will end with a four character sequential number.

301-2.1(q) What are the different travel “type” codes?

L – Local Travel	YXXXL0001
S - Domestic/Non-Foreign Single Travel Authorization Number	YXXXS0001
F - Foreign Single Travel Authorization Number	YXXXF0001
P - Domestic/Non-Foreign PCS Travel Authorization Number	YXXXP0001
R - Foreign PCS Travel Authorization Number	YXXXR0001
E – Evacuation Travel Authorization Number	YXXXE0001
B - Domestic/Non-Foreign Blanket Travel Authorization Number	YXXXB0050
K - Foreign Blanket Travel Authorization Number	YXXXK0050
Domestic Trip Authorization Number	YXXXB0051 – YXXXB0099
Foreign Trip Authorization Number	YXXXK0051 – YXXXK0099

Note: The type of travel must be entered in the fifth position of the travel authorization number.

301-2.1(r) How are trip authorization numbers assigned?

An individual trip authorization number will be a sequential number within the blanket travel authorization number (positions 6-9). For example: If the blanket domestic/non-foreign travel authorization number is YXXXB0050; the trip authorization numbers will be YXXXB0051 through YXXXB0099.

TRAVEL VOUCHERS**301-2.1(s) What form do I use to claim travel expenses?**

All NOAA and BIS employees **must** use the Travel Voucher Default form in ITM when claiming travel expenses or submitting a zero (\$0) dollar travel voucher to close out a travel authorization with no cost.

301-2.1(t) Who has the authority to approve travel vouchers?

Employees are required to submit **both** an electronic travel voucher through ITM as well as a hard copy (paper) travel voucher to their servicing finance office for processing.

- Travel vouchers sent electronically are sent through a pre-determined management chain for review, approval, and financial processing.
- Electronic and hard copy travel vouchers are legally binding documents that may be approved by the employee's approving official provided that the hard copy travel authorization has been authorized by the authorizing official from the funding office.
- Hard copy travel vouchers must be signed by the appropriate approving official and must include any applicable receipts when sent to the finance office for processing. Note: Post-approved expenses on the hard copy travel voucher must be authorized by the authorizing official from the funding office in the remarks section of the travel voucher. See NTR 301-2.1(i) for expenses not authorized on the travel authorization.

PART 301-32—EVACUATION TRAVEL ALLOWANCES**301-32.1 What are evacuation travel allowances?**

Evacuation travel allowances are allowances that may be paid to an employee and his or her dependents in the event of an officially-ordered evacuation, in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR).

301-32.2 How do I know if I am eligible to receive evacuation allowances?

In order to be eligible for evacuation allowances, you must be on a standing MANDATORY evacuation order as declared by Federal, State, or Local Government to evacuate from a place where there is imminent danger to your life or the lives of your dependents.

301-32.3 What documentation should I have in place in order to receive evacuation allowances?

You will need to have an approved round-trip travel authorization that covers you and your dependents to receive evacuation allowances. Under normal TDY, you are required to have a travel authorization prior to travel.

However, under evacuation travel, it may be necessary to issue travel authorizations after the employee and dependents are evacuated. You must:

- a) use the letter “E” in the fifth position of the travel authorization number;
- b) list your dependent’s names and dates of birth under “Comments” on the travel authorization; and
- c) select the Trip Purpose code “Evacuation” within the Document Information section of the travel authorization.

301-51.2(a) What classes of employees are exempt from the mandatory use of the Government travel card?

In addition to the classes of employees exempted in the FTR, and in the Department of Commerce (DOC) Travel Handbook from the mandatory use of the travel charge card, NOAA exempts employees who have a disability that would either limit or prevent them from using a Government travel card and employees who are not authorized to obtain a Government travel card due to low credit scoring.

1) Employees with a disability will submit a memoranda of request for exemption from the mandatory use of the Government travel card:

- must be substantiated in writing by a competent medical authority;
- must be signed by the Assistant Administrator, Line Office or Director, Staff Office; and
- will be reviewed for approval on a case-by-case basis by the Director, Finance Office/Comptroller.

