



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Office of Marine and Aviation Operations
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

OCT 20 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR: Distribution

FROM: John E. Potts 
Chief Financial Officer, OMAO

SUBJECT: OMAO Guidance for Deviation from NOAA Travel Record
Retention Policy Guidance

In response to NOAA's Travel Transmittal Number 29, dated October 4, 2011, this memorandum outlines OMAO's approved request to deviate from the NOAA Travel Record Retention Policy guidance (NOAA Travel Regulation, Chapter 301-52), effective October 24, 2011, with the implementation of the Post As Approved (PAA) project, and provides guidance to OMAO employees for retaining the proper travel records. In summary, OMAO is designating Travel Record Retention Officials at each center and at Headquarters and implementing an electronic routing and storage procedure for travel vouchers, receipts and other documents required to support the claim, where possible, with a few exceptions.

This attached guidance (Attachment 1) is **effective October 24, 2011**, and is only applicable to Temporary Duty (TDY) and local travel documents. Once PAA is implemented on October 24, 2011, this policy will apply to new and "in process" vouchers. The old procedure applies to vouchers "data linked" prior to October 24, 2011, and travelers will need to submit hard copy documentation to the Finance Office for processing and payment.

For the most part, OMAO travelers will no longer be required to obtain ink signatures nor submit any hard copy travel voucher documentation to the Finance Office for processing and payment unless specifically requested or audited. This does not apply to invitational travelers and excepted employees (i.e., Public Health Service (PHS) Officers) because they do not electronically route nor approve in the Integrated Travel Manager (ITM) system - ink signatures are still required and a "complete travel voucher package" must be submitted to the Finance Office for payment. Additionally, for employees involved in any on-going investigations or pending litigation, such as Deep Water Horizon and SWATH litigation, we are required to retain original travel vouchers, receipts and any other necessary documents required to support the claim until the litigation hold is lifted by General Counsel. Future exceptions may also be warranted due to investigations or pending litigation and will be identified when known.

Travel Record Retention Officials have been designated for each Center and at Headquarters (Attachment 2). Travel Record Retention Officials will retain travel records (electronic and hard copy, when required) to ensure compliance with travel record retention policies and procedures in the organization. Specific responsibilities and procedures will be documented in Headquarters and/or Center written policies.

The OMAO Information Management Division will establish the four (4) restricted network shares functional email accounts provided in this guidance:

- One restricted network share for each Center (MOC, AOC and CPC) and one restricted network share for Headquarters (includes NOAA Dive Center and Small Boat Program)
- One functional email account for each Center (MOC, AOC and CPC) and one functional email account for Headquarters (includes NOAA Dive Center and Small Boat Program)

Receipts and other documents required to support the claim will be scanned and stored electronically with the approved travel voucher (TV) on restricted network shares specifically established for travel record retention. Network shares for Travel Record Retention will be established for each Center and one for Headquarters. OMAO safeguards the integrity of information stored on network shares via a daily file back-up and off-site replication process. OMAO has implemented access controls that protect the confidentiality of travel records by limiting access to the designated network shares, in accordance with NOAA policies regarding protection of PII and sensitive data. Access to the designated network shares will be restricted to Travel Record Retention Officials and staff necessary to conduct internal audits for compliance, and will be documented in Headquarters and/or Center written procedures. A standard filing scheme will be provided for uniformity and ease of record retrieval for audit purposes.

Functional email accounts will be established for each Center and at Headquarters to allow for electronic routing of scanned receipts and approved TVs to the OMAO Travel Record Retention Officials. Access to the functional email accounts will be restricted to staff designated for uploading complete travel packages to the designated network share and will be documented in Headquarters and/or Center written procedures. Functional email accounts are as follows:

- OMAO-HQ.Travel.Record.Retention@noaa.gov (OMAO Headquarters Offices)
- MOC.Travel.Record.Retention@noaa.gov (Marine Operations Center)
- AOC.Travel.Record.Retention@noaa.gov (Aircraft Operations Center)
- CPC.Travel.Record.Retention@noaa.gov (Commissioned Personnel Center)

This guidance will be converted by **November 30, 2011**, into a policy directive and retained in OMAO's Document Management System (DMS) for future reference.

Headquarters and Center written procedures are required. Please provide them to the OMAO Resource Management Division (RMD) and distribute them to your employees by **October 31, 2011**. Centers should ensure Union obligations are met. Written procedures should include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Further designation of Travel Record Retention Official responsibilities, specifying each person's area of responsibility
- Identify approved access to restricted network shares and functional email accounts

- Access to OMAO network shares is managed by the OMAO Information Management Division in accordance with the OMAO Access Control (AC) Policy. Access to network shares containing travel records must be approved in advance by OMAO's Resource Management Division.
- Frequency of maintaining functional email accounts to upload travel records to the network share
- Length of time to retain actual emails with attached travel records and file to a sub-folder of the functional email account (at least a year), as a backup to the network drive

To ensure compliance, OMAO's RMD will select sample transactions to audit and ensure record retention compliance. These audits will be performed at least quarterly throughout FY 2012, beginning in January 2012, and then semiannually beginning in FY 2013. In FY 2012, the quarterly audits will be held the first month of each quarter and will review approved transactions for the prior three (3) months. Beginning in FY 2013, the biannual audits will be held in January and June and will review approved transactions for the prior six (6) months for local vouchers and travel vouchers.

For reference, please review the attached Travel Record Retention Policy, dated October 4, 2011, and the NOAA Travel Regulations for claiming reimbursements (Chapter 301, Part 52-Claiming Reimbursements).

Please disseminate this guidance to the employees under your areas of responsibility and notify them of required Headquarters/Center procedures.

If you have any questions, please contact Beth Downs, Resource Management Division, on 301-713-7688 or via email at Beth.Downs@noaa.gov.

Distribution:

- OMA Director
- OMA Deputy Director
- Director, Marine and Aviation Operations Center (MAOC)
- Deputy Direct, Marine and Aviation Operations Center (MAOC)
- Director, Marine Operations Center (MOC)
- Commanding Officer, Commissioned Personnel Center (CPC)
- Commanding Officer, Aircraft Operations Center (AOC)
- OMA Headquarters (HQ) Division Chiefs
- OMA Deputy Chief Financial Officer (DCFO)
- NOAA Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
- Director, Finance Office/Comptroller

Attachments

- Travel Record Retention - OMAO's Guidelines and General Procedures
- OMA Travel Record Retention Officials
- Travel Record Retention Policy, dated October 4, 2011
- NOAA Travel Regulation, Chapter 301 Part 52-Claiming Reimbursements