



## COMPANION SEATS – AWARD RECIPIENT TRAVEL

### Purpose

This SOP documents the process for how travelers must book reservations when multiple travelers are traveling together on a single travel authorization for an award ceremony.

### Responsibility

If airfare is needed to accommodate a Guest attending an official DOC Award Ceremony, it is the responsibility of the award recipient's "Office" (e.g. traveler/arranger) to:

- Contact the Travel Management Center (TMC) directly to book the necessary reservations
- Retrieve eligible reservations onto the authorization
- Manually enter reservation related expenses (e.g. Award Ceremony Guest Airfare, Extra TMC Transaction Fee, Rental Car) that cannot be retrieved (the separate reservation booked for Guest or a consolidated reservation for Award Recipient and Guest)
- Submit fully approved authorization to the TMC to ensure all reservations are ticketed

### Policy Background

The policy governing this travel can be found in the Department of Commerce Travel Handbook section [3.17.2 Award Recipient Travel](#). Travel and per diem expenses may be provided to a Departmental award recipient to attend a major award ceremony (e.g., Presidential award ceremony, the Department's or Bureau's annual award ceremony, or a prestigious honorary award ceremony sponsored by a non-Federal organization). The travel must be directly to and from the site of the ceremony and must be performed in accordance with the policies contained in the FTR and this Handbook.

Bureaus may provide reimbursement of travel and per diem expenses for a recipient's family member for a federal award ceremony. In addition, at the Bureau's discretion, travel reimbursement for more than one individual may be considered in instances where the award recipient may require assistance because of a disability or other medical need.

One travel authorization shall be issued that covers both the employee and the additional person. The employee will be responsible for submitting a travel voucher to obtain reimbursement for his/her travel costs and the additional person.

Honoraria offered in connection with official travel may not be accepted either as a personal payment to an employee or by the Department as a payment to the Government.



## Overview

Due to limitations of the E2 Solutions (E2) travel system and the GetThere Online Booking Engine (OBE), reservations for multiple travelers traveling together on a single authorization cannot be booked through the OBE or even retrieved in to E2 when booked directly with an agent. As a result, users must contact the TMC directly to book airfare reservations (SATO: 1-855-813-2844, El Sol: 1-844-355-0383) and, depending on how reservations are booked (e.g. consolidated reservations or separate reservations), manually enter reservation related expenses (e.g. Guest Airfare, Extra TMC Transaction Fee, Rental Car) on the authorization based on information provided by the TMC.

When the traveler calls the TMC to book for Award Recipient Travel and Guest, then the TMC should create two reservations; one for the Award Recipient and one for the Guest. The agent will use the Award Recipient's profile for their reservation then book the Guest in a separate reservation under a different Record Locator Number. The Award Recipient's reservation can be retrieved onto the authorization on Step 2: Reservation screen. The Guest's airfare reservation and TMC Transaction Fee will need to be manually entered on the authorization on the Step 4: Expenses screen by the user (traveler/arranger).

The standard is for the TMC agent to create two separate authorizations, one for each airfare. However, if two separate reservations are not made, the procedures are modified as follows:

- If airfare reservations for both the Award Recipient and Guest are booked under the same Record Locator Number, reservations cannot be retrieved on to the authorization in E2. Instead, airfare reservation related expenses for both the Award Recipient and Guest will need to be entered on the authorization Step 4: Expenses screen manually by the user (traveler/arranger).
- If hotel and/or rental car reservations are booked separately from airfare reservations (and separate Record Locator Numbers are provided by the TMC), then the hotel and/or rental car reservations can be retrieved onto the authorization on the Step 2: Reservation screen.
- If all reservations (e.g. Airfare, Hotel and Rental Car) are booked under the same Record Locator Number then the reservation in its entirety cannot be retrieved on to the authorization. Instead, all reservation related expenses (e.g. Airfare, TMC Transaction Fee, Rental Car) for both the Award Recipient and Guest will need to be manually entered on the authorization Step 4: Expenses screen by the user (traveler/arranger).

## Procedures

1. Call the TMC to book reservations for both the Award Recipient and Guest.
  - a. Listen carefully to the voice prompts and select the option for "Traveling with a Companion"
  - b. Identify yourself as an employee taking a companion for an awards ceremony.
  - c. If the Guest is not a DOC employee, inform the agent the Guest is someone who would not have a TMC Profile
  - d. The agent will need to obtain the following information for the Guest