2) Employees who are not authorized to obtain a Government travel card due to low credit scoring will be advised by their servicing Agency Program Coordinator (APC) that they have been declined for the Government travel card and will need to either use personal funds or submit travel advance paperwork to their servicing finance office. When an advance is requested, the servicing APC will send an e-mail approval for the employee to use travel advances for any and all future trips to both the employee and to the Chief of the servicing finance office. The e-mail approval from the APC must accompany all travel advance paperwork when submitted to finance for processing.

301-51.3(a) Who has the authority to request all other exemptions from the mandatory use of the Government travel card?

Memoranda of request for all other exemptions from the mandatory use of the Government travel card must be signed by the Line Office Chief Financial Officer (CFO)/Management and Budget Chief, or Staff Office Director, and be submitted thru the Director, Finance Office/Comptroller, to the NOAA CFO. The NOAA CFO will forward requests to the DOC Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration for approval. DOC must report all exemptions to General Services Administration (GSA).

301-51.5 How may I pay for official travel expenses if I receive an exemption from the use of the Government travel card?

When you receive an exemption from the use of the Government travel card, you are still expected to procure common carrier transportation on the centrally-billed account within a TMC, and use one of the following methods to pay all other official travel expenses:

(a) Personal funds (cash or personal charge card) will be used to pay for official travel expenses for:

- Employees who travel five times or less a year and elect to not use the Government travel card;
- Employees whose travel cards have been canceled because of delinquency or use for non-official purposes; or
- Intermittent, seasonal, or temporary employees who have limited appointments.

NOTE: Travel advances will not be authorized for employees mentioned in 301-51.5(a).

(b) Travel advances are authorized to pay for official travel expenses for:

- Invitational traveler who possess a bank account (bank account can be either a U.S. bank account or foreign bank account); or
- Employees with disabilities who were granted an exemption. A travel advance form and memoranda of request should be faxed to the Chief, Travel and Purchases Branch, Accounting Operations Division, Finance Office, or the Chief of your servicing finance office. In addition, the original travel advance form should be mailed to the servicing finance office for proper documentation; or
- Employees who are not authorized to obtain a Government travel card due to low credit scoring.

NOTE: The total advance amount is based on Block 6 of the Travel Manager Travel Authorization Default form and is limited to 80% of the estimated cash expenses. In addition, ATM withdrawals taken from the Government travel card can never exceed 80% of the estimated cash expenses.

(c) Convenience checks are advances which can be used to pay for official travel expenses for:

- Invitational travelers who do not possess a bank account.

301-51.8 How does the NOAA office obtain travel advances?

The NOAA office can obtain travel advances one of the following ways:

(a) **Travel Advance:** The NOAA office will submit a travel advance form and a travel authorization to the servicing finance office. The travel advance will be deposited directly to the traveler's bank account within 2 - 3 days (notify your servicing finance office for direct deposit set-up); or

(b) **Convenience Check:** The office inviting the invitational traveler will submit a travel advance form and a travel authorization to an imprest fund cashier who can issue a convenience check. Contact your servicing finance office for the location of an imprest fund cashier who can issue convenience checks. The imprest fund cashier will sign the Travel Advance (to indicate payment), to note that the advance was paid by convenience check, attach it to the Travel Authorization and forward both documents to the servicing finance office.

301-51.9 Who do I contact to apply for a Government travel card?

- (a) All Line and Staff Offices, other than NMFS and NWS, will call (301) 444-2107, fax (301) 413-3066; and
- (b) NMFS employees will call (301) 713-1364 x194, fax (301) 713-2258; and
- (c) NWS employees will call (301) 713-0720 x112, fax (301) 608-0850.

PART 306-3--Administrative Requirements

Sec.

- 306-3.1 Who processes foreign travel packages for NOAA?
306-3.2 What is a “complete” foreign travel package?
306-3.3 What happens when an incomplete foreign travel package is submitted?
306-3.4 Is a “Defensive Travel Briefing” required for foreign travel?
306-3.5 What will help ensure my safety as a Government employee traveling on official business?
306-3.6 How can I help ensure foreign travel packages will be processed in time for my travel?
306-3.7 What are the processing-time requirements for foreign travel packages that do not require visas or passports?
306-3.8 Does NOAA obtain official passports and visas for invitational travelers on foreign travel?
306-3.9 What do I submit to the NTO for an invitational traveler on foreign travel?
306-3.10 How does the NTO process a foreign travel package?

