




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

MEMORANDUM FOR: All NOAA Employees

FROM: Christopher Cartwright
Acting Director, Finance Office/Comptroller 

SUBJECT: Travel Advisory 20-7
Travel Approval Process for Employees Traveling
Amidst COVID-19 Outbreak

DATE: March 16, 2020

Pursuant to recent Office of Personnel Management and Department of Commerce guidance, bureaus have been instructed to limit all non-essential travel. Therefore, all travel, going forward, must be deemed 'mission-critical' and pre-approved by senior bureau leadership until further notice. Please see the [Office of Management and Budget's 3/14/20 guidance](#) regarding factors to consider to determine what is mission critical travel.

Upcoming Travel. By COB tomorrow, authorizing officials must log into E2 and review all currently approved travel authorizations (TAs) for any upcoming travel and cancel any travel that is not 'mission critical.' Cancelling travel in E2 cancels all reservations and de-obligates any funding connected to that TA. Please see [NOAA Travel Advisory 20-6](#) and the [Commerce Connection Collection](#) for instructions on how to cancel a TA in E2. Employees who determine their travel to be 'mission critical' must, in addition to obtaining their approving official's approval, also obtain approval from their Line/Staff Office Chief Financial Officer (CFO), as well from the NOAA Under Secretary (US) and Deputy Under Secretary for Operations (DUSO), using the '[NOAA Travel Justification Checklist](#)' process outlined under 'Essential Travel' below, **even if their travel has already been approved in E2.**

Currently on Travel. Employees who are currently on official temporary duty (TDY) travel should contact their supervisor immediately to determine if their travel is considered mission critical, and if it is not, should begin making plans to return to their duty station as quickly as possible. Employees who meet the ‘mission critical’ criteria **must now obtain approval from their Line/Staff Office CFO, as well as approval from the NOAA US and DUSO using the ‘NOAA Travel Justification Checklist’ process outlined under ‘Essential Travel’, below, even if their travel has already been approved in E2.**

The following outlines the new travel approval process for employees (includes invitational) who are either on official TDY travel, or who are about to perform official TDY travel, amidst the COVID-19 outbreak.

Essential Travel. Employees seeking to travel will be required to confirm the travel is “mission critical” and obtain approval from their Line/Staff Office Chief Financial Officer, as well as approval from the NOAA Under Secretary and Deputy Under Secretary for Operations using the ‘NOAA Travel Justification Checklist.’ Employees will:

1. Create a TA in E2, but will not route the TA for approval;
2. Complete Section A of the ‘NOAA Travel Justification Checklist’ for Upcoming Travel’;
3. Obtain their Chief Financial Officer (CFO) approval on the Checklist;
4. Send a copy of the unapproved TA along with the CFO-approved ‘NOAA Travel Justification Checklist’ to the following e-mail addresses for Under Secretary and DUSO approval: michael.weiss@noaa.gov and christiaan.vanwestendorp@noaa.gov.

Once submitted to the Under Secretary and DUSO’s offices, the travel package will be reviewed and if approved the ‘NOAA Travel Justification Checklist’ will be signed and returned to the employee. The employee will upload the final signed ‘NOAA Travel Justification Checklist’ into E2 and continue routing their TA to their authorizing official for final approval.

Please direct any questions regarding:

- The new travel approval process to either: michael.weiss@noaa.gov or christiaan.vanwestendorp@noaa.gov
- Travel policy to either rachael.s.wivell@noaa.gov/ (301) 444-2136 or chacity.n.grimm@noaa.gov/ (301) 444-2129;
- The E2 process or routing questions to clientservices@noaa.gov/ (301) 444-3400.