- i. Full Legal Name as it appears on Government issued Identification (ID), required by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA)
        - ii. Date of Birth, required by TSA
        - iii. Contact Information, required by TMC and Airlines
          1. Email Address, used to send reservation related information
          2. Cell Phone Number, used in the event the airline needs to contact the traveler
      2. Traveler/Arranger creates authorization in E2.
      3. On the Step 2: Reservations screen, retrieve the reservation made for the Award Recipient (employee) using the Record Locator Number for the Award Recipient's travel reservation provided by the TMC.
        - a. If hotel and/or rental car reservations were booked separately from airfare reservations (i.e. different Record Locator Number), then retrieve the reservation on the Step 2: Reservations screen.
        - b. If all accommodations (airfare, hotel and car reservations for both the Award Recipient and the Guest) were booked together (i.e. using the same Record Locator Number), then the reservations cannot be retrieved and all costs will need to be entered manually. *(See Next Step)*
      4. On Step 4: Expenses screen make sure all anticipated expenses for both the Award Recipient and Guest are entered. The expenses from the second Guest reservation will need to be entered manually, as well as the Per Diem and any Lodging expenses for the Guest.
        - a. Reservation Related Expenses
          - i. Based on information provided by the TMC, manually enter all costs that were unable to be retrieved on the Step 2: Reservations screen (e.g. Guest Airfare, TMC Transaction Fee, Rental Car)
        - b. Lodging Expenses
          - i. If the Guest will not be staying in the same room as the Award Recipient add a new expense for Guest Lodging. Select Expense Type: **Lodging - Award Ceremony Guest**. Enter the same total lodging amount as the Award Recipient's lodging costs. Indicate dates and costs in the Remarks.
          - ii. If the room rate is above per diem select Expense Type: **Actuals - Lodging - Award Ceremony Guest**. Enter the same total lodging amount as the Award Recipient's lodging costs. Indicate dates and costs in the Remarks.
          - iii. To accurately account for taxes incurred, if separate rooms are booked for the Award Recipient and Guest, record both the Award Recipient's and Guest's Hotel Tax on the Award Recipient's **Lodging** expense line ***(locations within the Continental United States (CONUS))***
        - c. Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE)
          - i. E2 will automatically calculate M&IE for the Award Recipient
          - ii. Since the Guest is also entitled to receive M&IE, add a new expense for Guest M&IE. Select Expense Type: **Meals and Incidentals - Award Ceremony Guest**



Enter the same total M&IE amount as the Award Recipient's M&IE. Indicate dates and applicable daily M&IE rate in the Remarks.

- d. Miscellaneous Expenses
  - i. Enter all other expenses that are anticipated to be incurred by both the Award Recipient and Guest (e.g. Checked Baggage Fee, Shuttle, Taxi, POV)
  - ii. If certain expenses are incurred on the same day by both the Award Recipient and Guest, the expenses can either be grouped together or entered as separate expense lines.
    1. Use the Remarks and the expense Description field to indicate who incurred the expense (i.e. Award Recipient, Guest, or Both).
    2. Please note that if grouping expenses results in the expense line exceeding \$75, receipts will need to be attached to support the claim.

Note: Per DOC regulations and at the Bureau's discretion, travel reimbursement for more than one individual may be considered in instances where the award recipient may require assistance because of a disability or other medical need. In the event a Medical Attendee is required in addition to the Guest, the following expense entries may also need to be selected:

- **Lodging - Attendant Traveling With Employee**
- **Actuals - Lodging - Attendant Traveling with Employee** (*if room rate is above per diem*)
- **Meals and Incidentals - Attendant Traveling with Employee**

5. On Step 7: Summary screen, add **Remarks** indicating the following:
  - a. All related Record Locator Numbers
  - b. Name of the Guest (*and Medical Attendee, if applicable*)
  - c. Why reservation(s) do not appear on Step 2: Reservations screen. For example, "*Companion Seating requires direct booking with the TMC and cannot be retrieved in to E2. Reservation related expenses have been manually entered based on information provided by the TMC*"
6. When the authorization has completed the electronic routing process and has received final approval, the information for the Award Recipient's reservation will be submitted to the TMC following the usual process because that reservation was able to be pulled into the authorization.
7. **The hard copy authorization must be submitted via Accellion to the TMC in order for the Guest reservation to be ticketed.** Approved authorizations can be submitted to the servicing TMC in electronic Portable Document Format (Adobe Acrobat) (pdf) via email. Proper email submission should include:
  - Subject Line: Award Recipient's Last Name and Trip ID Number
  - Record Locator Number for the Guest reservation

Direct all email traffic to your servicing TMC using one of the following dedicated email addresses:

- CWTSato Travel: [dcauth@cwtsatotravel.com](mailto:dcauth@cwtsatotravel.com)
- EISol Travel: [elsolalaska@elsoltravel.net](mailto:elsolalaska@elsoltravel.net)



In the event of a network outage, your approved authorization can be sent to your servicing TMC via fax using one of the following dedicated facsimile numbers:

- CWTSatoTravel: (855) 403-5255
- EISol Travel: (855) 248-3076

Note: If the authorization is submitted via email it does not need to be followed up by facsimile submission or vice versa unless otherwise directed by the TMC.