306-3.1 Who processes foreign travel packages for NOAA?

The NOAA Travel Office (NTO) processes all foreign travel packages.

306-3.2 What is a “complete” foreign travel package?

A complete foreign travel package consists of:

- 1) a completed “Foreign Travel Checklist”; *See NTR, Chapter 306-7.1*
- 2) two photocopies of the approved travel authorization with a travel authorization number assigned by the Line/Staff Office. The employee’s title must be shown on the travel authorization, as well as their grade and date of birth annotated in the remarks section of the travel authorization;
- 3) a certificate of completion for the “Defensive Travel Brief”; Defensive Travel Briefs are completed annually.
- 4) passport forms, passport photos (which must meet Department of State (DOS) requirements), and passports;
- 5) if applicable, visa photos (which must meet the country’s visa requirements), visa applications, and letters of invitation.

Please note: Your Line or Staff Office may have additional internal requirements.

306-3.3 What happens when an incomplete foreign travel package is submitted?

Your line office contact will be notified via e-mail of the missing documentation/information. **NOTE:** missing documentation/information will cause delays in the processing of your travel package which may result in the trip being delayed or canceled. See <http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/FT.html> for a current foreign travel contact listing.

306-3.4 Is a “Defensive Travel Briefs” required for foreign travel?

Yes. “Defensive Travel Briefs” are required for all employees traveling abroad and does not include invitational travelers. The “Defensive Travel Brief” consists of an on-line power point presentation and a certificate of completion. The entire presentation must be viewed and the certificate of completion must accompany the foreign travel package and submitted to the NTO annually. The certificate of completion confirms that the traveler has read the on-line presentation. Completed foreign travel packages will not be returned to the traveler until the certificate of completion is received by the NTO.

See <https://doc.learn.com/login.asp?sessionId=3-0766F656-28CD-4862-A296-7A11D0C95786&DCT=1&lcid=178409&requestedurl=learncenter%2Easp%3Fid%3D178409%26page%3D1&secure=true>

306-3.5 What will help ensure my safety as a Government employee traveling on official business?

- 1) Sign the official passport immediately upon receipt.
- 2) Renew passports 6 months before they expire.
- 3) Obtain visas for any in-transit travel.
- 4) Ensure that country clearance cables are processed by your Line Office’s servicing International Activities Office or by your Staff Office.

306-3.6 How can I help ensure foreign travel packages will be processed in time for my travel?

Provide adequate processing-time for foreign travel packages by using the following procedures:

1) Plan ahead - Determine well ahead of travel dates the documentation needed, i.e., an approved foreign travel authorization, an annual briefing, an official passport, and whether or not visas are necessary. Separate documentation is required for each traveler. Always provide the NTO with an office contact name and phone number.

2) Act promptly - Allow the proper processing-time necessary to obtain passports and visas. Passports/visas will not be sent to you until **all** documentation is received.

306-3.7 What are the processing-time requirements for foreign travel packages that do not require visas or passports?

A seven business day processing-time is required for foreign travel packages that do not require any action on our part, i.e., the processing of passports and/or visas. *See NTR, Chapter 306-4, 306-5, and 306-6 for specific processing-time requirements.*

306-3.8 Does NOAA obtain official passports and visas for invitational travelers on foreign travel?

No. NOAA is not responsible for official passports and visas for invitational travelers on foreign travel. Invitational travelers are expected to obtain their own personal passports and visas. However, NOAA will reimburse passport and visa fees for invitational travelers on foreign travel when approved on the travel authorization. NOTE: The NTO does not require the hard copy travel authorization for invitational travelers.

306-3.9 What information must be included on the travel authorization for an invitational traveler on foreign travel?

The following statement must be annotated in the remarks section of the travel authorization: “The individual named above is traveling at the invitation of the U.S. Government. Although not a formal representative of the U.S. Government, this individual is considered of sufficient character and qualification to participate on this mission.”

306-3.10 How does the NTO process a foreign travel package for employees?

Once all of the necessary documents have been processed, the NTO will forward a copy of the approved travel authorization, the official passport containing visas, if applicable, to the travel contact. Upon receipt of the foreign travel package, the travel contact and the traveler should review all documents for completion and accuracy.