



October 24, 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR: NOS Directors, Deputy Directors, Business Managers

FROM: Christopher Cartwright 
Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: NOS Deviation to the Travel Record Retention Policy Compliance

This memorandum defines National Ocean Service (NOS) responsibilities and procedures for the retention of travel records.

Background:

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Finance Office, in conjunction with the Office of the Chief Administrative Office (OCAO), is implementing procedures for the retention of travel records as part of the Integrated Travel Manager (ITM) Post As Approved project. These procedures are only applicable to Temporary Duty (TDY) and local travel documents and do not pertain to Permanent Change of Station (PCS).

Effective October 24, 2011, Travel Vouchers will no longer require hard copy submission to NOAA servicing Finance Branch. This change does not apply to Travel Vouchers selected for audit and Travel Vouchers belonging to Excepted Employees and Invitational Travelers. Travel Vouchers meeting one of the exceptions mentioned will continue to require hard copy submission to your servicing Finance Branch for payment.

Refer to Travel Transmittal Number 29 for additional information on the NOAA policy:
<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/TR.trans29a.pdf>

NOS Procedure:

The following explains NOS' approved procedure for implementing NOAA's Travel Record Retention Policy:

1. A complete travel voucher package consists of the travel voucher, which is generated by the Travel Manager system, receipts, and any other supporting documentation. One official electronic copy of the travel voucher and receipts and any other supporting



documentation will be stored by each program office on a secure network drive that is accessible by the travel voucher preparer and approving official.

2. Upon completion of a trip, travelers are responsible for providing all receipts and any other relevant documentation to the travel voucher preparer so that the voucher can be completed. The traveler should retain the original receipts and a copy of the travel voucher for his or her record. The travel voucher preparer will post an electronic copy of the complete travel package (voucher, receipts, and any other documentation) on the office's designated network shared directory that is backed up and secure. As a part of the approval process, the Approving Official will validate that the travel package, including receipts, is consistent with DOC and NOAA travel policy including the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), and posted on the designated network directory. Once the travel voucher is approved, the official electronic copy of the travel voucher and supporting documentation (this will be considered the "ORIGINAL") will be retained on the office's secure network drive for six years and three months in accordance with records retention requirements for financial documents. The electronically stored documents must be accessible in the event of an audit. Hard copies will not be retained. After six years and three months, the electronic files may be destroyed.
3. For travel conducted in support of emergency response or Natural Resource Damage Assessment activity, hard copies of the original signature travel voucher and receipts shall be provided to cost documentation compilers in the Office of Response and Restoration.
4. Program Office Business Managers are responsible for ensuring day-to-day compliance with the above procedure and that the office's network storage system is consistently utilized. The NOS Resource Management Division will conduct a random spot check every 6 to 8 months to ensure the travel records are retained consistent with the policy and implementation procedure.

Policy updates regarding travel voucher submission/record retention are posted on the NOAA Travel Office (NTO) website at:

<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/TRAVEL.html>

Questions concerning this instruction may be addressed to Nadia Stewart at 301-713-3050, Extension 166.