



MEMORANDUM FOR: ALL NOAA Employees

FROM: Christopher Cartwright   
Acting Director, Finance Office/Comptroller

SUBJECT: Travel Advisory 20-3  
High Threat – Security Overseas Seminar (HTSOS) and  
Foreign Affairs Counter-Threat (FACT)

DATE: January 23, 2020

The purpose of this advisory is to inform travelers who perform official TDY (temporary duty) travel abroad that the Foreign Travel Briefing (FTB) has been replaced by the High Threat - Security Overseas Seminar (HTSOS) which can be accessed via the Commerce Learning Center (CLC). This means that employees who travel abroad are now required to have a valid HTSOS on file at the NOAA Travel Office (NTO) instead of the FTB. The HTSOS is valid for 5 years and the certificate of completion must be uploaded into E-2 and attached to the travel authorization (TA) in order for the NTO to approve the TA in E-2.

Employees who perform an overseas detail that will last 45 days or longer will be required to complete the 5 day Foreign Affairs Counter-Threat (FACT) course instead of the HTSOS. In these cases, the FACT certificate of completion must be uploaded in E2 and accompany the TA in order for the NTO to approve the TA in E-2. Just like the HTSOS, the FACT is valid for 5 years. However, if you have a FACT certificate on file and are performing regular TDY travel abroad, you will not have to take the HTSOS course since the FACT course satisfies the HTSOS course requirement. Employees who need to access the FACT course will need to visit the Department of State (DOS) Foreign Service Institute (FSI) website <https://fsitraining.state.gov/> or contact the FSI Office of the Registrar at 703-302-7037 or email [FSIRegistrar@state.gov](mailto:FSIRegistrar@state.gov).

In summary, and effective immediately, employees who travel abroad are required to either have a certificate of completion for the HTSOS or FACT attached to their TA in E2 in order for the NTO to approve the TA in E-2. In addition, a certificate of completion for either the HTSOS or FACT must also be uploaded into the E Country Clearance system in order to be approved for a country clearance.

As a reminder, the NOAA Travel Office (NTO) must receive foreign travel packages that require a passport 6 - 8 weeks before the start of travel. Passport applications submitted with less than four (4) weeks lead-time must include a flight itinerary and/or Travel Authorization (TA). Additional time is required to process foreign travel packages that require visas. Lead-time requirements for processing visas and passports are dictated by the embassies and DOS. Most countries require that the passport be valid at least **six (6) months** or longer beyond the dates of

travel. Please visit our website for additional information:

<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/FT.passport.html>.

The DOS security requirements dictate that upon completion of foreign travel, all official passports must be returned to the NTO for safekeeping in the official passport repository or designation line office passport location. When not in use, official passports must never be kept at home, in a desk, in a car or any other unsecure area. **Official passports are the property of the Government, and are not the personal property of the traveler.**

**For policy inquiries on HTSOS training**, please visit the NOAA Travel Regulation (NTR), 306 Chapter 1, Foreign Travel:

<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/documents/TR.Chapter301.docx> .

For further policy guidance, please contact Tiffany Gaymon:

E-Mail: Tiffany.Y.Gaymon@noaa.gov or phone: (301) 444-2193.